PSALMS

THE

HYMNAL OF

ANCIENT ISRAEL

BY JOHN WADDEY

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to the host of gifted singers who have led God's people in praising Christ and his Father. They have enriched the hearts and souls of Christians as they directed them in offering up their sacrifices of praise to God, "the fruit of lips which make confession to his name" (Heb. 13:15). To hymn writers such as Tillet Teddlie, L. O. Sanderson, Alton Howard, A. W. Dicus, Will Slater and F. L. Eiland we express our thanks. To capable song leaders such as Aubrey Yearwood, Nick Boon, Ralph Casey, Gary Hale, David Duncan and Ray Walker we express our sincere appreciation. You have blessed our lives and enriched our worship. We are grateful.

My thanks to Eddy Joel Silsbee who designed the cover of this book.

FORWARD

The portion of the Bible we call the Psalms was the hymnal of ancient Israel. It continues to provide wonderful hymns sung by both Jews and Christians. One small branch of Presbyterians sing only the Psalms in their worship, having adapted them to our modern style of music. Outside of the Four Gospels, the Psalms are the most read portion of the Bible. It is a treasure trove of devotional thoughts that will inspire and strengthen all who read them.

In the Psalms we catch glimpses of how the Hebrews expressed their praise to God. Some of the Psalms were majestic hymns sung by the sacred singers at God's temple. Among those songs are psalms 146-150. Other psalms reflect the praise and devotion of individual saints. Such is the twenty-third psalm of David. Psalms 43 and 51 reflect David's sorrow and repentance regarding his sin with Bathsheba and his wicked actions that caused the death of her husband. Many of the psalms grew out of their author's reflection on creation and the world of nature (See Psalms 33 and 148).

In reading the Psalms we see the unique style and beauty of Hebrew religious poetry. Their appeal to man's spiritual appetite is universal and age-lasting. Whether young or old, whether the reader is highly educated or of limited reading skills, all will find food for their soul in the Book of Psalms.

Reading the Psalms is of great value, whether in the worship assembly or in ones private devotions. Whether read or sung, the Psalms edify those who take them into their heart.

I encourage you to take time to read the introductory chapters of this book before you begin with Psalm 1. This material will enable you to better understand the words you read. It will also familiarize you with the unique style of Hebrew poetry which makes much use of "parallelisms" and other figures of speech which, if you have not previously learned about them, might not be recognized or understood.

The Psalms abound in lessons for life. Make good use of you notepad and pen as you read these beautiful hymns and learn their contents. I call them lessons to remember.

The treasures of the Psalms are inexhaustible. Like the rest of Scripture, the Psalms never grow old. If you truly love God with all your heart, soul and mind, you will never grow weary of reading the Psalms. The older you grow, the more precious they will be to you. Like your marriage vow to your mate, the Psalms will be your companion in good times or hard times, in sickness or in health until you finally close your eyes in death.

"I will be glad and exult in thee;
I will sing praise to thy name,
O thou Most High" (Ps. 9:2).
"I will declare thy name unto my brethren;
In the midst of the assembly will I praise thee." (Ps. 22:22).
"Bless be Jehovah God...
And blessed be his glorious name for ever" (Ps. 72:18-19).

John Waddey

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THE HYMNAL OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

Key Verse: **29:2** "Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name; worship Jehovah in holy array."

Key Thought: Worship.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

I. Authors:

A. Contrary to popular opinion, David did not author all of the psalms.

B. The following authors are named:

1. Moses wrote Psalm 90.
2. David is credited with 73 psalms.
3. Solomon wrote Psalms 72 and 127.
4. Asaph authored 12 psalms.
5. Heman gave us Psalm 88.
6. Ethan is credited with Psalm 89.
7. Hezekiah wrote 10 psalms.
8. The sons of Korah authored 11 psalms.
9. The remainder are anonymous. These are often described as orphan psalms.

C. Our present edition of the Book of Psalms is a compilation done by some later inspired hand:

1. One Jewish tradition ascribes the collecting of the psalms to Nehemiah.
2. Another says it was Ezra.
3. Still another would credit it to Hezekiah.

D. About David as lyric writer:

1. He was a skilled musician (1 Sam. 16:16-18; II Sam. 6:5; I Chron. 16:4-6).
2. He was an inventor and maker of musical instruments (Amos 6:5).
3. He was an accomplished poet (II Sam. 1: 19-27).
4. He was a man of deep feelings and rich information.
5. He was a true worshiper of Jehovah with genuine religious convictions.
6. His life's experiences were rich and varied.
7. He was filled with God's Spirit (I Sam. 16:13).
8. He was inspired of the Holy Spirit to write his psalms (II Sam. 23:1-2).

II. About the Book:

A. Date of composition:

1. From Moses, about 1450 B.C.
2. Most were completed by 500 B.C. in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.
3. The psalms had their origin primarily in the age of David.
Hezekiah and the return from Babylonian captivity.
4. In days past, liberal scholars sought to place a late date on all of the psalms, i.e., 500-150 B.C. Today such views have been discredited and repudiated by nearly all.
5. Some conservative scholars would date Psalms 44, 74 and 79 in the Maccabean period.

B. Name

1. In the Hebrew title is ***Tehillim*** which means Praise.
2. Psalms is from the Septuagint.
3. Early Christians referred to the book as the Psalter,

C. State of the Hebrew text, "It may safely be maintained that the Hebrew text of the Psalter has come down to us in a rather good state of preservation" (Leupold).

D. Numbering of the Psalms:

1. In ancient Hebrew and Greek manuscripts the number of Psalms vary as some are joined together as one, or longer ones subdivided.
2. Some manuscripts count 147, others 151.
3. Psalms 1 and 2 are often joined as one, as are 9 and 10, and 114 and 115.

E. Divisions of the Book:

1. Hebrews divided the Psalms into five books.

2. Each book ends with a doxology except the last. There the 150th psalm is the doxology to it and the whole collection.

3. Characteristics of the five books:

a. **Book I**, Psalms 1-41. With four exceptions, the psalms are attributed to David. The name Jehovah is most often applied to God.

b. **Book II**, Psalms 42-72, consists of psalms of Korah (42-47) and David (51-65, 68-70). Here the name Elohim is dominate,

c. **Book III**, Psalms 73-89. Psalms of Asaph (73-83) and Korah (84-89). Psalm 86 is attributed to David, The names Jehovah and Elohim are equally employed.

d. **Book IV**, Psalms 90-106. Moses is credited with the first, David is assigned two (101, 103). The rest are anonymous. Jehovah is the prevailing divine name,

e. **Book V**, Psalms 107-150. Fifteen of these are attributed to David, one to Solomon. The rest are anonymous. Jehovah is the prominent name used.

F. Type of Literature: Poetry**.**

1. Psalms is composed of 150 inspired poems set to music for Israel's worship.

2. It is the world's most ancient collection of poems.

3. The poetry of the Hebrews has been called "a poetry of between God and man" (Herder).

4. Psalms are lyric poetry, that is adapted to music. There is a great variety in style of composition:

a. Some are odes, i.e., a dignified sort of song which narrates in a highly figurative way the facts of public and private history,

b. Some are ethical, delivering solemn rules for life or religion in a simple manner.

c. Some are elegiac, sad compositions upon mournful subjects.

d. Some are dramatic odes, consisting of dialogues between the psalmist and others.

e. Some are enigmatic, delivering doctrines of religion in obscure symbols designed to strike the imagination forcefully, thus bringing about understanding.

5. The Psalms (Hebrew poetry) contrasted with the poetry of ancient Greece:

a. Greece's "subjects were either a fabulous theology, a false and ridiculous religion, chimerical wars, absurd heroism, impure love, agriculture, national sports, or hymns in honor of gods more corrupt than the most profligate of men. Their writings served only to render vice admirable, to honor superstition, to favor the most dangerous and degrading passions of men, such as impure love, ambition, pride and impiety." The same is true of Latin poets. (Adam Clarke).

6. In 1753 Bishop Lowth of England, an Oxford scholar and professor, discovered the fundamentals of Hebrew poetry and their use of parallelism.

G. Style of Poetry — Parallelism:

1. Hebrew poetry is not governed by a sense of rhyme.

There is no attempt to arrange every psalm into carefully measured stanzas though a psalm is sometimes divided by recurring refrains.

2. Their poetry has meter, but it is primarily a rhythm of sense. This is called parallelism.

3. In parallelism the lines are so arranged that the thought is expressed in different ways by repetition, amplification, contrast, or response.

4. Various types of parallelism:

a. ***Synonymous*** parallelism where the second line echoes or expands the first line with the same thought in different words.

b. ***Synthetic*** or constructive parallelism, where the second line adds a supplement or variation in thought to the first.

c. ***Analytical*** parallelism, where the second line states a consequence of the first line.

d. ***Antithetic*** parallelism in which the second line is in contrast to the first.

e. ***Tautological*** parallelism where almost identical words are used in both lines.

f. ***Cumulative*** parallelism where the thought grows in intensity through repetition to a grand climax.

H. Guidelines for Interpreting Psalms:

1. Always seek to determine the historical background of the psalm and become familiar with it.

2. Remember the Psalms are poetic in nature. Take into consideration the author's use of allegory, metaphor, personification and hyperbole. These must not be understood literally.

3. When reading, compare the parallel lines for clarification.
4. Notice the different types of psalms: meditation, prayers, praises, prophecies, and instruction.
5. Recognize that many psalms have a dual meaning applying first to the author and his personal circumstance and then prophetically to the Messiah and his kingdom.
6. Psalms must be interpreted in the light of the meaning of that day and culture. Do not attribute to them of old a knowledge and insight which they did not possess.
7. Read the Psalms devotionally and practically not only to learn the meaning, but to apply the lesson to your life.

I. Miscellaneous facts about Psalms:

1. Psalms is not arranged in chronological order.
2. The Psalter was the first portion of the Hebrew Bible to be produced on the printing press.
3. The Psalms are unlike all other scriptures in that in the others God is speaking to man, in the Psalms man is speaking to God.
4. The Hebrew scriptures (and Psalms) were divided into chapters and verses in 1445.
5. Psalm 119 is considered by many the greatest psalm of all.
6. In the fifth century, the Patriarch of Constantinople refused to ordain ministers who could not repeat the psalms by heart.

III. Classifications of Different Types of Psalms:

A. Psalms may be classified by their use of the divine names:

1. Book I uses Jehovah 272 times while Elohim is used but 15 times.
2. Book II uses Elohim 164 times and Jehovah only 30.
3. Book III uses Jehovah 44 times and Elohim 43 times.
4. Book IV uses Jehovah alone, 103 times.
5. Book V uses Jehovah 236 times and Elohim only once in reference to the living God.

B. Another grouping is:

1. National psalms which speak of the nation's joys, sorrows, triumphs and tragedies.
2. Nature psalms which declare God's glory as seen in nature.
3. Royal or Messianic psalms which sing the praises of Israel's coming Messiah.
4. Penitential psalms in which the writer confesses his sins and asks God's forgiveness.
5. Imprecatory psalms in which the author calls upon God to punish his enemies.
6. Alphabetic or acrostic psalms where the author so arranges his lines that each begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet (see Psalms 9, 10, 25, 119),
7. Miscellaneous psalms.

C. Yet another classification is:

1. Instruction (Psalms 1, 19, 39).
2. Praise (Psalms 8, 29, 93, 100).
3. Thanksgiving (Psalms 30, 65, 103, 107, 116).
4. Penitence (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).
5. Trust (Psalms 3, 27, 31,46, 56, 62, 86).
6. Distress (Psalms 4, 13, 55, 64, 88).
7. Aspiration (Psalms 42, 63, 80, 84, 137).
8. History (Psalms 78, 105, 106),
9. Messianic prophecy (Psalms 2, 16, 22, 24, 40, 45, 68, 69, 72, 97, 110, 118).

IV. The Headings or Inscriptions of the Psalms:

A. Value:

1.The headings of the psalms are very old (pre-dating the Septuagint), but they do not belong to the inspired text.
2.The inscriptions cannot always be relied on. Some are genuine and represent ancient traditions. Their value must be weighed and tested by the usual critical processes and the contents of the psalm.

B. The inscriptions are of three kinds:

1. Those which mark their musical or liturgical character.
2. Those which assign them to particular authors.
3. Those which designate the particular circumstances under which a psalm was composed.

C. Inscriptions explained:

1. ***Aijeleth hash-Shahar*** (Psalm 22), "the hind of the morning." An Eastern expression for dawn. Likely the name of a well- known tune to which the psalm was sung.
2. ***Alamoth*** (Psalm 46), "maidens." To be sung by female voices.
3. ***Al-tashheth*** (Psalm 57), "destroy not." Thought to be the first words of a vintage song to which this psalm was sung.
4. ***Gittith*** (Psalm 8), from the name Gath which means "wine press." It refers either to an instrument made in Gath or a vintage tune.
5. ***Jonath elem rehokim*** (Psalm 46), "The dove of the distant terebinths." The name of a tune to sing it by.
6. ***Leannoth*** (Psalm 88), "for singing."
7. ***Mahalath*** (Psalm 53), uncertain, perhaps "dancings" or "sickness," likely the name of the tune.
8. ***Muth-Labben*** (Psalm 9), "the death of a son," probably a tune,
9. ***Neginoth*** (Psalm 6), "stringed instruments" accompaniment.
10. ***Nehiloth*** (Psalm 5), "wind instruments" accompaniment.
11. ***Selah*** used 71 times. Probably a pause in the vocal part during an instrumental interlude.
12. ***Sheminith*** (Psalm 12), "the eights." Seems to denote the male voices, perhaps an eight-stringed instrument.
13. ***Shiggaion*** (Psalm 7), likely an excited wandering rhythm.
14. ***Shoshannim*** (Psalm 69), "lilies," instructions for singing the song.
15. ***Song of Loves*** (Psalm 45), a title to a marriage song.
16. ***Song of Ascents*** (Psalms 120-134), songs sung by pilgrims on their way to the great festivals at Jerusalem.
17. ***For the Chief Musician*.** Fifty-five psalms are dedicated to the choir leader of the temple.
18. ***Dedication of the House*** (Psalm 30), for the celebration when the ark was brought to Jerusalem.
19. ***Higgaion*** (Psalm 9:16), a musical note used with Selah.
20. ***Jeduthun*** (Psalm 39). A choir leader in David's day. Likely this refers to a mode of singing adopted by his choir.
21. ***Maschil*** (Psalm 32), probably means meditation or instruction.
22. ***Michtam*** (Psalm 16), uncertain, some think it means "golden."

V. Additional Psalms Found in the Old Testament:

A. The victory song of Moses when they crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-18).
B. Moses' farewell song (Deut. 32:1-43).
C. The song of Deborah when God rescued Israel from the Canaanites (Judges 5:1-31).
D. The song of Hannah when God gave her Samuel (I Sam. 2:1-10).
E. David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan (II Sam. 1:19-27).
F. David's song of deliverance (II Sam. 22:2-51).
G. David's last song (II Sam. 23:1-7).
H. Isaiah's song of the coming restoration from captivity (Is. 12:1-6).
I. Hezekiah's song of thanksgiving when he was spared from death (Is. 38:9-20).
J. Jonah's prayer from the belly of the fish (Jonah 2:1-9).
K. Habakkuk's hymn of praise (Hab. 3:1-19).
L. Jeremiah's lamentation.

VI. Theology of the Psalms:

A. We read the Old Testament now with our Christian illumination. We must remember, however, that the ancient Hebrews did not so read it. God chose to reveal the great doctrines of the faith to mankind in successive stages, beginning with the simple promises to Adam and Eve in Eden. This is called progressive revelation:

1. Progressive revelation is a progression from the partial and obscure to the complete and clear.
2. Never should it be considered as progress from truth to error.

B. The concept of a resurrection and future life in Psalms:

1. In Psalms it is a hope of that which may be, rather than a conviction of what shall be.
2. In Isaiah the hope grows clearer.

3. Ezekiel, in his vision of the dry bones, conceives of a resurrection.
4. Daniel asserts a resurrection in language that cannot be misunderstood.
5. From his time on it is a matter of undoubted Jewish faith. In his resurrection, Christ brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (II Tim. 1:10).

VII. Problem Areas in the Study of Psalms:

A. Some psalms are difficult to understand because we have no definite knowledge of their historical background.

B. The bitter imprecations of some psalms have been a stumbling block to many students:

1. "If we believe that the imprecatory passages are divine, that they belong to Him in whose hands are life and death, the load is lifted off and laid upon One who is strong enough to bear the burden of reproach" (Joseph Angus).
2. "... we are justified in saying that the imprecations in the Psalms, though springing from a righteous zeal for the glory of God, and not for any mere thirst of personal revenge, still are not such as a Christian can lawfully, in the natural sense, use now" (J. S. Perowne).

VIII. Value of the Psalms:

A. If you ask, what will I expect to find in the Psalms?, the answer is everything found elsewhere in the Old Testament.

B. "The Psalms are the epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purpose of devotion" (George Heme):

1. They are models of acceptable devotion.
2. They furnish God's people with a guide for emotional attitudes in facing the problems of life.
3. They provide additional insights into many of the historical narratives of the Old Testament.
4. They provide a penetrating insight into the nature of man.
5. Every great doctrine of the Bible is in some way dealt with in Psalms.
6. Every characteristic and attribute of God is found therein.

C. "The psalms of David will always be a mine of comfort to the needy and distressed, and a wellspring of hope for the downcast" (S. C. Yoder).

D. No book of the scriptures, excepting the gospels, has taken such a hold on the heart of Christendom.

E. Ambrose of Milan wrote, "Psalms are a kind of medicine for the salvation of man." "It is the benediction of the people, the praise of God, the thanksgiving of the multitude...the voice of the church, the harmonious confession of our faith."

F. The English martyr Hooker wrote, "Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found."

G. Probably no other book has so influenced the turning points in men's lives, given expression to their deepest experiences, and woven itself into the very fibre of their character as the Psalms.

H. The Lord himself died with the words of Psalm 22 on his lips.

I. Psalms is one of the most important Old Testament books because it reveals to us the religion of Israel in terms of the individual saint's experience.

J. They beautifully portray the prophetic history of our Lord; Psalms and the New Testament:

1. The New Testament writers quote from Psalms more than any other Old Testament book. There are 93 such quotes with additional allusions.
2. Of all Old Testament citations in the New Testament, which have Messianic content, nearly half are from the Psalms.

IX. The Use of Psalms in Christian Worship:

A. The Psalter was the hymnal of the ancient Hebrew temple, synagogue and early church.

B. Psalms were sung antiphonally in the early church:

1. At times the congregation sang the verses of the Psalms alternately in two choirs, one answering the other.
2. Sometimes the first half of the verse was sung by a single voice, and the other half by the entire congregation.

C. Psalms are hymns of worship:

1. Thanksgiving is the very life of the psalms.

2. Every psalm is a direct expression of the soul's consciousness of God.
3. Other scriptures have God speaking to man; in the psalms men are speaking to God.
4. "Here we can look into the hearts of all the saints" (M Luther).

D. Psalms have inspired some of the most noble hymns of the English language.

X. What Great Men Have Said About Psalms:

A. Luther called them "an epitome of the Bible."

B. John Milton: "They may he easily made to appear over all the kinds of lyric poetry incomparable."

C. Sir D. K. Sanford: "The poetry of the ancient Scriptures is the most superb that ever burnt within the breast of man."

D. Roland Prothero: "The Book of Psalms contains the whole music of the heart of man, swept by the hand of his Maker."

E. "The Psalms are a mirror in which each man sees the motions of his own soul."

XI. Recommended Tools for Study of the Psalms.

A. ***Exploring the Old Testament*** by W. T. Perkiser, for a general introduction to the book.

B. ***Clarkes Commentary*** by Adam Clark. See his 'Introduction and an outline study of each psalm.

C. ***The Book of Psalms*** by Stewart Perowne for an introduction to each psalm.

D. ***The Treasury of David*** by C.H. Spurgeon for homiletic treatment and practical lessons on each psalm.

E. ***The Psalms*** by W. Graham Scroggie. Excellent summary of each psalm.

XII. Simple Outline:

A. Book I which deals primarily with man, His origin his blessed state, fall and recovery (Psalms 1-41).

B. Book II which speaks of Israel's ruin, redemption and redeemer (Psalms 42-72).

C. Book III which speaks of God's sanctuary and its importance to men (Psalms 73-89).

D. Book IV which speaks of the earth which needs God's blessing (Psalms 90-106).

E. Book V which praises the word of God (Psalm 107-150) Notice that each section ends with an amen or hallelujah (praise ye Jehovah) except for the last section. It concludes with the 150th Psalm which itself is a doxology for its section, and the whole book.

BOOK I

Psalm 1

The Righteous And The Wicked Man Contrasted

Intro: This Psalm, was written by an unknown, but inspired author. Scroggie has noted several points of similarity between this and the second Psalm which is also anonymous. This has led him and others to theorize that the same author penned both. It presents a contrasting study of the righteous and the wicked man. It is classified as a wisdom psalm because it sets forth the advantages of serving God and the consequences of a life of evil. Most likely it was placed first in the collection because it provides a suitable introduction to all the rest. Perowne theorizes that if Solomon was chosen by God to assemble a collection of his father's psalms for the service of the Temple, he might have composed this song as a suitable preface to the whole. Interestingly, in some of the ancient Hebrew manuscripts it is not numbered, but treated as a prologue. Jeremiah seems to have drawn from the words and thoughts of this psalm in chapter 17:5-8 of his book. It has been described as an extended proverb. Solomon's observations in Proverbs 1:29-32 convey a similar lesson. Weiser describes it as, "a signpost, giving clear guidance regarding the way in which all Godfearing people shall conduct their lives." The words of Jerome regarding Paul's epistles aptly apply to this psalm, "It is short as to its size, but full of length and strength as to its matter." The message of this poem is as valuable for the modem Christian as it was for the Hebrew 3,000 years ago. "The Psalmist saith more to the point about true happiness in this short Psalm than any one of the philosophers, or all of them put together; they a did but beat the bush, God hath here put the bird into our hand" (John Trapp, 1660).

I. A Description of a Happy Man (1:1-3).

A. Negatively, the happy man (1:1):

1.**Walks** not in the counsel of the wicked;

2. Nor **stands** in the way of sinners;

3. Nor **sitteth** in the seat of scoffers.

a. Notice the progression of sin: walks, stands, sits with them.

b."Blessed" means happy.

(1). In the original, "blessed" is in the plural. Literally, "O the blessednesses of the man..." This emphasizes the abundance of God's blessings on the righteous soul.

c. This happiness is also for women.

B. Positively, the happy man (1:2):

1. Delights in the law of Jehovah.

2. He meditates on God's law constantly.

C. His happy state illustrated (1:3):

1. He is like a tree planted be a stream.

a. He is continually nourished and refreshed.

2. He is like a fruitful tree that is always productive.

3. He is like an evergreen that is always productive.

4. All that he undertakes in life prospers.

II. The Wicked Man's Plight Described (1:4-5).

A. The wicked person is not, blessed as is the righteous described above.

B. He is worthless as the chaff of the threshing floor (1:4).

1.He will be blown away and no one will care.

2.Consider the contrast: the righteous is as rooted and strong as a tree that can withstand the storm, while the wicked are as flimsy and helpless as the chaff of the threshing floor before the wind.

C. He will not stand in the judgment (1:5).

1. He will not stand acquitted or exonerated, he will stand condemned.

D. He will not be allowed to stand accepted among the congregation of the righteous.

1.Whether on earth or in heaven.

Conclusion: Jehovah knows and approves of the way of the righteous person; He also knows the way of the wicked and he shall perish for his sins.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Make it your lifetime resolution to neither walk, stand or sit with wicked scoffers.

B. The most productive time of your life will be that spent meditating on the Word of God.

C. Even the strongest, toughest, meanest sinner will not be able to stand in judgment.

D. Just as Jehovah's eye is on the sparrow, he knoweth the way of the righteous.

E. Beware of the temptation to scoff at things you do not understand or appreciated, especially if they are things related to the Word, the worship or the church of the Lord God.

Psalm 2

The Reign Of Jehovah's Anointed Son

Intro: The Psalms were the hymns of ancient Israel and the early church. Through them God taught heart- changing and age-lasting lessons to his people. Some of the ancient Hebrew manuscripts combine Psalms l and 2 while others count Psalm 1 as an introduction to the whole book and this psalm is numbered first. The literary style of this poem is "dramatic," the action being carried by different speakers. The author of this psalm is not here indicated, but Peter

and John attributed it to David (Acts 4:25-26).

The occasion: “A king of Israel, recently placed upon the throne and consecrated by the solemn rite of anointing to be Jehovah’s representative in the government of His people, is menaced by a confederacy of subject nations, threatening to revolt and cast off their allegiance” (Kirkpatrick). The author sees, “A sublime vision of the nations in revolt against Jehovah and his anointed, with the declaration of the divine purpose to maintain His king’s authority, and a warning to the world that it must bow to Him or perish” (Alexander). “This (psalm) rings with the tramp of gathering armies, and notes of lofty challenge addressed by the poet to the invaders of his country” (Perowne). “The poet encourages his countrymen by reminding them of the covenant made with David’s house, and predicts for their enemies a disastrous overthrow” (Perowne). This is the first of the Messianic psalms. They are often called “royal psalms.” Many Old Testament passages have dual applications. “At times, a Psalm relating to one of the natural kings shades into a description of the King of kings; at times a description of contemporary blessedness leads to a description of the greater bliss of the times of the Messiah” (Cartledge). Five times New Testament writers apply verses of this psalm to Messiah and His kingdom (Matt. 3:17; Acts 4:25-26; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5).

The ancient Jewish scribes acknowledged this psalm as Messianic. Later they denied this application. “In or, however, to keep to the literal sense, and that we may be able to answer the heretics (i.e. Christians), it is better to explain it of David himself...” (Rabbi Solomon Isaki Rashi). While it clearly refers to the hostility of the Jews and Romans against Jesus, “It may be said to have an ever-repeated fulfillment in the history of the church... a kingdom which in all ages has the powers of the world arrayed against it, and in all ages with the same disastrous result to those who have risen ‘against the Lord, and against His Anointed.” (Perowne).

“In 1538 John Lambert was burned to death at Smithfield, England by order of King Henry VIII. He had enraged the arrogant monarch by a remonstrance addressed to him, based on verse 10 of this psalm. As the flames engulfed Lambert, he lifted his fingers and cried out “None but Christ, none but Christ.”

This psalm will be best understood if it is viewed as a fourfold picture:
I. The nations raging against God and His Anointed One (vss. 1-3);
II. The Lord in heaven deriding them (vss. 4-6);
III. The Son proclaims the royal decree (vss. 7-9);
IV. Advice given to worldly kings to yield obedience to the Lord’s Anointed (vss. 10-12).

I. The Rage of the Heathen Against the Jehovah and His Son (2:1-3).

A. His question: Why do God’s enemies so hate him and his cause? (2:1-2).
B. Their sin is rebellion against God’s claim over them (2:3).
1. The early Christians saw this prophesy fulfilled in the raging opposition of their enemies (Acts 4:25-27).

II. A Portrait of the Lord Against Whom They Rage (2:4-6).

A. He reigns in heaven, superior to all of them (2:4).
B. He is amused and taunts them for their childish tantrums (2:4b-5).
C. In spite of all their raging, He will enthrone his Messiah over them (2:6).
1. Messiah would reign upon Mt. Zion.
2. The writer of Hebrews applies this to the Lord’s church (Heb. 12:22-23).

III. The Anointed King Recites His Heavenly Mandate (2: 7-9).

A. His relationship to Jehovah God in heaven (2:7).
1. He is God’s Son.
2.The writer of Hebrews applies this verse to Jesus (Heb. 1:5).
3. Notice the Psalm foretells that Messiah would be begotten of God (See John 3:16).
B. His endowment by the Father (2:8).
1. The nations of the world are his to rule.
C. His mission:
1.To break his enemies as a potter breaks a defective vessel (2:9-10).
2.New Testament writers apply this to Christ (Rev. 12:5).

IV. The Author's Admonition to Rebellious Rulers (2:10-12).

A. Be humble and receptive to God's decrees (2:10).
B. Serve Jehovah with fear and trembling (2:11).
C. Seek the favor of God's Son. To show their love and loyalty, ancient people kissed the hand of their sovereign.
D. Remember, you too will have to face Messiah in the Judgment (2:12a.). (See John 5:22).

Conclusion: "Blessed are all they that take refuge in him" (2:12b).

Lessons to Remember:

A. The nations of the earth still rage against the Lord and his anointed. For that they will pay a price.
B. For sinners to rage against Jehovah is like ants raging against a stone wall.
C. All of us who are of Gentile stock should be forever thankful that God gave us to His Son for an inheritance.
D. Let us be first in line to kiss the hand of our Lord in love, appreciation and reverence.
E. Never forget where your only safe refuge is located.

Psalm 3

A Song Of Unshaken Trust In Jehovah

Intro: This psalm was written by David. It is a lament, based upon the Absalom's rebellion when David had to flee from Jerusalem to avoid capture and death (II Sam. 15:12-14). David apparently had little or no advanced warning of the plot. The conspiracy was strong for " the people increased continually with Absalom." A messenger reported that "Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." Absalom's mother was pagan (II Sam. 3:3). He spent three years with his pagan grandfather in Geshur (II Sam. 13:37-38). Perhaps his heart turned from Jehovah to idols in this period. God, long before, had warned David that circumstances such as this would arise (II Sam. 12:10). He was now reaping the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba. This and the following psalm are closely related being alike in structure, circumstances and time. Some suggest they were composed at the same time, this one in the morning, that in the afternoon. They both reflect a common crisis and author.

The word "psalm" used in the title of the songs, here and elsewhere is from the Hebrew "***mizmowr***" which means a song with instrumental accompaniment. It "is applied to songs made up of short sentences, where many superfluous words are put away" (H. Ainsworth). "For the expression of sublime trust in God, this psalm is not surpassed in the Psalter" (Oesterley). When Martin Luther was en route to the city of Worms to meet the Roman Catholic authorities, a messenger came warning him of their plot to seize and kill him. The brave reformer answered, "Go and tell your master that even should there be as many devils in Worms (the city) as tiles upon the housetops, still I would enter it."

I. The Danger Confronting Him (3:1-2).

A. His rebellious adversaries were numerous (3:1).
    1. Large numbers followed Absalom (II Sam. 15:12-13).
B. His enemies said, "There is no help for *him* in God" (3:2).
    1.Their taunts were designed to discourage him from resisting their overthrow.
C. ***Selah*** signals a musical interlude. For singers, readers or hearers it meant, pause and reflect on this.

II. He Reflects On His Past Deliverances (3:3-4).

A. God had always been his faithful helper so he asks for continued protection.
B. God was his shield around him (3:3).
    1.To protect him from the darts of his enemies.
    2."About me" suggests complete protection, not merely partial as an ordinary shield might provide.
    3. To Abraham, God likened himself to a shield (Gen. 15:1).
C. God was "his glory," i.e. the source of his glory as king and warrior.

D. God was the "lifter up of his head."

1. He had elevated him from the sheepcote to the throne.
2. When he was knocked down, God had raised him to his feet.
3. He would preserve him now and restore him to his place of honor and authority.

E. God had heard and answered his prayers (3:4).

1.The imperfect tense suggests a habitual action of praying.

a. "As often as I cried, He answered me."

2."He answereth me out of his holy hill" which was Mt. Zion.

III. His Trust in the Face of Great Danger (3:5-6).

A. Trusting God for protection, he laid down and slept in peace.

B. "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people."

1. Like a child safe in its mother's arms, he rested in God.
2. Ten thousands is a "myriad" in Hebrew terminology.
3. "There is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few" (I Sam. 14:6).

C. "That have set themselves against me round about," as a besieging army.

IV. **His Prayer Upon His Deliverance (3:7-8).**

A. "Arise O Jehovah, save me..."

1. His enemies denied that God would do so, he calls upon Him to prove them wrong.

B. "Thou has smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone."

1. A blow to the cheek was to show contempt for...to insult.

C. "Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked."

1. His enemies surrounded him like a snarling pack of dogs. He asked God to render them powerless to harm him.

2. A toothless dog can do no harm.

D. "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah" (3:8).

1. He needed salvation from temporal, physical dangers.
2. We need salvation from destructive temptation and influences, from Satan's domination and control and from death.

E. His prayer for all of God's people (3:8b).

1. It is noteworthy that the besieged king still prayed for all of his people, even those in rebellion against him.

Lessons to Remember:

A. "God's answers are given more readily to the habit of prayer than to the single act" (Purkiser).

B. Those who wait upon the Lord will be rewarded.

C. Those with strong faith can sleep soundly, even in the face of imminent danger.

D. The right way can never be determined by a poll. Absalom had the mob but David had God on his side.

1. One with God is a majority.

E. "All the temptation of this world, and in hell too, melted together into one, are nothing when compared with the temptation to despair of God's mercy" (Martin Luther).

F. We must learn to pray for our enemies even as David did.

Psalm 4

The Life Of Trust

Intro: This psalm was written by David for the Chief or Director of the Sanctuary musicians. Fifty-one psalms are thus dedicated. It was to be sung with the stringed instruments. Five other psalms have this same instruction affixed. The Hebrews were authorized by God to use instruments of music in their tabernacle and temple worship (II Chron. 29:25-28). The New Testament gives no such authority for our worship. This and the previous psalm are companion devotions. The first a morning prayer and this an evening prayer. Both mention laying down to sleep (3:5; 4:8). Both

have four stanzas of two verses. Both are thought to reflect David's thoughts and emotions at the time of Absalom's rebellion. It is noteworthy that David does not call for vengeance upon his enemies, but hopes to turn their hearts to God and thus end their rebellion against his rule. It is filled with wonderful devotional thoughts. The night before Nicholas Ridley was to be put to death for Christ's sake (1555), his fleshly brother offered to stay with him. Ridley refused saying that he would go to bed and sleep as quietly as ever. "In peace will I both lay me down and sleep; for thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety." The next day, they chained him to a stake in the town ditch at Oxford. As the flames licked about his flesh, he cried out, "Lord, Lord, receive my spirit."

I. He Requests An Audience With God (4:1).

A."Thou hast set me at large" i.e., "Thou hast given relief when I was in distress" (Berkeley).
B. Have mercy on me.
C. Hear my prayer.

II. He Rebukes His Enemies (4:2-3).

A. Why do you seek to dishonor me?
1. Remember many of his own trusted leaders turned against him in the rebellion.
B. Why do you love vanity and seek falsehood (4:2)?
1. "Selah" likely means "mark this!"
C. Jehovah will protect me (4:3).

III. He Recommends A Better, More Profitable Course to Follow (4:4-5).

A. Stand in awe of God and sin not.
1. Live thus day by day and you can,
B. Commune with your hearts and be still when night comes.
C. Offer sacrifices of righteousness to God.
1. Asking forgiveness for your sin and rebellion.
D. Put your trust in him.

IV. His Confidence in God Declared (4:6-8).

A. Some may be skeptical (4:6a).
B. God will smile upon him (4:6b).
1.That is the meaning of the light of is countenance.
C. He will put gladness in his heart (4:7).
D. He will give him peace and safety (4:8).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Whatever else we ask for in prayer, let us always plead for God's mercy. Without it we would perish.
B. It would be better for us to die than to dishonor the glory of God.
C. "Be it good or bad, people will seek what they love" (Scroggie).
D. Whenever you come into the presence of Jehovah let it always be with reverence and awe for he is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:28-29).
E. All who rebel against Jehovah are doomed to fail.
F. In the quiet of night, our conscience will remind us of our failures or commend us for our faithfulness.
G. Pity those poor souls whose peace of mind depends on the material things they possess.
H. Bring an empty but receptive heart to God and he will fill it for you.
I. One of the great blessings of godliness is, "in peace (we) both lay.. ..down and sleep" (4:8).

Psalm 5

A Prayer For The Morning Sacrifice

Intro: This psalm is attributed to David. The contents suggest he was facing hostile enemies bent on his destruction. Many scholars thus identify it with Absalom's rebellion and the defection of many of David's trusted friends. It is his prayer for protection against his enemies. It is dedicated to the Chief Musician, i.e., the leader of the temple

singers. It was to be sung with "**Nehiloth**" which means accompanied by wind instruments. The author confesses that only by the loving-kindness of God can he hope to stand before him. Across the ages it has served as a morning prayer for pious souls (see vs. 3b).

I. His Earnest Entreaty For a Hearing (5:1-3).

A. "Consider my meditation." "A meditation" is, "an unspoken prayer or the low voice of brooding sorrow."

1. Compare Rom. 8:26-27.

B."In the morning will I order my prayer unto thee, and keep watch." The word "order" is used to the describe the action of the priests who laid the wood on the altar for morning sacrifices (Lev. 6:12).

II. His Confidence as a Righteous Man, That God Will Not Tolerate the Wicked (5:4-7).

A. God has no pleasure in wickedness, i.e., "the ungodly; those guilty of transgression."

B. "Evil shall not sojourn with thee."

1. Evil people cannot dwell in God's presence now or in eternity.

C. "The arrogant shall not stand in they sight," i.e., vain boasters.

D. God "hates all workers of iniquity."

E. He will destroy liars.

1. All liars will have their part in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8).
2. "Leasing" is an old English term for lying (5:6, King James Version).

F. He "abhorreth the bloodthirsty and deceitful man"

1. Abhorreth, means to loath, to despise, to hate.
2. Bloodthirsty" describes the murderer who has no scruples about shedding the blood of fellow human beings.

G. His confidence that God will accept his worship (5:7).

1. Only by God's "loving-kindness" or mercy could he be accepted.
2. The same is true with us today (Eph. 2:8-9).
3. "I will worship" means "prostrate myself on my face."
4. Jews worshiped "toward" God's temple, i.e., facing it from where ever they prayed.

H. The "holy temple" to which David went for worship was the tabernacle.

1. The permanent temple was not built until Solomon's day.
2. Old Testament writers sometimes called the tabernacle God's house (I Sam. 1:9, II Sam. 12:20).

III. His Request for God's Guidance as He Contended with His Adversaries (5:8-9).

A."Make thy way straight before my face" means level and unobstructed least he stumble or get lost (5:8).

B. His enemies described (5:9):

1. "No unfaithfulness in their mouths." Their words could not be trusted.
2. "Their inwards part is very wickedness," refers to their corrupt hearts.
3. "Their throat is an open sepulcher." As evil odors emanating from an open grave proves the corruption within, so their evil words revealed the filth within their hearts. An open tomb polluted those who came near it (Num. 19:11).
    a. Paul uses this passage to describe the sinfulness of mankind (Rom. 3:13).
4. "They flatter with their tongue." Flattery was their method of recruiting people against David's authority.
5. Notice that his enemies were evil through and through.

IV. His Imprecation

A. Find them guilty.

B. Confound their evil schemes.

1."Jehovah...ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel" (II Sam. 17:14).

C. Reject them and cast them out.

D. For they are rebellious against God.

1.Having rebelled against David, God's chosen king, they sinned against God.
2."He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye..." (Zech. 2:8).

V. His Prayer for God's People (5:11-12).

A. Let them rejoice for God's protection.

1."Thou defendest them," i.e., "cover them." The idea seems to be from the cherubim whose outstretched wings covered the mercy-seat.

B. For God will be their shield of protection (5:12b).

1.The large shield which protect the entire body, it was twice the size of the normal battle shield.

2. God described himself as Abram's shield (Gen. 12:3).

Lessons to Remember:

A. The first hour of the day is as the rudder to the ship, so begin your day with prayer.

B. Direct your prayers to God then "look up" expecting his reply.

C. The wicked are excluded from Jehovah's presence by their own actions; the godly are admitted by God's grace.

D. The righteous can rejoice in the punishment of the wicked for in it they see the vindication of those who have trusted God and God's righteousness in punishing the wrongs done.

E. Sin is not only opposed to God's will, it is repugnant to his righteous nature.

F. "There are two kinds of prayer: those expressed in words, and those unuttered longings which abide as silent meditations. Words are not the essence but the garments of prayer" (Spurgeon).

G. A man may lie without danger of the law of man, but he will not escape the law of God.

H. "There be many human anteaters that with their long tongues, covered with oily words, entice and entrap the unwary and make their game thereby" (Spurgeon.).

I. Joy is the privilege of all who live for Jehovah.

J. "In the same field where Absalom raised his battle against his father stood the oak that was his gibbet. The mule whereon he rode was his hangman...the hair wherein he gloried served as a rope to hang him" (William Cowper).

Psalm 6

A Plea For Help In Time Of Sickness

Intro: This is a psalm of David for the chief or director of the tabernacle/temple musicians. It is to be sung with stringed instruments such as harps and set to ***Sheminith***. This term may mean, "with men's voices" or "an eight stringed instrument." This psalm is the first of seven "Penitential Psalms." Others are 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143. David had been suffering from a long and serious illness which had brought him to the brink of the death. He, like most folks of his day, thought that all suffering was proof of and punishment for sin. Malicious enemies had been taunting him, implying that God was displeased with him. A more specific date and circumstance cannot not be determined. David cries to God for mercy and deliverance. "In the malice of his enemies he sees the rod of God's chastisement" (Perowne). It is a cry for deliverance from his pain, sorrow and chastisement rather than from sin.

I. His Anguished Cry for Relief (6:1-3).

A. He begs God, not to be angry with him (6:1).

1. "Hot displeasure" describes God's wrath.

B. He pleads for God's mercy (6:2a).

1. "Withered"means languishing.

2.To the Hebrews, if the bones were healthy all else was as well (Prov. 16:24).

C. He relates just how ill he is (6:2b-3a).

1. How long God, will you wait to respond? (6:3b).

II. His Earnest Plea for Deliverance (6:4-7).

A. He pleads with God to please save his life (6:4).

1. In the Old Testament the term "soul" most often means "life" (Gen. 2:7).

B. He feels his death is imminent (6:5).

1."Sheol" here means the grave.

a. A dead corpse in the grave knows or remembers nothing.

2. Old Testament saints knew little of life after death.
3. Life and immortality was revealed through the gospel (II Tim. 1:10).

C. He is sinking in despair (6:6-7).

1. "Mine eye wasteth away" describes them being red and swollen from much weeping.

III. His Renewed Faith and Assurance that God had Heard His Prayer (6:8-10).

A. He declares "Jehovah hath heard my supplication" (6:8-9a).

1.Thus he can brush aside the accusations and tauntings of his enemies.

B. God will grant his request for healing (6:9b).

C. To his enemies he says:

1.They will not have the pleasure of seeing him dead,

2.They will be put to shame and properly rewarded for their heartless cruelty (6:10).

Lessons to Remember:

A. The soul that is sore troubled can find healing and renewal only in Jehovah.

B. How long has it been since you shed a tear for your sins, for the lost souls about you or for the wounds inflicted on God's church?

C. Faith grows stronger when we remind ourselves that, "Jehovah will receive my prayer" (6:9).

D. In prayer, the godly man will find adequate strength to handle any criticism from those who oppose him.

Psalm 7

The Song Of A Slandered Saint

Intro: This psalm is attributed to David and is a song of lament or sadness. It is a prayer for justice for himself and his enemies. It is called a ***Shiggaion***, the meaning of which is obscure, but involves the idea of wandering which may suggest it was written while David was fleeing from Saul. The Mesoretic notations tell us it was written "concerning the words of Cush a Benjamite" This is the only mention of such a person. It might refer to an individual in the circle of King Saul who sought by slanderous charges to poison the king's mind against David (I Sam. 24:9). It has also been suggested that the name might be a coded name for Saul himself. The word Cush means "black" and Saul was a Benjamite (I Sam. 9:1-2). Thus he might have been referring to the black-hearted Benjamite, Saul. The occasion is indicated in verse 1 b. "Save me from all them that pursue me." David was pursued by Saul who would have put him to death (I Sam. 19:1). Ancient Jews sang this psalm in observance of the Feast of Purim.

I. His Confident Prayer (7:1-2).

A. He affirms his faith in Jehovah his God (7:1a).

B. He prays for deliverance from his enemies (7: l b).

C. Without divine help, they would surely destroy him.

1. Lest they tear his soul like a lion.

a. "Soul" stands for his person and life.

b. He feels like a sheep being stalked by a lion.

II. He Protests His Innocence (7:3-5).

A. He would gladly submit to the direst calamities if he was guilty (7:3-5).

1. If iniquity were found in his hands,

2. If he had rewarded evil to those at peace with him.

a. Twice David had actually spared King Saul's life when he could easily have killed him (I Sam. 24:1-22; 26: 6-12).

B. If he were guilty, left he enemy pursue and overtake him.

1. Let his enemy tread him down in the dust.

2. This alludes to combat where the dead and wounded were trampled under the feet of charging cavalry and advancing soldiers.

C. Selah, a musical interlude, allowing hearers time to reflect on the words.

III. His Plea For Vindication by God (7:6-10).

A. He calls upon God to:
1. Arise from his couch and,
2. Lift himself up against his raging enemies,
3. Awake and act in his behalf.
4. This is an anthropomorphic expression that pictures God as a warrior king, reclining and resting on his couch. At his servant's cry of distress, he arouses and saves him from his enemy.

B. "Let the congregation of thy people compass thee about" (7:7).
1. This pictures God as judge, after the fashion of an Oriental king, and his people gathered around him to see justice administered.

C. "And...return thou on high" (7:7b).
1. Having administered justice on earth, return to your heavenly throne.

D. When Jehovah judges,
1. The righteous will be acquitted, and
2. The wicked will be duly and appropriately punished (7:9).
3. As judge, God tries the minds and hearts, as no mortal judge can do (7:9b).
a. Compare Heb.4:12.
4. God is a shield (i.e. a defender) of the righteous; he saves them from the harm evil men would do unto them.

IV. God and Wicked Men Contrasted (7:11-16).

A. God is a righteous judge (7:11).
1. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25).

B. Sinners who do not repent will incur his wrath (7:12-13).
1. He is angry with sinners every day they continue to rebel against him.
2. His instruments of death are poised to smite them (7:12-13).
a. He keeps his sword whet, i.e., well sharpened.
b. His arrow of justice is upon the bowstring and the bow is already bent.
c. His arrows are fiery shafts, dipped in pitch and flaming.

C. The enemies of God described (7:14):
1. They conceive mischief as a woman doth a child.
2. They travail in pain to deliver their iniquitous plan.
3. They bring forth falsehood.
4. The picture is of a woman who greatly desires to give birth to her child. But the results are disappointing, for it is either a false pregnancy or a stillbirth. All of her wishing, waiting and pain are for naught.

D. The method of Jehovah's judgements upon the wicked (7:15-16).
1. They dig a pit for others and then fall into it themselves.
2. They plan violence against others but it rebounds on their own heads.
a. Pate (King James Version) is head.
3. "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands" (Ps. 9:16).
4. Felix, Earl of Wartenburg, swore at a banquet that before he died he would ride up to the spurs in the blood of Lutherans...but that very night he strangled and choked to death on his own blood.
5. Dr. Story, an ardent Catholic escaped from prison in England in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Arriving in Antwerp, Belgium, he went to work for the Duke of Alva, trying to intercept and confiscate books by English Protestants. An English merchant named Parker learned of Story and his mission and spread the rumor that he had stores of Protestant books on his ship. Story eagerly rushed to find and destroy them. Clue were dropped about that led him into the deepest hold of the ship. The crew then shut and locked the hatches on him and sailed away for England. There, Story was tried for treason, convicted and hung at Tyburn.

V. Conclusion: His Doxology:

A. He vows to give thanks to Jehovah and sing his praises.

B. He praises Jehovah Most High, i.e., Yahweh Elyon, the Supreme God.

Lessons To Remember:

A. Blessed is the soul that can take the most painful of events and turn them into a song praising Jehovah.

B. Martin Luther said, "David made Psalms; we also will make psalms, and sing them as well as we can to the honor of our Lord and to spite and mock the devil."

C. It is Satan's business to accuse and slander God's people. He always finds plenty of eager helpers.

D. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that raiseth against thee in judgement thou shalt condemn" (Is. 54:17).

E. Like David we too have an adversary that is like a roaring lion (I Pet. 5:8).

F. "Slander leaves a slur, even if it be wholly disproved."

G. "Tis a meanness most detestable to stab a good man in his reputation" (Spurgeon).

H. God not only detests sin, but is angry with those who continue to indulge in it.

I. Sinners may have many feasts, but no safe days" (Spurgeon).

J. "Anyone that begins to be godly, presently he must prepare to suffer reproach" (Augustine).

K. "The pain for sin answers the pleasure of sin" (Thomas Adams).

Psalm 8

What Is Man, To Be So Honored?

Intro: This Psalm was written by David. The background is unknown. It was dedicated to "the Chief Musician" of the temple symphony and set to the ***Gittith***. This term likely refers to an instrument of Gath or a melody originating there. The purpose of the writer is to "show that notwithstanding the vastness and magnificence of nature, man is greater" (Scroggie). He emphasizes that even though man is but a speck compared to the vast universe, God has appointed him lord of creation. "It is the marvel of God's choice of man to be the chief revelation of Himself and his representative on earth that is the theme of this Psalm" (Kirkpatrick). His "principal thought (is) not man's littleness, but his greatness" (Perowne). It has messianic applications. Its verses contain no specific prophecy of the coming Messiah, but their words beautifully describe his grandeur and glory and are thus applied to him by New Testament writers. This psalm is the first of several which celebrate God's praise and power as demonstrated in the natural world. "Nature is full of God; Nature is the theater of His Glory. All admiration of Nature, in a rightly turned heart, is a confession of that glory" (Perowne). Spurgeon calls this, "The Song of the Astronomer." Purkiser describes this psalm as, "a perfect gem of adoration, praise and worship." A. B. Rhodes calls it "Genesis I set to music." "Full of instructive beauty is the twofold thought of man's insignificance in the sight of God, and yet of man's dignity as God's highest creation." (Oesterley).

I. His Praise to God (8:1-2).

A. The greatness of his name and his glory.

B. Even little children praise him.

C. He will subdue his enemies.

II. He Ponders Why God has so Honored Man (8:3-5).

A. What is man?

1. This is life's second most important question.

a. Plato, in jest, said, man is "a featherless biped." A rival confronted him with a plucked chicken and said to the audience, "This is Plato's man." The Philosopher changed his description to, man is a "being in search of meaning."

b. Pascal called man a "reed, but a thinking reed."

c. Mark Twain opined that inasmuch as God created man at the end of the work week, He was tired and did not do a thorough job.

d. God, through David, depicts man as the king of His creation.

2. "Man" is thought by some to refer to Adam and "son of man" to us.

3. He uses two words for man, "***enosh***, i.e., frail man," and "***Ben-adam***, i.e., made from the earth."

4. "Nature is wonderful as the reflection of God's glory, but man is more wonderful still...Man's

dignity is the true marvel of the universe" (Kirkpatrick).

B. Man is but a little lower than God (8:5a).

1.The author of Hebrews applies this to Christ (Heb. 2:6-9).

2."The image of God in man is defaced but not destroyed (I Cor. 11:7)" (Kirkpatrick).

C. He is crowned with glory and honor (8:5b).

1."Man is a king. God has put a crown upon his had, and not only so, but has given him a territory and subjects" (Perowne).

III. Man's God-given Dominion (8:6-8).

A. Over all creation:

1. Domesticated animals,
2. Wild beasts,
3. Sea life (Compare Gen. 1:28).
4. This clashes with the thinking of the evolutionists and environmentalists who see man as only a "highly evolved animal" with no dominion over animal life.

B. Matthew Fountaine Maury (1806-1873) read of the "***paths of the seas***" and was inspired to search for, find and document the "sea lanes" now used by all mariners.

Conclusion: "O Jehovah, our Lord, How excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (8:9).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Never overlook the important lessons that can be learned from little children.

B. Strange how a Christian and an atheist can look at the same starry heaven and draw such different conclusions. The one sees the work of an all-wise, all-powerful Creator, the other sees the result of a cosmic explosion.

C. Take time to contempt the question, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (8:4). It will humble you and at the same time fill you with holy pride.

D. God gave us dominion over his earth, not to waste and spoil it, but to use it wisely for our benefit and then pass it on to the next generation for their use.

E. "Man is greater than matter, and the Eternal, greater than the temporal" (Scroggie).

F. "God became Man that man might be like God" (Scroggie).

G. Two things fill the mind with ever-renewed wonder and reverence.. .the star-lit heavens above me, and the moral law within me" (Immanuel Kant).

H. "Nature is wonderful as the reflection of God's glory, but man is more wonderful still" (Kirkpatrick).

I. "Man's dignity is the true marvel of the universe" (Kirkpatrick).

J. Apart from the Divine Creator the universe and all that is therein has no meaning or purpose.

K. "Man is what he is, because the Son of God has taken upon Him man's nature." (Perowne).

Psalm 9

A Song Praising God The Righteous Judge Of Both Saints And Sinners

Intro: This is a thanksgiving psalm. It is attributed to David and dedicated to the Chief of the Temple Musicians for use in the sacred service. It is set to Muth-labben, an obscure musician notation. The words mean, "upon the death of a son," and are most likely the name of the tune to which it was sung. It is framed on an acrostic pattern, with two lines assigned to each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Ancient tradition says that this and the following psalm were originally one. The LXX and Jerome's Latin Vulgate combine them. Note that psalm 10 has no notations before it which might imply it was originally joined to 9. Also the presence of the Selah at the end of 9 suggests something to follow. In this, he speaks of the wicked outside the Lord's nation, in 10 he addresses the wicked within the nation of Israel. This psalm has a special message for those in trouble (See vss. 9, 13-14), as well as for those perplexed by the apparent success of evil (See vss. 5-8 & 15-17). This psalm reflects the defeat of an unknown enemy. In 1552, five Protestant Bible Scholars of Lausanne were arrested, taken to Lyons, France and condemned to death by burning. On the way to the stake, they sang this psalm for all to hear.

I. His Holy Resolution (9:1-2).

A. To offer unreserved thanks to God (9:1a).

1. With his " whole heart"

2. In the Old Testament the term ***ieb***, rendered heart, means the essential self, the thinking, feeling and volitional self.

B. To joyfully praise God's mighty works (9: lb-2).

1. Because His works are marvelous.

2. He is the "Most High" God, Elyon.

3. True religion always results in a happy heart and joyful songs of praise to God.

II. He Praises the Judgements of God (9:3-8).

A. God's enemies melt in fear when in his presence (9:3).

B. God has maintained the author's cause (9:4).

C. He occupies the throne of judgement (9:4).

1. He judges righteously.

D. Enemy nations he has rebuked and destroyed (9:5-6).

1. His enemies are destroyed and their cities are overthrown.

2. He blotted out their name forever.

a. Like Sodom and Gomorrah.

b. The Roman Senate found emperor Elagabalus so depraved and contemptible that they had is name expunged from all public records.

E. Jehovah also reigns as king of all the world (9:7).

1. His reign is forever.

2. Note the contrast between the wicked nations that will be destroyed and forgotten and Jehovah who will reign triumphant forever.

III. The Righteous Have Complete Security in God (9:10-11).

A. He is their "high tower in times of trouble," i.e., their secure fortress.

B. His dwelling place is Zion.

1. That is, Jerusalem where his tabernacle and later his temple stood.

C. They that know him can be secure in him (9:10).

1. An intimate personal knowledge; not just knowing about God.

III. God's Vengeance is Complete (9:12-17).

A. He maketh inquisition for blood (9:12a).

1. "He who avenges (shed) blood is mindful of them (the wicked) (RSV).

2. "The avenger of death bears them in mind" (Harrison.

3. God calls all murders to account, no matter who they are or where they hide.

B. His plea for mercy (9:13).

1. Have mercy on me.

2. Behold my affliction.

a. Only God can lift him from "the gates of death."

b. He had been at death's door.

c. Sheol is likened to a strong prison whose gates only open inward.

C. His promise (9:14).

1.I will show forth all thy praise (9:14).

2.I will rejoice in thy salvation.

3.He would proclaim God's praise "in the gates" of the daughter of Zion.

a. The most public place, hence without reservation or shame.

D. He praises God for confounding the schemes of evil nations, by snaring them in the traps they set for their victims. (9:15-16).

1. Note how God through his providence overrules the plans of the wicked.

2. Sin brings its own punishment upon the evildoer.

E. "***Higgaion, Selah***"

1. A musical interlude for mediation on the thoughts thus expressed.

F. The destiny of wicked men and nations that forget Jehovah (9:17).

1.They will be turned into Sheol, the place of the dead, where hope has vanished.
a. It speaks of their destruction from this life, not the Gehenna of the New Testament.
2. Life beyond the grave was not fully revealed until Christ did so (See Luke 16:19-31 & II Tim. 1:10).

V. He Calls Upon God to Vindicate the Righteous and Judge the Wicked (9:18-20).

A. The needy and poor- are the righteous among them.
1. No man is blessed simply because he is poor.
a. The idea that the poor are automatically righteous and the rich, evil is a doctrine of modem liberalism, both political and religious.
B. He begs God to "arise" to action and,
1. Let not (sinful) men prevail against his people.
2. Let wicked nations be judged.
3. Make them fear God and fear to harm his chosen people.
4. Make them understand their human weakness.
a. ***Enosh***, frail man, meaning their mortality before the Almighty Jehovah.
C. Selah. Think about this as the music plays.

Lessons to Remember:

A. "We will fear men less if we fear God more" (Scroggie).
B. God still expects of us wholehearted worship and service (Matt. 22:37).
C. We are saved from the gates of death that we may praise God at the gates of his Jerusalem.
D. Wicked people, and nations forget God, but he does not forget them. They will taste his wrath.
E. With a correct understanding of God, men see themselves as grasshoppers (Is. 40:22).
F. This psalm is full of honey of comfort; spread it lavishly on your bread" (Scroggie).
G. They who truly know Jehovah will honor him (vs. 10).
H. Prayer is a haven to the ship wrecked man, an anchor to them swept by the storm, a staff to the limbs that totter, a mine of jewels to the poor, medicine for those who are sick and a preventive for those who are well.
I. Sin allures us with promises of pleasure and profit, but it pays us with the wages of death, torment and destruction.
J. Wickedness originates in hell. Those who embrace it will accompany it back to its own place.
K. Idols are worshiped with shrieks of pain and dying groans, but Jehovah wants holy mirth and sanctified gladness.
L. God rebukes before he destroys men or nations. But when one leaves him no choice, he smashes them into oblivion.
M. We are never quite sure how earthly courts will decide a case, but the Judge of heaven will always do what is right (Gen. 18:25).
N. Halfhearted religion is really no religion at all.
O. The avenging God will search out and punish every evil soul that sheds the blood of innocent victims (Rom. 12:19).

Psalm 10

A Prayer For The Overthrow Of The Wicked

Intro: Like the previous psalm, the last section this poem (vss. 12-18), is framed on an acrostic pattern, with two lines assigned to each of the final four letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Ancient tradition says that this and the previous psalm were originally one. The LXX and Jerome's Latin Vulgate combine them. Note that this psalm has no notations before it which might imply it was originally joined to 9. Also the presence of the ***Selah*** at the end of 9 suggests something to follow. In nine, the author speaks of the wicked outside the Lord's nation, in this he addresses the wicked within the nation of Israel. Although the author of this psalm is not stated, it is almost certainly the work of David. Those psalms without indication of authorship are called "orphan psalms." The background is not revealed, but it reflects a situation where the author is in serious trouble, under heavy attack by his enemies. He asks God to punish his enemies. Such a prayer is called an "imprecation". The theme of this song is the need for Divine

assistance in the face of oppression and persecution by the wicked. Martin Luther wrote that this and other psalms presents "a perfect image and representation of iniquity." Augustine and his disciples understood it to refer to anti-christ.

I. He Feels God Has Abandoned Him (10:1).

A. He feels he is left to stand alone in his conflict.

1. "Why standest thou afar off' like an idle spectator with no interest in what was occurring.

B. Our feelings about the attention or actions of God are not necessarily the reality of the case. God's ways are not our ways (Is. 55:8).

II. A Portrait Of Those He Was Up Against (10:2-11).

A. They were proud (10:2):

1. Domition, Emperor of Rome, claimed to be a divine god. He persecuted the Christians, more than any others, when they refused to worship his image and confess his lordship.

2. "Pride is a vice which cleaveth so fast unto the hearts of men, that if we were to strip ourselves of all faults one by one, we should undoubtedly find it the very last and hardest to put off' (Richard Hooker).

B. Boastful (10:3).

1. The wicked were not only engaging in evil conduct, but boasting of it.

2. They were confident that God would do nothing about their wickedness.

C. Skeptical about God's existence or his ability to do anything for their victims (10:4-5).

1. We call such an attitude, "practical atheism."

D. Arrogant (10:6).

1. It is not unusual for hardened sinners to act this way until they are faced by death.

E. Profane and deceitful (10:7).

1. "Under his tongue" suggests that his words do not mean what they appear to say; double tongued.

F. Like predatory beasts (10:8-10).

1. "Lurking places" would be in dark alleys, or abandoned buildings from whence they could attack their victims by surprise.

2. "His eyes are privily set against the helpless" means he secretly observes them, watching for an opportunity to strike.

3. "He croucheth" like a lion stalking his prey.

G. Defiant of God (10:11). "God hath forgotten...he will never see it."

1. This is the hope of every rebellious soul.

III. His Prayer For Deliverance (10:12-15).

A. Awake and remember the poor victims (10:12).

1."The poor" are blessed, not because of their economic status, but because they are faithful to God.

B. Remember the wicked man's mischief and spite (10:13-14).

C .Break his evil power (10:15).

1. To break the arm of the wicked means to destroy his power to do evil and harm to others.

2. "Seek out his wickedness till thou find none" is a proverbial way of saying pursue him and so destroy him that no trace will be left of him.

IV. His Confidence in God's Deliverance (10:16-18).

A. "Jehovah is King for ever and ever" (10:16).

B. "Jehovah has heard the desire of the meek" (10:17).

C. "The man of the earth" is rendered "mortal man" by Moffatt (10:18).

1.The "fatherless and the oppressed" are those who are weak and defenseless in the face of wicked oppressors. They especially need God's help and protection.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Not only are we not to oppress the poor, we are to come to his rescue and lend him a helping hand.

B. Because of his sins, the wicked man hopes there is no God. What a shock awaits him at death!
C. No matter what may be the current, prevailing political wind, “Jehovah is King for ever and ever” (10:16).
D. Light is never so welcome as in the darkness of night.
E. This Psalm is a valuable remedy in those dark hours of the soul when we feel that God has forgotten or forsaken
F.“Cursing men are cursed men” (John Trapp).

Psalm 11

The Answer Of Faith To The Advice of Fear

Intro: This is a psalm of David, dedicated to the Chief Musician of the Temple. The theme is based upon an incident when the author’s life was imperiled and the situation truly desperate. Wickedness was in the ascendancy. His advisors counseled flight to the hills, but David refused, being confident that God would deliver him. This reflects either his persecution by King Saul or the attempted coup by Absalom. The latter seems the most likely. When John Welsh and his fellow-captives were summoned from prison in Blackness, Scotland, to appear at court, they sang this psalm as they walked through the night to their judgment. As they languished in a dark, damp dungeon, Lady Melville wrote to encourage them saying, “Be thankful you are in the "darkness of Blackness, and not in the blackness of darkness.”

I. The Suggestion of His Faint-hearted Friends (11:1-3).

A. His affirmation of faith (11:1a).
B. The advice he received (11 lb-3).
1. “Flee as a bird to your mountain.”
a. We would say, “Head for the hills.”
2. Your enemies are plotting your death (11:2).
A. Their bows were strung, with arrows in place.
B. They were looking for any opportunity to assassinate him (11:2b).
3. David saw their advice as a temptation to doubt God’s protection. “How say ye to my soul?” (11:1b).
C. The basis for their urgent advice (11:3).
1. “If the foundations be destroyed...”
A. The state or society is likened to a building; the king and his advisors to supporting pillars. If they are undermined and brought down, there is nothing that we can do.
B. The civil foundation of a nation is its laws and constitution. If that is uprooted and cast aside what hope is there for an equitable and just settlement of strife?
2. What can the righteous do?
A. His timid friends were saying, “The situation is hopeless, there is nothing we can do but flee.”

II. The Grounds For David’s Confidence (11:4-6).

A. Jehovah is in his holy temple.
1. Enthroned in heaven
2. We have an old hymn entitled, **“The Lord is in His Holy Temple.”**
B. He is omniscient.
1.“His eyes behold”...i.e., a discerning, penetrating gaze.
2.“ His eyelids try the children of men.”
. a. “His eyelids try” as one narrows his eyes when carefully observing something.
b. “Try” is a metaphor for refining ore (Job 23:10).
3. Jehovah never slumbers or sleeps, nothing escapes him (Ps. 121:3-4).
C. He is judge of all “the children of men.”
1. He tries and separates the wicked and the righteous (11:5-7).
D. Upon the wicked God rains snares.

1. To entangle them so they cannot escape the fiery judgements he sends.
2. Fire, brimstone (sulphur) and burning winds (from the desert) will be their portion (11:6); like he sent on Sodom and Gomorrah.
3. Their portion is burning wind, but the Lord is David's portion (Ps. 16:5).

III. His Affirmation of Faith (11:7).

A. Jehovah is righteous. That is the essence of his character.
B. He loveth righteousness, i.e., right doing.
1. Compare Is. 33:15-16.
C. The upright will one day behold his face.
1.This is their reward for faithfulness.
2.They will be in his presence.
a. Matt. 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."
b. Rev. 22:4, In heaven, "His servants...shall see his face."

Lessons to Remember:

A Faith is more valuable than flight.
B. Advice that is earthbound and time-limited we must reject.
C. Not the righteous, but the wicked have need to fear.
D. The short sighted and cowardly asks, What is safe? The man of faith asks, What is right?
E. When the moral spiritual foundations of society are destroyed what are we to do? We look to God for protection during the ensuing storm.
F. The foundations of a society or nation may be demolished, but the firm foundation of God standeth fast and sure (II Tim. 2:19).
G. Sinning times have ever been the saint's praying times" (William Gurnall).
H. No snare can hold us so fast as our own sins.

Psalm 12

A Plea For Help Against The Treacherous

Intro: This also is a psalm of David, dedicated to the Chief Musician. It is set to ***Sheminith*** which means "eighth" and may refer to an eight stringed harp. It may mean to be sung by bass voices. It is classed with the "wisdom psalms." It was composed during a time of national moral, ethical and religious collapse. It was an age of universal hypocrisy, dissimulation, untrustworthiness. David encountered just such a situation while serving in Saul's court. (Compare I Sam. 26:19, 23:11 and 23:19ff). Note the three distinct voices in this psalm: The psalmist (vs. 1-3), the wicked (vs. 4) and the Lord (vs. 5). Spurgeon called it, "Good Thoughts for Bad Times." On Aug. 12, 1593, the Tobie, a ship of 250 tons, carrying 50 men, ran aground on the Barbary Coast. She broke up so fast the men could only climb up into her shrouds. While the waves did their destructive work, they with doleful hearts sang the 12th Psalm, "Help Lord, for the godly man perisheth." They fully expected to perish. By the time they reached the fourth verse, the waves quietened and the 12 survivors swam safely to shore, a quarter mile away.

I. His Desperate Prayer (12:1-2).

A. "Help (me) Jehovah."
1. No other helper was adequate for the problem at hand.
B. The situation he faced (12:lb-2).
1. "The godly man ceaseth"
a. Martin Luther rendered this the "amen-folk."
b. Perhaps they had been driven out,

c. Or killed.
d. Or they may have defected to the camp of wickedness.

2. This description is hyperbolic.
    a. In his haste, David concluded that all men were liars (Ps. 116:11).
3. "The present times always appear to be peculiarly dangerous, because they are nearest to us."
4. Falsehood was the norm among the people (12:2).
    a. They spoke with deceptive...
    b. Flattery and,
    c. With double hearts. One could never be sure just what a person meant, or if he could be believed.
        (1). A double minded man is unstable in all his ways (James 1:8)
    d. Honesty was virtually unknown.

II. His Confidence That God Would Punish the Arrogant (12:3-4).

A. His prediction: Jehovah will cut them off.
B. Their boasting would be punished. They were insolent braggarts who said:
1. "With our tongue we will prevail" (12:4a).
    a. Courtiers used lying flattery to advance personal agendas and interests
2. "Our lips are our own" (12:4b).
    a. They failed to understand that the creature's body belongs to the Creator (I Cor. 6:19-20).

3. "Who is lord over us" (12:4c)?
    a. No one can hold us accountable for what we say.
    b. Compare Pharaoh's statement (Ex. 5:2).
4. In all of three cases they were mistaken.

III. God Promises to Respond to His Prayer (12:5-6).

A. "Now will I arise," saith the Mighty God.
B. "I will set him in the safety he panteth for."
1. Like a chased animal fleeing, pants for the safety of his den.
C. God's promise is genuine and can be relied upon (12:6).
1. His words are as pure and valuable as refined silver.
2. "Purified seven times" means completely and totally reliable.

IV. His Affirmation of Faith (12:7-8).

A. God will preserve him from that wicked generation.
B. A generation where the wicked boldly walked about as on parade,
1. And vileness was established in high places.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Nothing moves a father like the cries of his children.
B. The message of this psalm is an ancient portrait of modem America.
C. God cannot and will not tolerate flattery and pride.
D. A flatter is a beast that bites while smiling (Sir Walter Raleigh).
E. A man had better be among lions than liars" (Spurgeon).
F. Every generation has a prevailing spirit, his was dishonesty and lying; ours is that plus unrestrained lust and violence.
G. Nothing makes a better disguise for wickedness than religion.
H. When the wicked are honored with high office, they foster vice on every hand.
I. None are so detestably domineering as the little creatures who creep into office by clinging to the great" (Spurgeon).
J. If we wear the holy name Christian, we must speak the truth and lie not (Rom. 9:1).
K. Many a time the righteous will stand alone, keeping watch against a world of wickedness.

Psalm 13

An Urgent Plea For Help In Affliction

Intro: This is a psalm of David and is dedicated to the Chief Musician of the House of God. It is a lament and a petition for divine help. There is no hint as to the particular occasion that prompted this hymn to be written. It seemed to the author that God had forgotten him. His endurance was well-nigh spent. He desperately needed God's help to survive. It is the story of a soul's journey from self to God (Scroggie). From the darkness of despair, by prayer, the author finds wonderful hope of deliverance. It describes those dark nights of the soul which all will sooner or later experience. Our hymn, "**Count Your Many Blessings**," reflects many thoughts of this psalm. In the 1600s John Philpot and six other brethren were for a long time imprisoned in the coal-house of the bishop of London. The bishop sent for John and ask him "why they were so merry in prison?..singing ...rejoicing in your naughtiness, whereas you should rather lament and be sorry." Philpot replied, "My lord, the mirth which we make is but in singing certain Psalms...for we are in a dark comfortless place and therefore we thus solace ourselves." Later he wrote, "though my lord's coal house be very black, yet it is more to be desired of the faithful than the Queen's palace...Believe me, there is no such joy in the world, as the people of God have under the cross...Our enemies do fret, fume, and gnash their teeth at it." (Samuel Clarke).

I. His Questions of Despair (13: 1-2).

A. How long, O Jehovah?

1. Must I wait forever for your response to my calamity?
2. This same question was asked by the martyred saints (Rev. 6:10).
    a. The answer is be patient (Rev. 14:12).

B. How long will you hide your face from me?

1. By not answering his prayer.
2. God never forgets. Only our impatience makes us imagine such.
3. Isaiah 49:15 asks, "Can a woman forget her sucking child?... yea these may forget, yet will not I forget thee."

C. How long must I take counsel in my soul?

1. Doubting, wondering why God has not responded. What will be the end of all of this?
2. Take counsel, may be translated, "bear this pain."

II. His Request for Divine Help (13:3-4).

A. Consider me O Jehovah.

B. Answer me, O my God.

C. Lighten mine eyes.

1. The eyes of those who are dying, are often dull and fixed.
2. He felt death overtaking him.
3. Restore the brightness to my weary eyes.
4. Lest I sleep the sleep of death" (13:3b).
    a. This verse is used by those who believe the soul sleeps in death.
    b. These are figurative, poetical words, not to be taken as doctrinal pronouncements.
    c. Universally, men describe the bodies of the dead as sleeping.
        (1). This is called the phenomenal use of the words because the dead do appear to us to be sleeping.
        (2) Knowledge of life beyond death was not fully known until it was reveal by Christ (II Tim. 1:10; Luke 16:19-31).

D. Do not allow my enemy the privilege of seeing me defeated and destroyed. (13:4).

1. This prayer matches the four points of his earlier complaint.
2. "When I am moved" means "overthrown" (Berkley).

III. His Song of Faith and Hope (13:5-6).

A. He found his strength by trusting God's mercy (13:5).

1. Like Job, who in his great suffering said, "though he slay me, yet will I trust him" (Job.13:15).

B. He rejoiced in the salvation God provided him (13:5b).
C. He sang praises to Jehovah (13:6).
1. "While Satan rages and wars about him, he...sings quietly his little Psalm" (M. Luther).

Lessons to Remember:
A. "Hope despairs, yet despair hopes" (M. Luther).
B. How swiftly our joys seem to pass, and how long our sorrow seem to last.
C. Prayer needs not be long to be powerful.
D. Rather than ask if Jehovah has forgotten us, we should ask, "have we forgotten Him?"
E. Trusting while waiting for God's answer tempers the steel of our faith.
F. If our enemies rejoice over our misfortunes, their joy will be short lived.
G. A song in the heart makes the sorrows and disappointments of life pass by more quickly.

Psalm 14

On The Universal Foolishness And Wickedness Of Men

Intro: This is a psalm of David. It is dedicated to the Chief Musician, that is the Master of the Sanctuary musicians. This dedication is posted in the heading of 53 psalms. Psalm 53 is almost identical to 14. The 14th uses the name "Jehovah" (see vs. 4b); the 53rd uses the term Elohim for God. It reflects a time of national oppression. There are no hints as to a more specific situation or date for its composition. The style of the poet is "dramatic." Note that this song has but little praise of God in it, yet the Holy Spirit judged it suitable for the worship of God's people. The early church sang these psalms in their worship. Following the example of the Psalter, our hymns of worship can include not only songs of praise, but those doctrine, meditation, prayer, exhortation and instruction The author depicts a most deplorable state of affairs, a state of general corruption into which great numbers had fallen because of their unbelief. The first three verses of this psalm are used by Paul in his letter to the Romans to describe the depravity of first century society (Rom. 3:10-12). Of this psalm Ewald wrote, "It would scarcely be possible for a great truth to be sketched in fewer or more striking outlines."

I. A Description of Unbelievers (14:1).
A. "Fool" The Hebrew word *"**naba**"* suggests a man with a withered soul.
1. He is like a tree whose sap has ceased to flow.
2. Fool here does not speak of mental limitations, but of moral perversity (Comp. Is. 32:5-7).
B. He says, "No God for me!"
1. Rom. 1:28.
C. He is corrupt.
1. This description of the depravity of man is reminiscent of the condition in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:12-13).
2."Here we are shown that universal corruption is due to the denial of God" (Scroggie).
3. The picture he uses is that of milk or leaven that has spoiled and become putrid.
D. His actions are abominable.

III. God's Perception of Mankind (14:2-3).
A. God observes every man's life (14:2a).
1. While fools are denying his existence, God looks down on them from heaven, taking note of their every move and determining their judgment.
2. He looks down on mankind as a watchman from his tower.
B. He searches for those who want to please him (14:2b).
1. "The deep and universal corruption of mankind is traced to its source in their failure to seek after God" (Kirkpatrick).
C. None can be found (14:3).
1. This is a hyperbolic (See vs. 5b).
a. There has always been a righteous remnant (Compare Rom 9:27).
2. "The whole (of the race) has apostatized; together they have putrefied..." (Alexander).
3. "They are...become filthy" literally means spoiled like soured milk.

D. Some ancient manuscripts add three additional verses here. They may have been taken from Paul's citation in Romans 3:13-18. Which reads as follows:

"Their throat is an open sepulcher:
With their tongues they have used deceit:
The poison of asps is under their lips:
Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:
Their feet are swift to shed blood:
Destruction and misery are in their ways;
And the way of peace have they not known:
There is no fear of God before their eyes."

1. This arrangement is found in the Septuagint. These lines are taken from other Old Testament scripture.
2. Textual research has demonstrated that they were not part of the original Hebrew text.

III. His Confidence In God's Judgment (14:4-6).

A. Sinners should realize their doom (14:4a).

B. Their great crimes were persecuting the righteous and refusing to honor Jehovah.

1. His general description of mankind's wickedness is here replaced with the specific charge of persecuting the saints of God.
2. "Hatred of God and corruptness of life are the motive forces which produced persecution" (Spurgeon).
3. Just as they regularly consumed their meals, they regularly consumed the righteous with oppression and persecution.
    a. As they felt no shame in eating their meals they felt no shame in oppressing God's people.

C. He looks back on past judgments of the wicked (14:5a).

1. Some think this is an allusion to the fear that struck the Egyptians when they saw God's protection of Israel and his judgements on themselves (Kirkpatrick).
2. "The end result of folly is great fear" (Purkiser).
3. "There were they in great fear." "There, where they denied God and hectored against his people...these very loud-mouthed, iron-handed, proud-hearted Nimrods and Herods, these heady, high-minded sinners-there were they in great fear" (Spurgeon).

D. God is with the righteous (14:5b-6).

1. They "put to shame the counsel of the poor," i.e., they had scorned or derided them for looking to Jehovah for protection and deliverance.
    a. They badgered them asking, "What can your God do for you now?"
2. "Though fools themselves, they mock at the truly wise as if the folly were on their side" (Spurgeon).

IV. His Closing Prayer (14:7).

A. Oh that Jehovah would come forth to save his people.
In Hebrew thought, Zion, the place of God's sanctuary, was poetically considered to be his dwelling place.

1. "Oh that Jehovah, from his throne in Zion, would grant salvation to his people, by revisiting them in their captive and forsaken state..." (Alexander).
2. "This is not the language of sad doubt but of glad assurance" (Scroggie).
3. The author began his song with a portrait of a fool and now ends with that of the hope of an optimistic believer.

B. What a day of rejoicing that will be.

Lessons to Remember:

A. The atheist is the preeminent example of a fool.

B. Sinners, by their militant atheism, seek to destroy the God whom they hate.

C. The unbeliever needs to see his soul as God does. It is like the shriveled, withered fruit on a barren tree.

D. With all their elitist attitudes and posturing, proud atheists need to remember that the least gnat or the most primitive worm in the earth is a living demonstration that there is a Creator who made them.
E. There are folks who regularly occupy church pews who by their way of life demonstrate that they are "practical atheists."
F We must see sin and unbelief as God does. To him it is a filthy thing (14:3).
G. "All history reeks with terrible evidence of human corruption" (Spurgeon).
H. The atheist is not nearly so intelligent as he believes himself to be. He looks at the many effects of the cosmos and sees no Cause; he contemplates a sublime law, but sees no Lawgiver; He observes motion but sees no Mover; he lives in time but cannot admit eternity; he sees creative beauty but cannot acknowledge the creative Artist. No matter how well credentialed he may be, he is a fool!
I. "The life shows what the thought of the heart is" (Perowne).
J. Anytime your troubles or your enemies are multiplying, pray to God for rescue and deliverance.
K. Injuries inflicted upon God's people are inflicted upon Him and will be recompensed.
L. The ghost of past sin is a terrible specter to haunt any man, and though unbelievers may boast as loudly as they will, a sound is in their ears which makes them ill at ease" (Spurgeon).
M. Zion, the city and the sanctuary, could not of itself save them. It was Jehovah, the king of Zion, who could save them. So it is today. The church cannot save us, but the Christ of the church who can and will save those who seek refuge in him.
N. Even in its darkest hour faith can sing its song of triumph.

Psalm 15

Who Is The Friend Of God?

Intro: This is a psalm of David. It is one of some 30 which are described as "liturgical" psalms, i.e., songs intended for public worship. Note its similarity to Psalm 24. We classify this as an "ethical psalm. The message of this psalm is the "necessity of moral purity as a condition of the divine protection" (Alexander). In the Law, Moses set for 613 commandments one had to keep to be righteous before God. David lists eleven. Isaiah cites six (33:15); Micah three (6:8) and Habakkuk one (2:4). Christ summed up man's duties in two commandments (Matt. 22:37-39). This does not mean that the other commands were unimportant, but that if we met the demands of the summaries, we would have no trouble meeting the others. Many believe this psalm was written to be sung when the Ark was carried up to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:12-19). In its original setting the author asks what kind of man would be qualified to serve as a priest in sanctuary of God on Mt. Zion. The ancient Jews sang it on the first day of the week. Ps. 15 has been called the Gentleman's Psalm. It is a portrait of the man who God accepts. It is a profile of a citizen of Zion. "The Epistle of James is the New Testament expansion of, and comment upon, this Psalm" (Perowne). In olden times the Scots sang psalms as they waited by the deathbed of their loved ones. John Wilson notes that "It was an old custom in Scotland that the ransomed of the Lord returned and came to Zion with songs" (Scroggie).

I. Who Can Dwell With God? (15:1).

A. This is the most important question in the world?
1. It is tantamount to "What must I do to be saved?"
2. "Thy holy hill" is Mt. Zion where the tabernacle and later the temple stood.
3. This question is as valid and pertinent today as 3,000 years ago when David asked it.

B. To dwell with suggests the idea of being at home, a member of a household; a permanent member of a family.

II. God's Reply (15:2-5).

(The answer is, none but those of integrity, just and truthfulness).
A. He that walks uprightly (15:2a).
l."Walk before me, and be thou perfect' (Gen. 17:1).
B. And works righteousness (15:2b).
1. Literally "to be straight" according to the rule (Purkiser).
C. Speaks truth from the heart (15:3a).
1. With utter sincerity.

2. “God desirest truth in the inward parts” (Ps. 51:6-7),

D. Does no evil to his friend (15:3:b).

E. Repeats not slander against his neighbor (15:3c).

1. “Backbiteth.” “The Hebrew word signfieth to play the spy” (George Downame).

2. Of all the creatures God made, only man is capable of harming his neighbor with his words.

F. Despises reprobates (15:4a).

1. “A reprobate (is) one who is not good metal, but worthless dross (Jer. 6:30)” (Kirkpatrick).

G. Honors God-fearing people (15:4b).

H. Honors his oaths and pledges (15:4c).

1. “He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not” (15:4c)

I. Refuses to exact interest from his Hebrew neighbor (15:5a).

1. See Deut. 23:20.

J. Refuses bribes for false testimony against the innocent (15:5b).

1. “Thou shalt take no bride: for a bribe blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the words of the righteous” (Ex. 23:8).

III. His Reflection: “He that doeth these things shall never be moved” (15:5c).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Our chief goal in life should be to dwell with Jehovah in his tabernacle.

B. Living our life on earth in God’s church is preparation for living with Him in eternity.

C. Righteousness consists not only in what we do but also in what we refuse to do.

D. It is a mark of true character when a man swears to his own hurt and changes not (15:4).

E. If you want to live, so as not to be moved by the pressures and storms of life, plant your feet firmly on the Word of God.

F. Any man or woman can dwell with Jehovah in his house, but only by submitting to the law of Jehovah.

G. It is the prerogative of the Master of the house to set the terms on which he extends hospitality to his guests.

H. Only the upright can be right in the eyes of Jehovah.

Psalm 16

A Song Praising The Blessed Heritage Of The Godly

Intro: This is a psalm of David. It is identified as a ***michtam***, one of six so labeled. The word means, “golden” and seems to indicate that these are especially precious hymns, worthy of preservation. It is Messianic. Verses 8-11 are applied by Peter to Christ’s resurrection (See Acts 2:25ff). A comparison of this psalm with I Samuel 26:19 indicates that it may have been inspired by David’s experiences in the wilderness of Ziph when he was pursued by Saul. To the king he said, “they have driven me out this day from the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, ‘Go serve other gods.’” In this song, he expresses his delight in Jehovah, who was his portion in life and deliverer in death. The hymn, “**Thou My Everlasting Portion**” is based on vs. 5. “This psalm is appropriate to the whole class of pious sufferers, of which Christ is the most illustrious representative” (Alexander).

I. He Looks Up to God And Prays (16:1-2).

A. “Preserve me, 0 God,” i.e., guard me as bodyguard does his master.

1. Job calls God the Watcher or Preserver of Men (Job 7:20).

2. Jesus prayed, “Holy Father keep them in thy name, which thou has given me” (John 17:11).

B. He had always confessed and owned Jehovah as his Lord.

1. Jehovah (Yahweh, is the personal name of God).

2. Jehovah was his ***Adonai***, i.e., his Master, Lord or Ruler.

B. He “had no (source) of good beyond” Jehovah.

1 . The King James Version is obscure here, “My goodness extendeth not to thee.”

2. “My well-being depends entirely on you” (Harrison).

II. He Looks Around Himself And Expresses His Feelings (16:3-4).

A. He declares his love for all those who, like him, love God (16:3).

1. "As for the saints and the excellent who are in the earth, my delight is all in them" (Berkley).

2. Ingo, ancient king of the Draves, made a stately feast. He sat his nobles (who were pagan), in a hall below, while seating several poor Christians at his table. When questioned, he explained, "he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament to his table, and more worthy of his company than the greatest peers of the unconverted..." ©. Bradbury).

B. He declares his dislike for those who worship false gods (6:4).

1. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that sacrifice to another god.

a. "They that multiply gods multiply griefs to themselves; for whosoever thinks one god too little, will find two too many and yet hundreds not enough" (Matthew Henry).

2.He repudiates their sordid worship.

a. He would not participate in their idolatrous rites.

b. "Drink offerings of blood" refers to their idolatrous sacrifices or perhaps to proper sacrifices offered by idolaters which were unacceptable to Jehovah and him.

3. None one could affirm that it was a joy to dwell in the temples of the demon - gods of Canaan. There were no perpetual pleasure in the courts of Chemosh, Dagon, Baal or Ashtaroth. Rather there was only lust, blood and imposture, the screams of anguish and laughter of drunken votaries (Perowne).

4. He would not so much as speak the names of their cursed gods.

III. He Looks Within Himself And Communes With His God (16:5-8).

A. God was the portion of his inheritance and cup.

1. This seems to allude to the daily supply of food which was the inheritance of the Levites (Deut. 18:1-2).

a. While some rejoiced in their land and food allotment, which could be swept away, David rejoiced in God.

2. The portion of the wicked is fire and brimstone (Comp. Ps. 11:6).

B. "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places" reflects the use of the surveyor's measuring tape to allot the land to the individual families in Joshua's day (See Josh. 13:7; 14:2).

1. That which God had given him was "pleasant and a goodly heritage, even if it meant being a refugee from the king's wrath.

C. He blessed Jehovah for giving him wise counsel to cope with his adversaries (16:7).

1. A good mind, an innocent heart and a clear conscience, along with Jehovah's guidance, made it possible for him to survive.

a. God had given him counsel, i.e., taught him to trust and follow him.

2. His "reigns," (KJV), literally means kidneys, refers metaphorically to his conscience or heart.

3. The night seasons, were the quite hours of night.

D. He kept the Lord constantly before him...and therefore he was not shaken nor moved by his problems (16:8).

IV. He Looks to the Future And Feels Complete Security (16:9-11).

A. He feels perfectly safe with God as his protector, even in the face of death.

1. His "glory" rejoiced is the parallel of "heart" in the previous line.

B. For even if evil men should succeed in taking his life, God would not leave his soul in Sheol (16:10).

1. ***Sheol*** is not the ***Gehenna*** hell of the KJV, but the invisible world of disembodied spirits. Peter uses the word *Hades* in Acts 2:31.

2.The early Reformers held that Christ in death literally descended into hell to suffer there as our surety, or to make a public triumph over death and hell, or to preach salvation to the inhabitants thereof. The text, properly understood does not allow this interpretation.

3. Many of the creedal statements of Protestant churches still reflect this view.

C His body (thy holy one) would not see corruption, i.e., the decay of the tomb.

D. God would show him the path of life and in His presence (at God's right hand), he would know fulness of joy and pleasure.

1. In this we see:

a. A guide: "Thou," meaning Jehovah.

b. A traveler, the author.
c. A way, the heavenly path.
d. A destination, life eternal in God's presence.

E. Peter affirms this to be a conscious prediction of Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:25-31).
1. When an inspired man said, "This is that," then "That's that!"

Lessons to Remember:

A. In the great conflict for the hearts and minds of men, one small nation on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, held forth against all the other nations of the world for the true worship of Jehovah, the only true God, and against their idols.

B. The person who can casually observe and indulge in paganism and idolatry and not be offended by its sinfulness does not have the spirit of Christ in his heart.

C. "They never felt God's love, nor tasted forgiveness of sins, who are discontented" (Greenham).

D. God can easily do without our feeble efforts to worship him, but we cannot survive without him in our lives.

E. If our mortal lives are God-filled, then we can be sure of immortality.

F. Here we have but a drop of joy to an ocean of sorrow...but then we shall have endless ease without any pain; true happiness without any heaviness (Augustine).

F. "The pillow is the best counselor" (English Proverb).

Psalm 17

A Prayer Of A Man In Serious Trouble

Intro: This is a prayer of David. The contents indicate it was written about the time when David and his men were surrounded by troops of Saul (1 Sam. 23:25-26). It is thus a lamentation. Difficulties in translating the Hebrew text have made some of the verses hard to understand. Alexander Hume closed his earthy life in 1682 by singing this psalm before his execution. His crime was attending forbidden meetings of the Presbyterians. His wife pleaded for mercy in his case on account of her and their five small children. She was rudely repulsed. His estate was confiscated, leaving her penniless. He was judicially murdered to strike terror into other men of position and property who might be inclined to investigate the new ways of religion being taught by the Protestants.

I. He Appeals for Justice on the Basis of His Integrity (17:1-5).

A. He prayers for vindication and justice.
1. "Hear the right," i.e., the prayers of the righteous man.
2. His prayer is from unfeigned lips, i.e., truthful, not lying lips (17:1b).

B. He gladly rests his case before God as his judge.
1. And is confident His ruling will be equitable.
a. "May God's eyes gaze upon my integrity" (Anchor Bible).

C. God had proved, i.e., tested by refining his heart (17:3).
1. God had visited him at night, when he was alone, free of the cares of the day.
2. He had been found innocent.

D. His firm resolution: "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress" (17:3c).

E. The path he had followed in life (17:4-5).
1. God's word had kept him safe.
2. He had faithfully walked the path of righteousness (17:5).

II. His Prayer: To Be Safely Kept, On the Basis of His Relationship With God (17:6-12).

A. His plea for God's gracious care (17:6-7).

B. His desperate need:
1. That God would keep him as the "apple of his eye" (17:8).
A. Literally "the little man of the pupil," i.e., the dearest, most precious of God's possessions, and thus the most carefully guarded.
2. That He would hide him "in the shadow of his wings"
A. Like the mother bird shelters and protects her young (See Matt. 23:37).

C. His enemies described (17:9-12):
1. They were wicked,
2. Deadly (17:9),
3. Morally and spiritually insensible (17:10a),
a. "inclosed in their own fat,"
4. They were proud (17:10:b),
5. They were like vicious predators (17:12).

D. His plight (17:11-12):
1. They oppressed him (17:9a).
2. The had him trapped and compassed, i.e., surrounded (17:11a).
3. They had their eyes (heart) set on bringing him down (17:11b).
a. We would say, they had him in their sights.
4. They were cruel and merciless as hungry lions.
5. Note that he singles out one of his enemies saying, "He is like a lion greedy of his prey." This may likely refer to King Saul himself.

III. His Prayer For Jehovah's Help Against These Men of the World (17:13-15).

A. He begs God to arise to his defense (17:13).
B. His plea: confront him, and cast him down.
1. Deliver my soul from him.
C. The two sides of the conflict (17:14-15).
1. Wicked men of this world are those not spiritual or interested in God's things.
a. Whose portion is wholly in this life.
b. Ungrateful men who take God's blessings and abuse them (17: 14).
(1). Compare Phil. 3:19.
2. The Petitioner, who lives his life for Jehovah and
a. Fully expects to one day see Him in the world to come.
D. His closing affirmation of faith in Jehovah (17:15).
1. That he shall one day stand before God, face to face.
a. Even should he die at the hands of these enemies.
2. "When I awake with thy likeness" (Berkley).
a. This is one of the earliest indications of life beyond the grave.
b. David's words about a future life with God are like the bud of the apple tree, later, when Christ came, it matured into ripen fruit (II Tim. 1:10).
3. Men of the world find their satisfaction in their children and their substance, but David found his in God.

Lessons to Remember:

A. One friend is more than a match for all our foes.
B. Why should we worry, when worry never solved a problem or lifted a burden?
C. No matter how dark the present, look to the bright future of the saved.
D. A righteous man with a righteous cause should never be afraid to approach the righteous God.
E. Are you a person of time or of eternity? Only you can decide that!
F. Let us join David in resolving that we will not sin with our lips.

Psalm 18

A Hymn Praising Jehovah For Providing Protection And Victory

Intro: The author is this psalm is David and he dedicates it to the Chief Musician of the temple (tabernacle) singers. It is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving. The same psalm is set forth as a sample of David's hymns in II Samuel 22:2-51. The ancient Rabbis noted 74 slight differences in the two accounts. It is the longest psalm of the first volume of the Psalter. The background is said to be when God delivered him from the hand of Saul (II Sam. 22:1). The key verse is 20, which says, "Jehovah hath rewarded me according to my righteousness." "The inspiring

thought of the psalm is that Jehovah has made him what he is" (Kirkpatrick). "In this magnificent hymn the royal poet sketches in a few grand outlines, the tale of his life, the record of his marvelous deliverances and of the victories which Jehovah had given him" (Perowne). Although David had been forsaken by friends and pursued by foes, the love and presence of God had always been with him. In bold poetic expression he pictures Jehovah as reaching down from heaven to save him. He paints his scenes in such brilliant and lively colors that as we read we can almost see the lightening, hear the thunder and feel the earthquake. This psalm has been said to touch the high water make of Old Testament devotion. Kirkpatrick calls it, a "magnificent hymn of thanksgiving." Spurgeon calls it, "one of the most magnificent lyrical raptures in the Scriptures."

I. What Jehovah Meant to David (18:1-3).

A. His love professed (18:1).

1. Literally, "Fervently do I love thee." The original language denotes tender, intimate affection.

B. A cumulative portrait of David's Lord (18:1 b-2).:

1. "My strength." Note how he emphasizes his personal relationship to God.
2. "My rock,"
3. "My fortress,"
4. "My deliverer,"
5. "My "refuge,"
6. "My shield,"
7. "The horn of my salvation,"
8. "My high tower."
9. Thus God provided everything his warrior servant needed for victory, both offensive and defensive.

C. His commitment to always look to Jehovah for every need (18:3).

1. God had proven himself worthy of David's praise.

II. The Perils David Had Faced (18:4-5).

A. Death had wrapped his cords about him to drag him down (18:4a, 5).

1. Like a hunter's net.

B. Floods of ungodliness had tried to sweep him away (18:4b).

1. The waves or breakers of death.

III. Jehovah's Supernatural Intervention (A Theophany) (18:5-15).

A. In his distress he cried unto Jehovah and He heard and responded (18:6).

1. He heard his voice out of his temple in heaven.
2. The imperfect tense of his verbs indicate that it was his regular habit to call upon God.

B. A poetic description of God's response and its impact on the earth (18:7-15).

1. Like a mighty earthquake (18:7).
2. Like a volcanic eruption {18:8), as when he appeared on Sinai in Moses' day.
    a. "Smoke out of his nostrils" is an outward sign of pent up fires of wrath.
3. He drew back the heavens and came down to assist David (18:9).
4. He rode upon his heavenly chariot, drawn by his cherubim (18:10a).
    a. Like a victorious king charging forth in his chariot.
    b. For a picture of God's chariot and cherubim, see Ezekiel 10:1-14.
    c. According to the ancient rabbis, "Four things are chiefest in the world: The lion among (wild) beasts; The bull among cattle (domestic animals); the eagle among birds and man among all creatures; but God is the most High over all."
5. He flew down like a bird of prey swooping down on its victim (18:10b).
6. He cast down destructive hailstones and fire upon the enemy (19:12b).
    a. As in the day of the plagues upon Egypt (Ex. 9:22-26).
7. Lightning flashes emanated from his presence (18:14). See also Revelation.4:5.
    A. Like arrows shot at his enemies.

C. Devastating floods as in Noah's day (18:15).

1. All of this section is highly wrought poetry and not to be interpreted literally. It is a figurative description of the great victory God gave David.

IV. The Deliverance God Gave David That Day (18:16-19).

A. Like a man caught in a flood, God delivered him (18:16).

B. From a strong army of enemies he saved him (18:17).

C. From the tight spot in which he had been trapped, God delivered him into a large place (18:19).

V. Why God Delivered David (18:20-28).

A. Jehovah rewarded him according to his righteousness.

1.This suggests the psalm was written before his sin with Bathsheba.

2. Paul also had lived before God in all good conscience (Acts 23:1).

3.This is still the standard by which God blesses mankind.

4. Christ is our righteousness (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5; I Cor. 1:30).

B. His righteousness described (18:20b-23).

1. His hands were clean from guilt of sin (Compare James 4:8).

2. He kept the ways of Jehovah and was loyal to him.

3. He honored the ordinances and statues of Jehovah.

4.He walked perfectly before him, i.e., was wholly dedicated to Him.

5. He kept himself from personal temptations.

a. I have "guarded myself against my sinfulness" (Berkley).

C. Therefore had Jehovah recompensed him because of his faithfulness (18:24).

D. The kind of person God delights to bless (18:25-26):

1.The merciful soul (Compare Matt. 5:5:7).

2.The perfect, i.e., the truly dedicated soul (Matt. 5:48).

3.The pure hearted (Compare Matt. 5:8).

4. Note how these are incorporated by Jesus in his Beatitudes.

a. But with the perverse:

(1) God will show himself froward, i.e., He will frustrate their plans and purposes.

(2) The Hebrew root of "froward" describes two wrestlers striving for mastery.

E. God will save the afflicted, i.e., the humble (18:27).

1. But the haughty and proud, he will bring down in defeat.

2. God will light his lamp...and lighten his darkness (18:28).

a. In ancient Egypt they never allowed their home to be without a light at all hours of the day or night. This seems to allude to such a custom.

b. God would keep the lamp of his life and prosperity burning brightly.

VI. The Perfect Deliverance God Provided David (18:29-45).

A. God had taught him to successfully wage war against his adversaries.

1. He enabled David to "run upon a troop" of soldiers, i.e., to successfully smash through their battle lines.

a. And to "leap over a wall," i.e., to safely scale the wall of his enemy's fortress.

b. We too will be more than conquerors through Him (Rom. 8:37).

2. Jehovah is a shield to those who look to him for refuge (18:30b).

3. He is a rock, i.e.. a fortress to his people (18:31).

4. God girded David with strength and guided his path (18:32).

5. God made him swift and surefooted in battle(18:33).

a. Like the gazelle or mountain goat on the rocky cliffs.

6. God trained David to be a warrior so he would have the victory (18:34a).

7. He made David strong enough to bend the bow of brass (18:34).

a. Literally the bronze bow. Some bows were reinforced with a strip of bronze. It took an archer of uncommon strength to pull such a powerful bow.

8. God strengthened David for the conflict and protected him (18:35).

a. God had made David great, i.e., renowned as a warrior and king.

9. He would give him complete and total victory over his enemies (18:36-38).
10. God had girded him with strength for the battle (18:39).
11. He made his enemies to flee before him (18:40-41).

B. In their defeat, his enemies were as helpless as dust before the wind,
1. And trampled down like mire in the streets (18:42).
2. In the ancient East, all garbage and refuse was cast into the streets.

C. God crowned David as king of his nation (18:43).
1. Neighboring kings among the Canaanites would submit to his rule (18:44-45), as did Toi of Hamath (II Sam. 8:9ff).
a. "Their close places" refers to their strongholds.

VII. His Joyous Thanksgiving to Jehovah For His Mercies (18:46-50).

A. All the glory for the victory he ascribes to his God (18:46-48).
1. Following the great victory of his Protestant troops over the Catholic forces at Naseby, Oliver Cromwell wrote, "Sir, this is none other than the hand of God; and to him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with him."

B. He pledges to sing Jehovah's praises even among his Gentiles neighbors (18:49).
1. This is cited in Romans 15:9 and Hebrews 2:12 of Christ's reign among the Gentiles.

C. The promise of divine aid and deliverance is not only to David but to his seed for-evermore (18:50). This looks forward to Jesus, the most noble descendant of David.

Lessons to Remember:

A. In man's search for salvation, everything hinges on his personal relationship with God. "We can never be a substitute for I, nor our for my, nor us for me." (G. Scroggie).

B. "Faith is safe when in danger, and in danger when secure" (Robert Leighton).

C. Mary Queen of Scots "professed she was more afraid of the prayers of (John) Knox than of an army of ten thousand men."

D. When Henry VIII of England had written and spoken bitterly against Luther, the reformer replied, "Tell the Henries, the bishops, the Turks (Muhammadans) and the devil himself, do what they can, we are the children of the kingdom, worshiping the true God, whom they, and such as they, spit upon and crucified."

E. All that God did for David He can and will do for you if you will serve him as did David.

F. In the battle of life, make Jehovah your teacher, guide and master and you will not fail.

Psalm 19

Nature And Revelation: Two Witnesses To God's Glory

Intro: This lovely Psalm was penned by David and dedicated to the Chief or leader of the tabernacle, later temple musicians. It has great value in showing some of the external evidence for the existence of God. To the author, God has two books in which he reveals himself to man: Nature and Scripture. The lovely song is "the fruit of the rapture which was aroused in him by the moving experience of God in nature" (Weiser). C. S. Lewis wrote I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world." "The world resembleth a divinity-school and Christ, as the Scripture telleth, is our doctor, instructing us by his works and by his words" (Plutarch).

I. The Glory of God is Seen in Creation (19:1-6).

A. The heavenly bodies declare God's:
1. Glory and,
2. His creative power (19:1).
3. In them we see his genius, his wisdom, his provision and his sustaining power.
4. "The starry sky above me and the moral law within me...are two things which fill the soul with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence" (Immanuel Kant).
5. While nature impresses us with the fact of a Creator and his glorious power, it cannot tell us about the Savior, how to be saved or how to worship and serve him. For that we need Revelation.
a."The book of nature has three leaves, heaven, earth, and sea, of which heaven is the first and the most glorious..." (Spurgeon).

B. The testimony of the heavens is ceaseless (19:2).

1. “The heaven, as one of the divine works, becomes for every man who is not utterly insensible, the most eloquent witness and most speaking herald of the glory of its Master and Creator..” ’ (Ewald).

C. Their testimony is silent but powerful (19:3).

1. Eloquence without words.

D. Their testimony is universal (19:4).

E. The sun illustrates his point: (19:5-6):

1. It is as a bridegroom coming from his chamber, happy and richly adorned.
2. It is as a strong, long-distance runner who never tires or fails (19:5b-6).
3. He speaks of the sun coursing across the heavens...which is as it appears to us. He is not offering a mistaken scientific guess. This is called a phenomenal view...that is, “as it appears.” We still speak of the sun rising and setting.

II. The Word of God Declares His Grace (19:7-11).

A. What God’s word does for mankind (19:7-8).

B. The nature and quality of God’s Word (19:9).

C. The desirability of God’s word (19:10).

D. The reward for heeding God’s Word (19:11).

III. David's Prayer for Grace, Forgiveness and Acceptance (19:12-14).

A. He desires freedom from:

1. Errors he had committed,
2. Hidden faults of which he was not even aware,
3. He asks God to keep him from presumptuous sins of rebellion,
4. Great sins that were terrible in their nature.

B. He prays that his prayer will be accepted (19:14).

Lessons to Remember:

A. God has two books: the book of Nature reveals his existence; the book of Revelation reveals his will.

B. It is both foolish and wicked for creatures of the dust to try and set Nature and Revelation against each other. God is the author of both and there is no contradiction.

C. If every preacher in the world should fail him and refuse to declare his name, God will still have his never- failing preachers in the heavens, declaring his glory.

D. The creation is a "‘non-vocal” witness, daily testifying to humanity that there is a God is heaven.

E. The perfection of the law of Jehovah is declared by God himself. Educated man’s challenge is to believe what God says in his Word (19:7).

F. Our interest in Bible study says a great deal about our spiritual character.

G. As great as are God’s works of Nature, his Word is greater by far.

H. Even from the most well-educated, their personal faults are often hidden (19:12).

I. Our daily prayer should be “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah...” (19:14).

Psalm 20

A Prayer For Israel's King

Intro: This psalm is attributed to David. It is **an** intercessory prayer-song sung by the people for their king us he was preparing to enter battle. It is closely related to Psalm 21. This one is intercessory, that is a thanksgiving for his victory. The thoughts of this psalm are such that we could pray for our Christian friends when they are in trouble. This and 21 are classed as liturgical Psalms as they were designed for public worship. To understand this poem, imagine the king preparing to go forth in battle against a powerful enemy. Before his departure, he offers solemn sacrifices and commits his cause to the Lord. This Psalm was likely designed to be sung as the sacrifice was being offered. There is no indication as to which specific battle the author had in mind. Spurgeon describes it as ‘"a National Anthem, fitted to be sung at the outbreak of war. when the monarch was girding on his sword for the fight."

“This Psalm has been much used for coronation, thanksgiving, and fast sermons, and no end of nonsense and sickening flattery has been tacked thereto by the teacher-chaplains of the world's church. If kings had been devils, some of these gentry would have praised their horns and hoofs; for although some of their royal highnesses have been very obedient servants of the prince of darkness, these false prophets have dubbed them ‘most gracious sovereigns,' and have been as much dazzled in their presence as if they had beheld the beatific vision" (Spurgeon). On March 9. 1839 there was accident at a deep coal mind near Musselburgh, Midlothain. Thirteen men were buried alive in a tiny space 18x24 ft. just 3 ft. high. Expecting to die, they prayed and sang this psalm. The sacred thoughts calmed and strengthened them. They then discussed various scriptures and their spiritual state and their hopes for immortality. To their amazement, rescuers reached them before their oxygen was consumed and they lived to see another day.

I. The Congregation’s Prayer For Their King (20:1-5).

A. That God would answer his prayers (20:5a),

1. It was the custom for sacrifices to be offered up before going into combat (I Sam. 13:19ff).

B. That God would set **him on high,** i.e., above his enemies.

1.The name of God stands for God himself (5b).

2. On high, as in a secure fortress.

C. That God would send **him help.**

1. From the sanctuary refers to the ***shikinah,*** or glory of God that rested above the mercy seat in the tabernacle. That shining light was the visible symbol of God's presence.

2. Remember how the priests bore the ark of God before the warriors at Jericho (Josh 6:8-9).

D. That God would **strengthen him**.

1. Out of Zion again refers to the glory of God in the tabernacle at Jerusalem.

E. That God would **remember and accept his offerings and sacrifices** (20:3).

F. That He would **grant his heart’s desire over his enemies.**

G. That He would **fulfill the king's counsel,** i.e., his plans and strategy in battle.

H. The worshipers' confidence expressed (20:5).

1. We will, triumph.

2. Because we have trusted in God {20:5b).

II The Worship Leader Responds (20:6),

A. I know Jehovah will save our king!

B. He will strengthen him and give him the victory.

I I I . The Congregation Responds (20:7-8),

A. Faith will bring us the victory.

Conclusion: ‘‘Save us Jehovah” (20:9).

A. The LXX (the Septuagint translation) reads, “O Lord, save the king; and answer us when we call.”

Lessons to Remember:

A. Never forget how much help can be had “from the sanctuary'” of Jehovah (20:2).

B. If our victory is achieved, it will be “in the name of our God” (20:5).

C. In every crisis of life, look to Him who answers and saves "from his holy heaven” (20:6).

D. Spiritual warfare and worship go hand in hand.

E. “He who does not sacrifice in not likely to succeed’' (Scroggie).

F. “God acts when his people pray. “A whispered prayer may start an avalanche'" (Scroggie).

G. We Christians are to offer supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgiving for our kings and those high place (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Psalm 21

An Anthem Of Thanksgiving For The Deliverance And Victory Of Their King

Intro: This hymn is attributed to David. It appears to be a sequel to Psalm 20. The previous psalm was a "litany" or supplication for God's blessings on the king as he went forth into battle (20:5). This song is a "***Te Deum***" which celebrates the protection and victory God granted him (21:2). That which is expectation is Psalm 20 is exultation in 21. The author is persuaded that this victory which they now celebrate is but the first of many triumphs God will give them. From earliest times, devout scholars have held that vss. 3-6 are applicable also to Messiah (Comp. II Sam. 7:12-16). The ancient Jewish Targum applied these thoughts to Messiah, but rabbis since Christ do not. Rabbi Rashi explained, "Our old doctors interpreted this Psalm of King Messiah, but in order to meet the schismatics (i.e.,Christians) it is better to understand it of David himself."

I. Their Words of Thanks to Jehovah (21:1-7). (These lines were sung by the congregation).

A. God had kept their king safe and given him victory in answer to their prayer (21:1-2).

1. "Thy strength" and "thy salvation" are words used to express strength needed and given in battle.

B. God had blessed him richly (21: 3-6).

1. "For thou ***preventest*** him with the blessings..." "Prevent" is an archaic English word which formerly meant "go before." The Anchor Bible renders it "You set ***before him*** the blessings of prosperity."
2. He set "a crown of gold on his head" (21:3b).
    a. It was God who placed him in his regal office and sustained him in it.
    b. Some see in this the occasion when David defeated the king of Rabbah, and took his golden crown for his own head (II Sam. 12:29-30).
3. David had asked God to protect his life, which He did (21:4).
    a. They were confident he would also have a long life as their king (Comp. I Kings l:31).
    b. In those days, long life was considered a special blessing from Jehovah (See Deut. 5:16; Prov. 3:1-2).
4. God gave him glory and honor in his victory (21:5).
5. God had blessed him with joy by standing by him (21:6).

C. The grounds of the great blessing (21:7).

1.The king trusted in Jehovah.
2. God extended his loving-kindness to him, i.e., his mercy.

II. Their Words Sung To Their King (21:8-12). (Likely sung by a cantor or priest).

A. He will search out and destroy all of his remaining enemies (21:8).

B. He will consume them as the fire of the furnace consumes its fuel (21:9).

1. Note that while David would lead his troops to victory over his enemies, it was "Jehovah (who) will swallow them up in his wrath" (21:9b).
2. David was but an instrument of judgement in God's hand (Comp. Is. 10:5).

C. Their fruit would be destroyed (21:10).

1.Their fruit is their children (Ps. 127:3).
2. With their children destroyed, their families and their nation would become extinct.
3.One of the greatest disasters among the ancients was to have their posterity destroyed, thus blotting out their name forever.

D. Their intent against David was evil (21:11).

1. Note that God counts not only ones evil deed but the evil intent as punishable.
    a. Compare Matt. 5:21-32.
2. Note also how God, by his providence, is able to thwart the evil schemes of the wicked and thus protect his righteous ones.
    b. "The serpent may hiss but his head is broken..." (Spurgeon).

E. No matter how powerful they be, with Divine help, David would rout his enemies making them turn and flee (21:12).

II. Their Closing Anthem of Praise (21:13). (Sung by the congregation).

A. They praise God's strength and power.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Stability comes from trusting God. Doubt provides no security.

B. “If we pray today for a benefit and receive it, we must, ere the sun goes down, praise God for that mercy or we deserve to be denied the next time” (Spurgeon).

C. “I have always preferred cheerfulness to mirth. The latter I consider an act, the former as a habit of mind. Mirth is short and transient, cheerfulness fixed and permanent...Mirth is like a flash of lightening that breaks through a gloom of clouds and glitters for a moment, cheerfulness keeps up a kind of day light in the mind and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity” (Addison).

D. If men hate God’s Son, and oppose him they should not wonder if their own children receive no blessing from God.

E. A large portion of our blessings is given us before our asking or seeking. Existence, reason, intellect, a birth in a Christian land...and Christ himself...” (William Plumber).

Psalm 22

A Psalm Depicting Christ’s Suffering On Calvary

Intro: This is the first and most vivid of the “***passion psalms***.” This plaintiff song was composed by King David but the Holy Spirit led him to depict in vivid detail the suffering, death and triumph of the coming Messiah. Notice that Jesus voiced portions of this psalm while dying. It has been said that "‘the psalmist gives a more vivid description of the sufferings of Christ on the Cross than the authors of the Gospels” (Scroggie). “It is the gospel before the Gospels, and an apocalypse before Revelation” (Scroggie). Seven times this psalm is quoted in the New Testament. Peter declared David was a prophet (Acts 2:29-30). He lived and wrote some 1,000 years before Christ came. Psalms 22, 23 and 24 are a trilogy of teaching about the coming Messiah. In them we see the Savior, the Shepherd and the Sovereign roles of the coming Lord. As one author put it, in them we see the Cross, the (Shepherd’s) Crook and the Crown (Purkiser). “There is perhaps no Psalm in which the sense of loneliness is so utter, none in which the peril is so imminent...” (Perowne). Jewish Rabbis apply this psalm to the Hebrew nation during the Babylonian Captivity. It was dedicated to the Chief Musician and set to ***Aijeleth hash-Shahar*** which means “the hind of the morning.” This is thought to be the title of a melody to which it was sung. Charles Spurgeon called this “The Psalm of the Cross” and “The gem of the Psalms.”

I. Messiah’s Mournful Complaint to the Father (22:1-9).

A. “My God, why has thou forsaken me?”

1. Compare Matt. 27:46
2. To be lost means to be separated from God (Is. 59:1 -2; II Thess. 1:8-10).
3. In his experience on the cross, Christ was separated from God, i.e., he tasted for a short time the damnation that was due to each of us. We do not read that he cried out from the physical pain inflicted on him, but so awful was the agony of that experience that he cried out to God.

B. He trusted in the Father to safely deliver him through it all (22:3-5).

C. The shame he endured at the hands of his enemies (22:6-8).

1. Compare Matt. 27:39-40.

II. His Undying Confidence in the Father’s Love and Help (22:9-11).

A. He reveals that Messiah would be born of woman (22:9).

1. Note that he says nothing of an earthly father, hence Messiah was virgin born.

B. There were none to help him. Even his Apostles had all fled, save John (Mark 14:50)

III. The Crucifixion Foreseen and Described (22:12-22).

A. His enemies described (22:12-13).

1. Compare Matt. 27-39-44.

B. His personal suffering (22:14-18).

1. His lack of strength and helplessness on the cross (22:14-15a).
2. His intense thirst (Compare John 19:28).
3. He was surrounded by vicious enemies
4. They pierced his hands and feet (Mark 15:24).

5. They cast lots for his vesture (John 19:23-24).

C. His final desperate plea for help (22: 19-21).

IV. His Thanks for His Ultimate Deliverance (22:22-25)

A. He would declare God's name in the assembly of the saints.

1.Compare Hebrews 2:12 where the writer applies this to the church.

B. He would fulfill the divine mission God had given him (22:25).

V. All Mankind Would Share the Blessings His Suffering Made Possible (22:26-31).

A. They that seek God from the ends of the earth would be saved (Matt. 28:19).

B. All nations would worship Jehovah... not just Jews.

C. Both strong and weak would benefit from his sacrifice (22:29).

D. A righteous seed, i.e., a remnant, of Israel will serve him (Rom. 9:27).

E. Messiah's cause shall endure forever (22:30-31).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Read these remarkable words that foretold the suffering of Christ on the Cross and confess that truly these are the Words of the Omniscient God.

B. In times of sickness, suffering, persecution and fear, these words will comfort the soul of the saints of God.

C. It should be our commitment to declare God's name unto our brethren and praise him in the midst of the holy assembly (22:22).

D. May God hasten the day when "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah" (22:27).

E. Be not dismayed when the vast majority turn their backs on God or even oppose him. It has always been only "a seed" i.e., a remnant, that has served Him (22:30).

Psalm 23:1-6

The Good Shepherd And His Sheep

Intro. Psalm 23 is the most familiar passage in the Bible. It is among the most popular and most memorized portion of Scripture. It has been called, "The Pearl of the Psalms." Martin Luther called it "The nightingale of the psalms." Others have described it as "The Children's Psalm" since so many children have memorized it. Some call it "The Psalm of the Sickroom" or "The Psalm of the Death-bed" because so many folks have found consolation in it in times of sickness and death.

David, the author of this lovely piece was known as "the shepherd king of Israel." Nothing was more natural to him than the picture of sheep and their shepherd. The Hebrews, remembering their pastoral origins, cherished the thought of God as their shepherd.

I. The Lord is My Shepherd (23:1a).

A. David thought of Jehovah as being **like a shepherd** to him.

1. Jesus is our good shepherd (John 10:14).

B. As my shepherd He is my leader, my protector, my provider, my guide. He has the power of life and death over me.

C. He is **MY** shepherd.

1. Our relationship with Christ must be personal.

2. Each of us must confess and claim Christ as our Lord to be saved (Rom. 10:9-10).

3. It will not suffice that he is the shepherd of your family or friends. He must be **your** shepherd.

D. The Lord **IS** my shepherd.
1. “Was” is not adequate.
2. “Will or shall be” are unrealized and uncertain.
3. He must be your shepherd **now and forevermore** if you would be saved.

E. I am like a sheep of his flock.
1. Sheep are weak, helpless, defenseless.
2. They are dumb, easily lost or led astray.
3. They are prone to herd behavior which can be disastrous at times.
4. My life and all belong to my shepherd.
5. I have no rights nor independence from him.

II. Shall Not Want (23:1b).

A. Because my shepherd loves and cares for me,

B. He will supply:
1. My daily needs,
2. Guidance,
3. Supervision,
4. Protection,
5. Discipline.

III. He Maketh Me to Lie Down in Green Pastures (23:2a).

A. Given their nature, sheep are very hesitant to lie down.

B. They will do so only when:
1. Adequately fed and watered.
2. Free from fear, agitation, or aggravation.

C. The shepherd's presence eliminates these problems.

D. Our shepherd has taken away our fears (II Tim. 1:7).
1. He gives us peace (Phil. 4:7).

IV. He Leadeth Me Beside the Still Waters (23:2b).

A. Torrential streams can be deadly to sheep.

B. A good shepherd seeks out fresh, quiet waters for his sheep.

C. Our shepherd provides for us this blessing.
1. The promise (Matt. 5:6).
2. The source (John 4:14).
3. The indwelling Spirit is that blessing (John 7:38-39).

V. He Restoreth My Soul (23:3a).

A. When sheep are lost, the good shepherd seeks and finds them (Luke 15:3-4).

B. When they are sick or injured, he doctors and nurses them back to health.

C. So the Lord "cares for us" (I Pet. 5:7).
1. He is our great physician (Luke alm:31).
2. Ps. 42:11. When cast down, we call on our shepherd.
3. When sick, fearful, discouraged or beaten down our shepherd will lift us up and make us whole.

VI. He Leads Me in Paths of Righteousness (23:3b).

A. Paths of righteousness are right or proper paths.

B. We need his guiding hand.
1. All we like sheep have gone astray (Is. 53:6).
2. We don't know how to direct our steps (Jer. 10:23).
3. Wrong ways sometime seem right (Prov. 14:12).

C. Our shepherd leads us; he does not drive us as some do.
1. He has traveled the rocky road of life before us, leaving us an example (I Pet. 2:21).
2. He is our forerunner or pioneer who has met and conquered death and entered heaven (Heb. 6:20).
3.He says "follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

D. He leads me for "his own name's sake."
1. Because I am his and he loves me.
2. Lest I by my foolishness bring shame to his name.

VII. He Protects Me (23:4).

A. When I must walk "the valley of the shadow of death."
1. The dangerous defiles and densely overgrown places where wild beasts might lurk.
2. In the dark hours of twilight and dusk when sheep are led to and from pasture.
3. For us, those dark, difficult, dangerous events of life which could easily harm, defeat or destroy us.

B. His rod and staff comfort us.
1. The eastern shepherd always carried his rod for a weapon and his long crooked staff to guide and correct his sheep.
2. God's loving discipline is his staff that protects us (Heb. 12:4-6,11).
3. His providence keeps us in the safe way and protects us from harm.

VIII. Another Picture of Our Blessed State (23:5-6).

A . A banquet is prepared for me.
1. In the presence of mine enemies who would like to deny me this blessing.
a. They are forced to witness my honor.
2. My head thou has anointed with oil as an honored guest in the house of God.
a. Because of heat and dust, servants would anoint and massage the head of guests with pleasant oils.

B. The happy and wonderful conclusion of it all:
1. Goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.
a. God's generous blessings are continually poured out for me (Ps. 103:17).
b. His forgiving mercy is always mine.
2. I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (John 14:1-3).
3. "Surely:" I can rest confident and be assured of this promise (Heb. 6:17-18).
4. It will last "forever" (John 3:16).

Conclusion: Memorize this precious morsel of truth. Repeat it to yourself daily. It will be like vitamins for your soul; like good medicine when you are feeling low. When your time comes to depart this life it will be your comfort and consolation. With David we can sing, "Oh how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97).

PSALM 24

Celebrating The Bringing Of The Ark Of The Covenant Into Jerusalem

Intro: David wrote this lovely Psalm to celebrate the occasion of bringing the ark of the covenant from the house of Obed Edom, safely into its new and permanent home in Jerusalem. The ark with its ***shekinah*** was the visible symbol of Jehovah's presence among his people. When it was brought into the city, it was as though Jehovah himself was entering. This would have been the greatest day in King David's life. For the historical background of this psalm, see I Chronicles chapters 15-16 and II Samuel 6:12-23. This song was sung in antiphonal style. The musical leader sang the "Questions" solo and the congregation responded. "The Psalm was greater than the occasion, and has generally been interpreted as a prophetic expression of Christ's ascension after his victory over death and sin...and of His ultimate sovereignty over all" (M'Caw). Psalms 22, 23 and 24 form a trilogy, praising Messiah as our Savior, Shepherd and Sovereign (Scroggie). In the temple services, this psalm was sung on Sundays. When John Chrysostom was being oppressed by Empress Eudoxia, he expected to be banished from his homeland. He strengthened himself and calmed his fears by reciting "The earth is the Lord's." Long ago in England, John Welwood announced he would preach from this psalm. The service was to be conducted outside on a certain gentleman's property. Not approving of Welwood's preaching, the landlord traveled some of five miles to block him from so doing. The preacher opened his sermon by singing this psalm and reading verse one: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." He then observed, "Tho' the earth be the Lord's and the fulness thereof, yet the poor fools of the world will not allow a bit of earth to preach His gospel upon." The land owner was cut to the heart and

sat down quietly and listened to the lesson. He was convicted and persuaded and went home to worship God with his family (as cited in Scroggie).

I. Praise to Jehovah the Creator and Ruler of the World (24:1-2).

A. These lines were sung by the Procession.

B. This view of God's reign far transcended the thinking of the leaders of Judaism. In their mind, "The holy land is God's and the seed of Abraham by Jacob are his only people" (Spurgeon).

1. This truth should humble those who are driven to acquire vast amounts of property and boast themselves in their possessions.

II. Qualifications of Those Who Can Come Before Jehovah (24:3-6).

A. The Leader's Question: "Who shall stand in his holy place?" (24:3).

B. The Procession's reply (24:4-6).

1. He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,
2. He that is totally truthful,
3. He that never foreswears himself (24:4).

III. The Procession Enter's Jerusalem's Gates (24:7-10).

A. Lift up the city gates so the Lord's ark can enter in (24:7).

1. Sung by the Procession.
2. He speaks of gates that were drawn up to allow entry, rather than opened on hinges.
3. In your mind look beyond that celebrated event of David's day and see the conquering Christ as he approached the gates of heaven.
    a. Acts 1:8-11.
    b. Dan. 7:13-14

B. The Leader's question, "Who is this King of glory?" (24:8).

C. The Procession's reply: "Jehovah is the king of glory!" (24:10).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Since the earth is Jehovah's, we need to take care that we do not spoil or abuse it.

B. "The character of God determines the character of the worshipers." (Scroggie).

C. Are you among those who are qualified to ascend into the hill of Jehovah? If not, what do you need to do?

D. The poet described Christ's glorious and victorious entrance into heaven. He has a place for us in that holy place. Will the gates welcome you when your summons comes?

Psalm 25

A Prayer For Protection, Instruction and Forgiveness

Intro: David is the author of this lovely song. The background is unknown but that in no way inhibits our understanding and appreciation of its message. It deals with the permanent elements in a devout soul's relationship with God. It is arranged alphabetically, although the order is not strictly observed by the author. Other alphabetic psalms are 9, 10, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145. Kirkpatrick calls it, "An alphabet of prayers and meditations; the utterance of an humble, yet confident faith." It begins and ends with a prayer. The theme which runs through this psalm is deliverance from his enemies, blended with prayers for instruction and forgiveness. Psalm 25 is classified as "Wisdom Literature" along with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. In this psalm we look into the heart of the "man after God's own heart." "Some of the most precious spiritual treasures of the church have been drawn from this Psalm (Kay). "This most beautiful of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs closes with a, sweet petition such as everyone...would wish to depart with on his lips" (B. Bouchier). Our devotional song, "Unto Thee O Lord," is based upon the first verse of this psalm. On May 11, 1685 an elderly widow named MacLachlan and 18 year old Margaret Wilson were executed for refusing to swear their loyalty to the state church of Scotland. They were taken into the sea near Wigtown and tied to stakes while the tide was low. There they waited for the incoming tide to drown them. The elder sister perished first but as the salty waves rose about her, Margaret was heard singing the words of this psalm and continued until she was swallowed up.

I. His Prayer For Protection, Guidance and Pardon (25:1-7).

A. His address and petition to Jehovah (25:1-3).

1. "I lift up my soul unto Thee"

a. Cyprian (d. 258 A.D.) said, that "in primitive times the minister was wont to prepare the people's minds to pray, by prefacing with "lift up your hearts."

2. Unto God alone, not to any false god or human deliverer.

B. The basis of his prayer was his trust in God (25:2).

C. His request: "Let me not be put to shame, Let not mine enemies triumph over me."

1. His confidence: "None that wait for thee shall be put to shame" (Ps. 25:3a),

2. But all who deal treacherously without cause shall be put to shame (Ps. 25:3b).

D. His request for divine guidance and instruction (25:4-5).

1. "Show me they ways, O Jehovah."

a. Compare Ex. 33:13.

2. "Teach me thy paths."

3. "Guide me in thy truth."

a. Let me ever live in thy truth; to know, understand and obey it.

b. The Hebrew term speaks not of truth as man apprehends it, but as an attribute of God.

c. God alone possess the Truth, for he is Truth and he alone can impart it. He does so only to those who fear him.

4. "Teach me," lest I mistake my own ways for Thine.

5. "For thee do I wait all the day," i.e., continually.

E. A plea for deliverance from concern over past sins (25:6-7).

1. Remember how You in mercy blessed me in the past.

2. Please don't remember the sins of my youth.

a. "Sins" from the Hebrew ***chattah***, denotes primarily the failures, errors lapses of frailty... is naturally applied to the thoughtless offenses of youth (Kirkpatrick).

b. His sad recollection of sins of his youthful years.

3. "For thy goodness' sake, O Jehovah" (25:7).

a. When Moses asked for a revelation of God's glory, he was given a vision of his goodness (Ex. 33:18-19).

III. His Reflections On the Character of God (25:8-14).

A. Jehovah is good and upright.

B. Because of his mercy,

1. He is willing to show sinners a way of escape from their plight (25:8a).

2. Those who are meek He will teach His holy way (25:8b).

a. The meek are those who are humble-minded, therefore teachable.

C. Because Jehovah's paths are loving-kindness and truth.

1. The paths of Jehovah are those in which he himself walks.

a. "All the paths." The Hebrew speaks of the tracks or ruts made by the wheels of wagons as they repeatedly pass along the road.

2. They are understood only by those who keep the covenant.

3. God revealed himself to Israel as "abundant in loving kindness and truth" (Ex. 34:6).

D. Conscious of his many sins, he pleads for pardon (25:11).

1. His reflection on the righteousness of God made him painfully aware of his own sins and his need for forgiveness. It should do the same for us.

E. Benefits provided to the God-fearing man (25:12-14):

1. He shall be taught in the way he should choose (25:12).

a. God will guide him in his choices.

2. "His soul shall dwell at ease" (25:13a).

a. "At ease" means "in good or in prosperity."

3. "His seed shall inherit the land" (25:13b).

a. The land of Canaan, the Jewish homeland (Ex. 20:12).

b. His heirs would be safe in their inheritance of the family's land.

4. "The friendship of Jehovah" is with him (25:14a).

a. "The secret of the Lord" is with him" (KJV).

b. The secret counsel, i.e., the intimate self-communication of close friendship (Comp. John 15:13-15).

5. God will reveal his covenant unto him (25:14b).

a. We have a better covenant than the Hebrews ever knew (Heb. 8:6).

III. He Renews His Prayer For Deliverance From His Dangers (25:15-21).

A. His pledge of allegiance to Jehovah (25:15).

1. For only the Lord can deliver ***him*** from the snares of his enemies.

B. His request for attention and mercy (25:16a).

1. "Turn thee unto me," means turn thy face toward me.
2. It is mercy we all desperately need. God's justice condemns us (Rom. 6:23).

C. The situation he was in (25:16b-19):

1. He was "desolate and afflicted," the Hebrew means alone and poor.
2. His troubles were many and growing.

a. "Anguish cramps my heart; of my distress relieve me" (Anchor Bible).

3. He suffered affliction and travail (25:18).
4. He felt a heavy burden from the guilt of his sins (25:18b).
5. His enemies were many,

a. They hated him with cruel hatred, i.e., hatred of violence.

D. His plea for protection and deliverance (25:20-21).

1. He looks to Jehovah for his refuge.
2. He pleads that God will consider his integrity and uprightness and save him.

a. Integrity is the virtue of the godly man (Comp. Job 2:3).

b. Single hearted devotion to God and honorable behavior toward all men are two guardian angels by the side of the righteous soul.

Conclusion: His final petition for the redemption of Israel from all his troubles.

A. "Redeem" is from the Hebrew ***padhah*** which means to deliver from danger, difficulty or bondage by personal effort and to bring into a new state of freedom and release.

1. Note that in this final prayer he addresses God as Elohim, the mighty Creator.

Lessons to Remember:

A. He who would approach Jehovah's sanctuary must not have lifted up his soul in vanity.

B. Suffering enlarges the heart by creating the power to sympathize. None pity the poor like those who have been poor; none have tenderness for the sick as those who have long been ill.

C. We should to be grateful for occasional sorrows, if they preserve us from chronic hardheartedness.

D. God is not a tyrannical ruler; providence is not a bondage. Men sin because they will to do so (Spurgeon).

E. "Divine love is an eternal fountain that never ceases to run while an empty vessel or one capable of holding more is near (Elisha Coles).

F. Like David, we should apply for admission to God's college of grace.

G. "It is not safe to be at odds with the Ancient of Days" (John Trapp).

H. Patience is the fair daughter of faith.

I. "Present fear begetteth eternal security. Fear God, which is above all, and no need to fear man at all" (Augustine).

J. "The bones of our feastings at Satan's table will stick painfully in our throats when we are old..." (Spurgeon).

K. "Meek spirits live in high favor with the Father of the meek and lowly Jesus, for he sees in them the image of his only begotten Son" (Spurgeon).

L. "Keepers of the covenant shall be kept by the covenant" (Spurgeon).

M. Gospel privileges are not for pretenders.

N. "Blessed is the man to whom sin is more unbearable than disease" (Spurgeon).

O. A man can forgive one who has injured him, but one who he has injured he hates implacably" (Spurgeon).

Psalm 26

The Prayer Of A Righteous Soul For Vindication

Intro: This is a psalm of David. The occasion for its composition is not clear, but it may reflect the turmoil and troubles David encountered during Absalom's rebellion. Note his mention of "vain men" and "dissemblers." It is a petition for God's blessing of approval on his life. This psalm is closely related to the previous one. There is a similarity both in words and thoughts. A difference is seen in the thrice repeated confession of sin and the pleading for forgiveness of Psalm 25. Wheeler Robinson thinks this is an "oath of purgation" wherein David makes a formal and public oath of innocence in response to charges made against him by his enemies. He contrasts his single-hearted integrity and devotion to God with the hypocrisy and violence of his adversaries. The subject of this psalm is the author's integrity. Notice that he begins and ends his song with a declaration of his integrity (See verses 1,11). In 1685, King Louis XIV of France revoked the Edict of Nantes and expelled all Protestant ministers from the country. Their followers were forbidden to leave and persecution was used to force their return to Catholicism. To escape to freedom, the disciples left their homes and fled to friendly neighboring lands. They hid by day and traveled by night to avoid apprehension. A Protestant named Pineton of Chambrum, related that when he and his companions caught sight of Geneva, Switzerland, the Protestant stronghold, they sang with tears of joy this blessed psalm.

I. He Appeals to God to Witness His Sincerity and Righteousness (26:1-3).

A. He pleads for vindication by God (26:1a).
1. Make my innocence evident to all.

B. His confidence was based upon his integrity (26:1b).
1.The Hebrew term '***tam'*** is a word for perfection, sincerity of purpose and single-hearted devotion.
2. He was not claiming moral perfection, but uprightness of heart and sincerity of intention (Comp. Gen 20:5).

C. He had trusted God (26:1 c)
1. His faith had never wavered.
a. "I shall not slide" (KJV).

D. He requests that God examine, prove and try him (26:2).
1. These are words used for the testing of metals.
2. Note that he did not shrink from any test God might impose.
3. My "heart and mind."
a. The KJV reads "my reins and my heart"
(1) Reins are literally the kidneys. The term is used metaphorically for the seat of the lower animal passions.
(2)The heart is the seat of the higher affections, the will and conscience.
b. Together, they are all of his inner life; feelings, thoughts and will.

E. He kept God's loving-kindness constantly before his eyes (26:3a).

F. He walked in God's truth (26:3b).
1. The KJV renders this "conversation" which means "walked."
2.The idea is that of continual, habitual action.

II. How His Righteousness Has Manifested Itself in His Life (26:4-8).

A. In his complete separation from the wicked (26:5).
1. He did not fraternize with men of falsehood.
a. That is, men not genuine and true.
2. He avoided company with dissemblers or hypocrites.
a. He had no "fellowship with pretenders."

B. He hated the assembly of evildoers.
1. There is a holy hatred. It is right to hate the things that God hates.
a. Compare Proverbs 6:16-19.

C. In his love for God's house (26:6-8).

1. He pledges to “wash his hands in innocency” like the priest did before approaching God’s altar (See Ex. 30:17-21).
2. He would “compass” God’s altar, going around it in procession.
    a. On the day following the Feast of Tabernacles, the people compassed the altar seven times with palm boughs in hand, in remembrance of the overthrow of Jericho (Thomas Godwyn).
3. He would proclaim with thankful voice Jehovah’s wondrous works (26:7).
4. He expresses his love for Jehovah’s house.
    a. Note the antithesis with vs. 5. He hated the assembly of the hypocrites but loved the assembly of God’s saints.

III. His Prayer To Be Safely Delivered From the Judgment of the Wicked (26:9-10).

A. “Gather not my soul with sinners.”
1.The meaning of the verb is "to gather as a harvest or as fruit.”
2. “Bind me not up in the same bundle with them,” like tares being gathered for the fire (Matt. 13:30).
3. “Men of blood" are murderers and violent men.

B. Nor with wicked men in whose hands are wickedness and bribes (26:10).
1. No righteous soul will give or take a bribe to pervert justice (Ps. 15:5; Amos 5:12).
2. A bribe is like dust thrown into the eyes of a judge.

IV. His Resolution to Maintain His Integrity and Faithfulness to Jehovah (26:11-12).

A. He expects to walk in integrity because Jehovah will redeem him from sin’s power.
B. He felt that he was standing on solid ground, morally and spiritually (26:12a).
C. He commits himself to publicly praise and thank Jehovah in the assembly of his people (26:12b).

Lessons to Remember:

A. The company we choose is an index of our character.
B. There cannot be attachment to God without detachment from sinners and sin.
C. This psalm encourage us to take the burden of slander to God’s throne of grace for adjudication.
D.“The congregation of the hypocrites is not one with which we should cultivate communion” (Spurgeon).
E. The person who does not hate evil terribly, does not love good whole heartedly.
F. What God hates we must also hate.
G. Better to sit with the blind, the halt and the lame at God’s table than with the wicked in the feasts of ungodliness.
H. To publish abroad the praises of God is the daily business of every saint.
I. He who gives the bribe is as guilty as he who takes it.
J. It is a small matter to saints to be commended or condemned by men. It is God’s approval they seek. (Gal. 1:10).
K. The hypocrite is like a snow-covered dunghill (Thomas Adams).
L. Wheresoever we perceive any people to worship God truly after his word, there we may be certain the church of Christ to be, unto which we ought to associate ourselves...” (John Philpot, Christian Martyr, burned to death at Smithfield, England, 1555).

PSALM 27

A Song Of Fearless Trust In Jehovah

Intro: This inspiring hymn was composed by King David. The background is unknown, but its design is to inspire unswerving faith in God’s loving care and protection. From its contents we can conclude that the author was pursued by his enemies (vss. 2-3); shut out from God’s house (vs.4); separated from his parents (vs. 10) and the subject of vicious slander (vs. 12). The first six verses speak of his great faith. Verses 7-14 speak of his fears. The contrast of the two sections is so marked that some have theorized that two different Psalms have been combined. When Alice Driver, a non-conformist believer, was dragged before the doctors of the established church, they examined her,

trying to find wherewith to condemn her. Her simple scriptural explanations for her faith put the learned men to shame. She then asked them, "Have you no more to Say? God be honored, you be not able to resist the Spirit of God, in me a poor woman. I was an honest poor man's daughter, never brought up at the University as you have been; but I have driven the plough many a time...in the defense of God's truth, and in the cause of my Master, Christ. By his grace I will set my foot against the foot of any of you all, in the maintenance and defense of the same; and if I had a thousand lives they should go for payment thereof." They condemned her to death (Cited in Spurgeon).

I. His Declaration of His Confidence in His God (27:1-6).

A. Jehovah provides him protection (27:1-3).

1. "Jehovah is my light" (27:1a).
    a. Light shows us the way to travel in safety.
    b. Light reveals our enemies so they cannot catch us unawares.
2. "Whom shall I fear?" (27:1b).
    a. "The shadow of anticipated trouble is, to timorous minds, a more prolific source of sorrow than the trouble itself..."(Spurgeon).
3. "When evil-doers came upon me to eat up my flesh" (27:2a), i.e., to devour and destroy me.

B. His burning desire to worship in God's house (27:4-6).

1. "One thing have I asked of Jehovah" (27:4a).
    a. Single-mindedness and focus are essential to victory, be it mortal or spiritual.
    b. "One master passion in the breast, Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest" (Alexander Pope).
2. In David's day this would have been the tabernacle.
3. "To behold the beauty of Jehovah" (27:4c), likely refers to the beautiful, esthetically pleasing aspects of the tabernacle and its sacred rites of worship.
4. "To inquire in his temple" is explained by the parallel in vs. 5 to be the tabernacle.
5. "His pavilion" (27:5). From the word ***"papilio"*** which literally means butterfly and figuratively describes the cloth of the tent stretched over its frame.
6. "I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy" (27:6b).
    a. All worship worthy of the name is joyfully given (Phil. 4:4).

II His Fervent Prayer for God's Continued Help (27:7-13).

A. Oh God, please hear my prayer (27:7-9).

1. To seek God's face is to worship him.
2. He reminds God of his past record of faithful worship.
3. "Cast me no off, neither forsake me, O God" (27:9c).
    a. He has promised never to forsake us (Heb. 13:5).

B. His faith in God's deliverance (27:10-13).

1. "When my father and my mother forsake me" (27:10).
    a. This likely refers to the death of his parents (James Merrick).
2. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah" (27:13a).

III. His Admonition to Others (27:14).

A. Have patience when in trouble.
B. Be strong.
C. Be courageous.
D. God will give the victory.

Lessons to Remember:

A. With Jehovah as our light, we can safely travel through any dark night of temptation, suffering or sorrow.
B. Faith, grown strong, will make the heart fearless.
C. "Confidence is the child of experience" (Spurgeon).
D. "Nothing is so much to be feared as fear" (H. D. Thoreau).
E. "When fear grips the heart, the body is paralyzed" (Wiersbe).
F. The earthly enemies we face are but lackeys of the real enemy, the devil (Eph. 6:12).

G. Of this we can be sure, the journey of life will be through both mountains and valleys.
H. One of the greatest needs of the church in the 21st century is for Christians who long to "dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of (their) li(ves)" (27:4).
I. Once we truly behold the beauty of Jehovah, the passing and artificial beauty of the sinful world will have no appeal to us.
J. You have not yet reached spiritual maturity until you can "offer in his (God's) tabernacle, sacrifices of joy." He who gives grudgingly or of necessity is either a novice or stunted Christian.
K. Never forget that even if your father and mother forsake you, Jehovah will be there to help you (27:10).
L. Be not like those who plead with God while in the battle and then forget to praise Him for the victory he gives.
M. Victories on the battle field of life are won by saints on their knees in prayer.
N. One of life's greatest and most needed lessons in life is to "wait for Jehovah" (27:14).
O. God's delays are not necessarily denials. They may be precursors of greater blessings.

Psalm 28

A Plea For Help And Thanksgiving For Its Answer

Intro: This too is a prayer of David. The background is uncertain but could easily have been prompted by Absalom's rebellion (Compare II Samuel 15:1-18:33). It is an imprecatory psalm in that he asks God to punish his treacherous enemies. He prays that he will not be confounded with the wicked whom he abhors. It is very similar to Psalm 26, but here the danger is more pressing. He is in imminent peril of death. He prays that Jehovah will manifest His divine justice by punishing the wicked and sparing the righteous. Commenting on the fact that some of the most beautiful and spiritual thoughts have been penned by those suffering or in distress, Spurgeon noted that some ancient naturalists believe that the nightingale was prompted to sing all through the night because it had a thorn in its flesh.

I. His Urgent Petition To Be Heard

A. God is his rock, i.e., his unmovable foundation of hope and his object of trust (28: lb).
B. "Be not deaf unto me," i.e., like a deaf man who cannot hear his desperate cry.
1. "If thou be silent unto me." As the deaf man cannot speak in response to others, if God did not hear and respond to him, he would surely perish.
C. "Lest...I become like them that go down into the pit" or grave, i.e., I die and be buried.
D. Hear...when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle (28:2b).
1. They lifted up then hands in prayer as an outward expression of lifting up the heart to God (Comp. Ex. 9:29).
a. Early Christians sometimes followed this usage in their prayers (I Tim. 2:8).
2. "Toward thy holy oracle." When praying they faced towards the resting place of God's tabernacle and later towards his temple at Jerusalem.
3. The "holy oracle." This expression is from a verb meaning "to speak" and refers to the inner room of the tabernacle, the holy of holies, where the ark was housed and where God spoke to Moses.

II. His Imprecation On the Wicked (28:3-5).

A. "Draw me not away with the wicked..." (28:3a).
1. He prays that he will not be grouped with the wicked when God judges them.
2. The picture of "drawing away" is of a criminal dragged away to execution.
3. They are workers of iniquity who speak peace but have mischief in their hearts.
a. Our word mischief, is not as strong as the Hebrew term. It means, i.e., stark evil.
b. The evil he describes was of disloyalty, treachery and deceit.
B. Reward them according to their deeds (28:4).
1. He is asking God to act as a just and holy judge should act.
2. That they reap as they have sown (Gal. 6:7).
3. The men who accused Daniel and had him thrown into the lion's den were themselves cast into it and perished (Dan. 9:24). It is common for the wicked to perish on their own gallows like

Haman (Esther 7:10).

4. Christ teaches us to forgive and pray for our enemies (Matt. 5:43-45).

C. The reason they should be punished is they regarded not the works of the Lord (28:5).

1. They were atheists either in faith or practice, refusing to acknowledge what they could plainly see.

2. Therefore God will break them down like a wall and not build them up or strengthen them, nor allow them to recover.

III. His Thanksgiving For God's Answer to His Prayer (28:6-7).

A. "Blessed be Jehovah" means, glory, praise, and adoration be given to Him.

B. Because He had heard and answered the author's prayers.

1. This is the key to interpreting this psalm.

C. What God meant to him:

1. He was his strength, i.e., his source of inward strength and courage.
2. He was his shield, his outward protection.
3. He had trusted God and was reward with needed help (28:7b).
4. His heart was filled with joy.

D. Therefore with his song he would praise Jehovah.

IV. A Prayer for God's People (28:8-9).

A. Jehovah is their strength; not their superior armies, munitions and defenses.

B. As he had saved David, his anointed king, so might He save and bless the people.

C. His request: Save thy people, bless them, be their shepherd and bear them up forever.

1. These words are all images of a good shepherd and his sheep.

a. "Bear them up" means carry them like a shepherd does his lambs (Is. 40:11).

2. It reflects the thoughts of Psalm 23 and John 10:10-16.
3. It summarizes all the blessings of redemption.

Lessons to Remember:

A. God manifests his righteous judgement alike by sparing the godly and punishing the wicked.

B. If God seems to close his ears, we must not cease to pray, but do so with more earnestness.

C. It is sobering to imagine sinful humans dragged away to hell like vicious felons to the gallows.

D. Deceivers are more dangerous than wild beasts. Better to be in a pit with snakes than in a fine house with liars.

E. Isn't it amazing that the great God of the universe condescends to teach and save us and stubborn fools refuse to listen.

F. They who pray well with also praise well.

G. A song is the soul's best way of giving vent to its happiness. It should be more like the singing of a lark that the scolding of a jay or the croaking of a raven.

H. Our daily prayers should include a petition that God would revive, refresh, enlarge, strengthen and sanctify His church.

Psalm 29

A SONG OF A STORM-TOSSED SOUL

Intro: This psalm was written by David, It was prompted as he witnessed a powerful and destructive thunderstorm (See vs. 3-9). The demonstration of God's power in the storm was reminiscent of the events that transpired when He descended upon Mt Sinai. No phenomenon of nature is as awesome as a powerful thunderstorm. Virtually very poet in ancient and modem times has used his lines to describe such storms. Ancient Hebrews viewed nature from the perspective of their sovereign God as its creator, sustainer and overseer. Nature was a revelation of their God (Comp. Ps. 19:1-6). Isaiah wrote that "the whole earth is full of His glory" (Is. 6:3). Thunder was poetically described as the voice of Jehovah (Ex. 19:16). Storms are more violent and impressive in Palestine than in our climate. This psalm is a hymn of adoration of God. The Lord is directly named 18 times with another seven indirect references. A scribal note in the LXX indicates that at the time of the second Temple (Ezra's), this hymn was sung

on the concluding day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:36). Modem Jews, following the Talmud, sing it on the first day of Pentecost in their synagogue services. The song begins with "glory in the highest" and ends with "peace upon earth." Perowne observed, "No more perfect specimen (of poetry) exists in Hebrew." An English hymnal of the 1600s arranged the Psalms according to the months of the years, making a calendar of nature. This psalm is placed with the July collection, since in England, it was the season of thunderstorms.

I. He Calls Upon the Angels to Bow Before Jehovah in Worship (29:1-2),

A. "Ye sons of the mighty" improves on the KJV "O ye mighty."

1. Compare Job 1:6 where angels are called "sons of God."

B. "Ascribe to Jehovah." The charge is thrice repeated for emphasis of what is due Him.

1. Recognize and acknowledge the glory and honor that are rightfully His.
2. "His name" stands for Jehovah himself.

C. "Worship Jehovah in holy array" (29:2b).

1. In the beauty of holiness" (KJV) is a lovely expression in our English translation and has been the basis for hundreds of sermons on holy living, but it is not the meaning of the Hebrew text.
2. The meaning is that the angels should come before God adorned in garments suitable for those who approach the August Lord of creation.
3. God had a dress code for his earthly priests in Moses' system (Ex. 28:2).
4. These words depict heaven as a vast temple with all the inhabitants, arranged in priestly garments, doing perpetual service before the I AM (Com. Rev. 7:9-10).

II. His Impressions When He Witnessed a Powerful Thunderstorm (29:3-9),

A. The storm described (29:3-4).

1. He hears the rolling thunder from the clouds.
   a. The force and power of it reminds him of the voice of Jehovah.
   b. God's voice was heard amidst the thunder on Sinai (Ex. 19:16-19).
   c. Seven times Jehovah's voice of thunder is mentioned. (Compare the seven thunders in Rev. 10:3).
2. The voice is heard upon the waters (29:3a).
   a. This may refer to the dark clouds laden with rain (Comp. Jer. 10:13).
   b. Or the storm originating over the Mediterranean and sweeping inland.
3. The powerful claps of thunder command respect (29:4).

B. The effects of the storm (29:5-9).

1. The towering cedars of Lebanon are broken in pieces.
   a. Both by lightening strikes and by the force of the winds.
   b. Lebanon's renowned cedars, the tallest and strongest of all their trees, fell before Jehovah's wrath,
2. "He maketh them to skip like a calf" refers to the trees bending and whipping about before the winds.
3. "Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild-ox" (29:6).
   a. Sirion is the old Sidonian name for Mt. Herman (Deut. 3:9). It referred to the glistening snow on its summit.
   b. These were the loftiest mountains in Palestine and they marked the northern boundary on the nation.
   c. "Like a young unicorn" (KJV), is better translated wild-ox ASV.' The Hebrew text does not make specifically clear which wild beast is intended. The KJV translators followed the rendering of the LXX. They knew there were no unicorns extant in their day, but since ancient writers frequently alluded to these strange beasts, they presumed that they were an extinct species. Atheists pounce on this rendering to ridicule Scripture, but their target is a strawman.
4. "The voice...cleaveth the flames of fire" i.e. the forked tongues of lightening.
   a. The lightening strikes caused the fires he mentioned.
5. "The voice (thunder) makes the hinds to calve" (29:9a).
   a. Frightened and panicked by the storm, the expecting mothers drop their calves, whether ready or not. This is common among many mammals.
   b. Augustus, emperor of Rome, was so terrified of thunder that he wrapped a sealskin

around his body, to protect it from lightening, and concealed himself until it was past. Emperor Caligula covered his head and hid under his bed (Seutonius).

6. The voice "strippeth the forests bare" describes the leaves and branches torn from trees by the powerful winds.

a. "Discovereth the forests." The King James Version means to reveal, expose or lay bare.

C. The extent of the storm: from Lebanon and Sirion on the north to Kadesh on the South, from one end of the country to the other.

D. The aftermath of the storm (29:9b-10).

1. In his temple in heaven, in the wake of the storm, angels proclaim his glory.
2. On earth, the swollen streams of water remind the author of the Great Flood of Noah's day.
   a. "***Mabbul***" translated Flood, is used only of the Great Deluge.
3. As Jehovah protected and saved Noah in that great display of his judgmental power, so will he protect and save his people now.
4. The storm passed but He who sent it remains on his throne, in control of his universe, and ready to bless his people.
5. All is now peaceful.

III. The Moral of His Song Which We Should Remember (29:11).

A. His saints need not fear, Jehovah is not angry with them. He will strengthen them.

B. He will bless them with ***peace.*** This lovely word hangs like a rainbow of hope over this majestic portrait of a terrible, destructive storm.

1. The storm that struck fear into the hearts of unbelievers, delivered the blessing of rain to the earth.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Natural laws are those by which God works his will and way in his universe.

B. It is a diabolical science...which fixes our contemplations on the works of nature, and turns them away from God" (John Calvin),

C. As the mighty cedars of Lebanon could not withstand the strikes of Jehovah's lightening and powerful winds, so the mightiest of men can not withstand his judgement.

D. There is a threefold peace for God's children: temporal, spiritual and celestial; outward, inward and everlasting.

Psalm 30

A Song Of Thanks Upon A Signal Deliverance By The Mercy Of God

Intro: This lovely hymn was composed by David to celebrate his deliverance from some great physical danger. The Mesoretic notes indicate it was "A Song at the Dedication of the House." Although we cannot be absolutely sure, the contents seem to fit with the events that transpired when David, contrary to the will of Jehovah, ordered a military census of his people. The Divine punishment was a terrible pestilence which swept away seventy thousand people. The angel of destruction sheathed his sword at the threshing floor of Oman (Araunah), the Jebusite. David immediately purchased the ground and dedicated it to the worship of Jehovah by building an altar there. It was the site upon which the temple was later built (Comp. I Chron. 21:1-22:1). The psalm was chosen to be used at the dedicatory service of Solomon's temple, or at that of the Second temple, built in Ezra's day. It is still used by Jews at the festival of Chanukah which celebrates the rededication of the temple after it was defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria. The key verse of this psalm is, "I cried unto thee, and thou has healed me" (vs. 2).

When the Spanish governor, the Duke of Alva, sought to crush the Protestant disciples in the Netherlands, John Herwin was among those arrested. Waiting in his miserable prison cell, he sang psalms. Many people gathered around his door to hear his melodious voice. At the place of execution, he began singing Psalm 30. A Catholic priest tried to interrupt him, but John completed his song. He then said to those assembled, "I am going to be sacrificed, follow up me when God of His goodness shall call you." He was first strangled, then burned to ashes.

I. His Praise For God's Goodness (30:1-3).

A. He pledges to extol Jehovah for saving his life (30: 1a).

1. Extol means to lift up or exalt.
2. The reason being, that God had raised him up, literally drawn him up as a bucket from a well.
3. Because God had raised him up, he would raise God's name up in praise.

B. By saving him, God had frustrated his enemies desire to see him dead (30:1b)

C. God had heard his prayer and healed him (30:2).

1. This is the heart of his message.

D. God had saved him from the door of death (30:3).

1. Sheol is literally "the unseen" and refers to the grave.

II. He Exhorts Others to Join Him in Praise to Jehovah (30:4-5).

A. Sing his praise ye saints and,

B. Give thanks to his memorial name (30:4b).

1. His deliverance was a wonderful display of God's goodness and mercy. It should be commemorated by all (30:4b).

a. Jehovah is his memorial name (Ex. 3:15).

b. His point is; always remember what Jehovah has done for us.

C. Reason for memorializing his name.

1. His anger is but for a moment but his favor is for a life-time (30:5).
2. His proverb: "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy cometh in the morning."

a. Sorrow is like a passing wayfarer (Comp. Jer. 14:8), who only tarries for a night. With dawn joy comes to take its place.

III. The Mistake He Had Made (30:6-10).

A. His confession of over-confidence (30:6).

1. In his prosperity he had thought "I shall never be moved."

a. Paul warns us against this very thing (I Cor. 10:12).

2. He felt his kingdom was too strong to be shaken (30:7).

a. "My mountain" refers to his government or kingdom (Comp. Is. 2:2).

b. David had his stronghold on Mt. Zion (II Sam. 5:9).

B. Because of his sin, God hid his face from him, i.e. turned his back on him (30:7b).

1. He was "troubled" i.e., confounded, agitated, perplexed.

C. His prayer in the face of that distress (30:8-9).

1. "What profit is therein my blood, when I go down to the pit?" (30:9).

a. His "blood stands for his life (Lev. 17:11).

b."When I go down to the pit" means should I die and be buried.

2. Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth? i.e., If I die, can I praise you from the grave?

a. "If I die and go down to the grave, my voice will be missed from the chorus which sings God's praises on earth; let me live therefore to praise Thee" (Scroggie).

b. They knew little or nothing of life beyond the grave. He assumed that death was the end of man's existence. Even we say, a corpse cannot talk.

c. Christ brought immortality to light through the gospel (II Tim. 1:10).

d. "Declare thy truth" refers to God's truthfulness or fidelity.

D. His fervent prayer, "Hear O Jehovah, and have mercy upon me" (30:10).

IV. His Recovery and His Thanksgiving For It (30:11-12).

A. "Thou hast turned for me...that is reversed his circumstances (30:11).

1. His mourning was turned into dancing or celebrating.
2. His sackcloth (mourning clothes) were replaced with festal garments.
3. His muted silence was changed into songs of praise to God.

a. "My glory" seems to refer to his voice, although some think it refers to his soul.

B. His solemn pledge (30:12b).

1. "Jehovah...I will give thanks unto thee forever"

Lessons to Remember:

A. Remember the cause of your despondency; the bed of sickness, the bondage of fear and doubt,... and then praise God's holy name.
B. Grief accepted will change the nature of the sorrow.
C. Never forget the danger of self-sufficiency and over-confidence.
D. One of the greatest temptations of life is to enjoy tranquility and unmingled prosperity.
E. Before God, we can never think too little of ourselves.
F. For God's people, joy always follows the sorrows of life, just as the sun the darkness of night.
G. It is comforting to know that God's anger is but for a moment and his favor is for a life-time.

Psalm 31

A Hymn Of Mingled Sorrow And Praise

Intro: This hymn was written by David and dedicated to the Chief Musician of the Sanctuary singers. "Worn out in mind and body, despised, defamed and persecuted, the Psalmist casts himself upon God. Faith upholds him as he recalls past mercies; despondency overwhelms him as he thinks of his present distress; till the clouds clear, and the sun light of God's goodness floods his soul " (Kirkpatrick). In dire affliction he with confidence calls upon God for help and soon he finds his heart so strengthened that he ends with an outburst of praise and adoration. The lyrics of this song are full of the surging emotions of the author. For a while he rides the joyful crest of the wave, then he is plunged into the trough of despondency. It is cherished by many because they can identify with its surging emotions. The prayer of this song is one we all have prayed: deliver me, defend me, save me, guide me. G. Campbell Morgan describes this psalm as, "a great song of trust struggling through tears to triumph." He compared its changing moods to the changing seasons of the year, (an observation we will note in our discussion of the text). When an African missionary quoted verse 15, "My times are in thy hand," his native interpreter said in his local dialect, "All my life's whys and whens and wheres and wherefores are in God's hands."

I. The Author's Trust in Jehovah (31:1-8).

A. He affirms his faith and trust in the Lord (31:1).
1. "Let me never be ashamed, i.e., disappointed and confounded by finding my trust in you was in vain.
B. He pleads for God to hear his prayer and deliver him (31:2).
1. "Be thou to me...a house of defense," i.e., prove thyself to be what I know thou art. Delitsch called this, "The logic of every believing prayer."
C. He asks God to lead and guide me in right and safe paths (31:3).
1. "Pluck me out of the net that they have laid privily for me"
a. The net is a snare or a trap to capture the unsuspecting prey.
b."Privily" means secretly.
c. "Into thy hand I commend my spirit" (31:5).
(1) In total confidence he entrusted his life to God's care and keeping.
(2) Jesus expressed these word in his dying breath (Luke 23:46).
(3) God had redeemed him before and he was confident He would do so again.
d. The "God of truth" expects us to be people of truth and to love and honor His Truth (II Thess. 2:10)..
(1). "God of truth" from the Hebrew *emet*, means trustworthiness.
D. "He declares his hatred for idolatry and its devotees (31:6).
1. Literally, "I have hated them and hate them still."
2. "Lying vanities" refers to false gods (Jer. 8:19).
E. This was his **"Autumn"** experience, a time of wind and gathering clouds.
F. The joy he found in his prayer and meditation (31:7-8).
1. God had seen his afflictions and adversities and delivered him.

2. To be “shut up into the hand of the enemy” meant to be held under his power.
3. His feet set “in a large place,” meant a place of safety and freedom.

II. The Troubles He Faced (31:9-13).

A. His complaint:

1. “I am in distress.”
    a. “Mine eye wasteth away with grief.” They appeared red and swollen from weeping.
    b. His soul and body suffered as well.
2. My life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing (31:10).
3. My strength faileth.”
    a. My “bones are wasted away,” like those of an age person; hence unable to support the labor expected of them. “My strength totters.”
4. He was a reproach to his neighbors, i.e., an object of scorn (31:11).
    a. Friends and acquaintances who encountered him in public, avoided him, perhaps afraid of incurring persecution by any sign of sympathy for him.
5. He was forgotten by his friends (31:12). Out of sight out of mind..
    a. Cast away like a useless, worthless broken clay vessel.
6. He was demeaned and slandered by many (31:13a).
7. His enemies plotted his death (31:13b).

B. This was his **Winter** of sobs and sighings.

III. His Plea For Deliverance From His Enemies (31:14-18).

A. His trust in God declared (31:14).

B. He acknowledges God’s oversight and control of his life (31:15a).

1.“My times are in thy hand,” i.e., seasons, circumstances. “My destiny is under your control” (Harrison). We speak of good times, hard times, bad times.
2. The circumstances of our lives are not left to blind chance or fate.

C. Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies” (31:15b).

D. “Make thy face to shine upon thy servant’ (31:16a.)

1. Smile upon me with favor...save me.

E. “Let me not be put to shame, O Jehovah...Let the wicked be put to shame.

1. “Let the wicked...be silent in Sheol, i.e., in the grave.

F. “Let the lying lips be dumb which speak against the righteous insolently” (31:18).

G. This is his season of **Spring**, full of hope and expectation.

IV. He Praises God’s Goodness (31:19-24).

A. “How great is thy goodness” (31:19a).

1. “What a wealth of kindness thou has laid up for thy worshipers” (Moffatt).
2. God's manifold blessings for his children are stored up in the divine treasure house, awaiting distribution.

B. God will protect his faithful ones in “the covert of his presence.”

1. The parallel line is “a pavilion” or shelter for protection.

C. He confesses that for a brief period he had given up hope (31:22a).

1. I said in my haste,” that is in my agitation and excitement.”
2. He had said, “I am cut off.” i.e., finished or doomed.

D. God proved faithful even when his faith had failed him (31:22b).

E. His recommendation to the saints (31:23-24).

1. ”Love Jehovah”
2. “Be strong and... take courage.” Let your heart by valiant.

F. This was his **Summer** of golden sunshine and gladness.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Never forget the importance of trusting the Lord (vs. 14).

B. Trusting faith is the fulcrum by which all our cares and burdens can be lifted and removed.

C. Every day of our lives we should contemplate the great goodness of our God.

D. God owns and acknowledges his saints even when others are ashamed of them for their ragged and

tattered lives.

E. To “know thyself’ is a fine principle of philosophy, but to know God and be known by him is a far greater principle to both live and die by.

F. When, like David, we are forced to dwell in the dungeon of distress, faith and prayer are the keys that will allow us to escape to freedom (vs. 10).

G. Is it not amazing how the wicked can work in unity and harmony to oppose and destroy the good, while God’s people are often too divided to fight for the common good (vs. 13)?

H. When the Lord blesses us we should do no less than bless his Holy Name in return.

I. “Love is the universal debt of all the saved” (Spurgeon).

J. “Victory waits upon the banners of the brave” (vs. 24) (Spurgeon).

K. Omnipotence cuts the net which the wicked weave for the righteous (vs.4).

L. Let us live that at the end we can say with confidence, “Into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

M . **Rabbi Ben Ezra:**

“Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last for which the first was made.
Our times are in his hand Who saith, “A whole I planned.’
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid” (Robert Browning).

Psalm 32

The Song Of A Forgiven Sinner

Intro: This joyful, heartfelt song of David is classed as a penitential psalm, i.e., one that sprang from a penitent heart. Others of this category are 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143. Martin Luther referred to four of the penitential psalms as "the Pauline psalms” because they dwelt upon the grace and mercy of God. It reflects David's emotions following his pardon for his disastrous, sinful involvement with Bathsheba and her husband Uriah. It almost certainly would have been composed following his rebuke by Nathan the prophet. To see this psalm in perspective, we should first read Psalm 51, which speaks of David’s mental anguish for the unforgiven guilt of his sins. There he promised to “teach transgressors (God’s) way” and here he does so. “***Maschil***” means “for instruction” and describes the purpose of this song. Paul cites a portion of this psalm in Romans 4:6-8 to illustrate how God’s grace is freely given to the penitent. He attributes it to David. The author’s thesis is how to find peace with God. When Galileo was imprisoned by the Roman Inquisition for teaching the Copernican System, he was ordered to repeat the seven Penitential Psalms every week for three years. Augustine frequently read this psalm with an aching heart and tears in his eyes. He had it written upon the wall near his sick-bed to remind him of his never-ceasing need for God and to comfort him by it message.

I. The Happiness of a Forgiven Man (32:1-2).

A. “Blessed” means happy is the man who is forgiven.

1. David did not earn forgiveness by sacrifices, works of charity or gifts given. It was freely bestowed upon him by the grace of God (Rom. 4:6-8).

B. His evil conduct is described as, transgression (rebellion), sin (missing the mark), iniquity (moral crookedness) and guile (insincerity).

C. His pardon is described as forgiveness, sin covered and a debt not reckoned.

1. When we are in Christ, with our iniquities forgiven, God will not reckon or charge our sins and shortcomings to our account (Rom. 4:6-8).
2. This presupposes that we will be always willing to confess our sins (I John 1:8-9).

D. Sins are covered by God’s forgiveness (See Ps. 85:2).

1. True happiness is only realized when we make our peace with God and receive his forgiveness.

II. The Misery of Unconfessed Sin (32:3-4).

A. Much of life's misery is self-imposed by our refusal to acknowledge our wrongs.

1. His unforgiven guilt is pictured as a wasting disease, pain so severe that it caused him to cry out, one on whom the heavy hand of discipline rested and as land parched by drought.

2. David spent much of a year trying to hide his sin.

B. "Thy hand" refers to God's hand of discipline (Heb. 12:5-10).

III. The Pleasant Fruit of Confession (32:5-7).

A. Compare Proverbs 28:13, "He that covereth his transgression shall not prosper; But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy."

1. The sin unto death (I John 5:16-17), or unpardonable sin, is the unconfessed sin (See I. John 1:8-9).

2. Many seek a cure from a gnawing conscience on the psychiatrist's couch. This may only "conceal it under a well-adjusted personality, schooled in self-justification" (L. E. Toombs).

B. To bring a sinner to a saving relationship with Jehovah is like tossing a life-preserver to a drowning man.

IV. His Advice to Others (32:8-11).

A. Do not be stubborn as a mule (32:9).

1. Brute animals must be controlled and forced to learn submission to their master's will. If we behave as a beast, God will have to use discipline and chastisements to make us submit to his will.

B. Trust and obey in the Lord (32:10).

1. "The wicked have a hive or wasps around them, bringing many sorrows; but we have a swarm of bees storing honey for us" (Spurgeon).

C. Rejoice and be happy in Him (32:11).

1. "Rejoice" in the Hebrew expresses joy with outward gestures as children dance or skip for joy.

2. Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always."

3. The unhappy Christians has got a serious problem with his relationship to God!

Lessons to Remember:

A. One of the most beautiful passages in all of Scripture is 32:1 "Blessed (happy) is he whose transgression is forgiven."

B. When sin gnaws away at the conscience, the quickest, surest relief is to acknowledge and confess it (32:3-5).

C. God's finger is sufficient to crush the stubborn, sinful human heart.

D. All our sins must first be confessed unto Jehovah and then to others affected by them (32:5).

E. When we are tempted to sin, Satan tells us we can get away with it. When we have yielded to sin, he then says to us, you can never escape from this.

F. The lessons we have learned in life, even those hard ones of the consequences of sin, should be shared with others for their benefit (32:8). Thus your pain can be the inoculation that keeps them from the mistakes you made.

G. The Lord is much quicker to forgive sins than we are to confess them.

H. If we are stubborn as a mule, we will force God to put the bridle and the whip to us (32:9).

I. Oh the joy of a heart that is free from sin and right with God.

Psalm 33

A Song of Praise To Jehovah The Creator And Preserver Of All

Intro: This psalm was written by an unknown author, thus it is described as an orphan psalm. The Septuagint attributes it to David. This psalm is closely related to the preceding one and some speculate they were originally one. Compare 32:11 and 33:1-3 to see this connection. It is one of only three in the First Book of Psalms that have no

heading information or title in the Hebrew text. In it the author celebrates the creative power and providential rule and protection of Jehovah. It is a psalm of adoration and praise for Jehovah.

I. A Call to Praise Jehovah (33:1-3).

A. Rejoice in Jehovah, i.e., be happy! (33:1).

1. "Joy is the soul of praise" (Spurgeon). An unhappy person finds it hard to praise God.
2. The Hebrew verb means "to dance for joy..a strong expression for the liveliest exultation" (Alexander).

B. Praise is comely, i.e., an attractive thing for the upright (33:1b).

1. Only the upright will have their worship accepted.

C. Be thankful (33:2).

1. The harp and psaltery are related stringed instruments, commonly used by the Hebrews.
2. Their use in Hebrew worship was authorized by God (II Chron. 29:25).
    a. No such authorization can be found for Christian worship.
    b. Singing is the kind of music prescribed (Eph. 5:19).

D. Sing praises unto him (33:2-3).

1. The new song of which he speaks is "one that springs freshly from a thankful and rejoicing heart" (Perowne).
2. To be acceptable worship, our songs must be "unto Jehovah" rather than to men or self.
3. Hymn singing, just for singing's sake is not worship.

II. Reasons Why We Should Praise Jehovah (33:4-9).

A. His word and works are faithful (33:4).

1. There is no conflict between the Word of God and the Creation of God.
2. "The breath of his mouth" refers to "the word of Jehovah" which spoke the creation into being.

B. He is a God of love and he loves righteousness and justice (33:5).

C. He created the heavens and the earth by his powerful spoken word (33:6-9).

1. Moses' account of creation notes that in all cases "God said" and it was done(Gen. 1:3).
2. "In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was God,..all things were made through him...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1-14).
3. "He holds the seas as in a water-skin" (Moffatt), i.e., a water bottle made of goat skin.
4. He is fascinated not by the glorious things God made, but by His method of creation.

III. Because He is the Ruler Of All Nations (33:10-17).

A. The schemes of rulers he brings to nought (33:10).

1."Nations." The Hebrew ***goyyim*** refers to Gentiles.
2.An old adage says, "Man proposes, but God disposes."

B. His counsel stands unmoved forever.

1. Note the antithesis between the counsels of men and the counsel of God.
2. "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever," but the shores of time are littered with the wreckage...of proud nations which defied God and sailed in the teeth of his wrath.

C. His beatitude: "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah" (33:12).

D. Only Jehovah can save a nation from its enemies (33:16-17).

1. The horse mentioned here is the war-horse, the most powerful weapon of that day.
2. Massive military might is insufficient to save a nation if God decrees its overthrow.
3. In the battle of Arbela, the Persian army numbered well over 500,000 but Alexander's band of 50,000 Greeks utterly routed them."
4. "Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
lest we forget, lest we forget!" ®. Kipling).
5."A mighty man is not delivered by great strength." Remember Goliath of Gath!

IV. God Protects and Provides for His People (33:18-22).

A. The "eye of Jehovah" speaks of his omniscience (33:18).

B. He protects those who fear him (33:18).

1. Rebels have no claim upon his protection.

C. He will "deliver their soul from death" (33:19).

1. The word "soul" here means life.
2. "Death" used in conjunction with famine may have reference to deadly pestilence.

D. If we trust in him we shall rejoice (33:21).

E. His closing request: "Let thy loving-kindness, O Jehovah, be upon us" (33:22).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Praise to God is always comely and proper for the godly soul (33:1).

B. "There is always room for a fresh voice to praise the old Gospel, the old creation, the old providence" (Scroggie)**.**

C. No matter what any man or group of men may say, no matter how August their position, "the word of Jehovah is right" (33:4).

D. The marvelous power of Jehovah's spoken word is seen in his creation of the cosmos; the power of his written Word is seen in the salvation of souls and renewing of sin-ruined lives of men and women (33:6).

E. "God writes with a pen that never blots, speaks with a tongue that never slips, acts with a hand which never fails" (Spurgeon).

F. "Blessed in the nation whose God is Jehovah" (33:12).

G. One of the greatest consolations of the Christian life is that "the eye of Jehovah is upon them that fear him" (33:18).

H. "Hands lifted empty to heaven in longing trust will never drop empty back and hang listless, without a blessing..." (Scroggie).

I. As a speck of light piercing into a dark room leads one to conclude there must be a source for that light, so the marvelous things of creation, force us to look for their source...their Creator.

Psalm 34

A Hymn Praising Jehovah The Great Provider

Intro: This song was written by David to celebrate his deliverance when he had to feign madness to escape the Philistines (I Sam. 21:10-15). "Abimelech" was an hereditary, dynastic title of Philistine kings. "Achish" was the personal name of the king David encountered. Like Psalm 25, this is an alphabetic psalm, i.e., each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Only the ***vau*** is omitted. An extra line beginning with **p** is added at the end to complete the 22 lines of the alphabet. There are nine of them in all. The old Latin fathers called the alphabetic Psalms the "psalmi abcdari." It is didactic, i.e., a lesson to be shared (34:11). He acknowledges "God's providence and moral government of the world" (Perowne). Purkiser calls it "one of the most beautiful in the Psalter." John Fisher was beheaded on Tower Hill in London on June 22, 1535. Having spent 14 months imprisoned in the Tower of London, he was so weak he could hardly stand. As he mounted the steps of the scaffold, he lifted up his hands and murmured the words of Psalm 34:5 "They looked unto him and were radiant; and their faces shall never be confounded." Allowed to say a few words to the spectators, he knelt and prayed repeating the words of Psalm 31, "In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust." One swift stroke of the executioner's axe sent him speeding into eternity.

I. His Continual Praise to Jehovah (34:1-10).

A. His promise to praise God always (34:1).

1. A Mr. Bradford, who was imprisoned by Queen Mary, said, "If the queen be pleased to release me, I will thank her; if she will imprison me, I will thank her; if she will burn me, I will thank her..." So the believer says, "Let God do with me as he will, I will be thankful" (Samuel Clarke).

B. His invitation to others to join him (34:3).

1. Others are more likely to praise God if the saints lead the way.

C. God had answered his prayers (34:4-6).

1. "They looked unto him and were radiant" i.e., "beamed with joy" (Moffatt).
2. "Their faces shall never be confounded" i.e., made to the blush with disappointment" (Kirkpatrick).

3. “I sought Jehovah, and he answered me.” “God expects to hear from you before you can expect to hear from him” (Spurgeon).

D. The protection Heaven provided him (34:7).

1. The angel of Jehovah protected him.

a. This is the Second Person of the Godhead in his pre-incarnate state. When he came and pitched his tent among us, he was named Jesus (John 1:14; Matt. 1:21).

b. Compare Joshua 5:14 and Zechariah 9:8.

c. He is both an angel of blessing and of judgment.

2. Hebrews 1:13-14, God’s angels watch over his children.

3. II Kings 6:16-16-17, angels watched over Elisha.

E. God provided his every need (34:8-10).

1.The invitation to taste and see for yourself that God is good (34:8).

2. His beatitude: “Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him.”

3. Following the bloody battle at Bothwell, marauding soldiers came to the house of a widow who lost her husband in the conflict. They accosted her saying they would take all she had. She responded “I care not, I will not want as long as God is in the heavens.” Her’s was true faith in the love and provision of God.

II. His Lesson of Instruction (34:11-22).

A. He invites all to come and learn (34:11).

1. He did not propose to teach them science, mathematics, philosophy or business, but “the fear of Jehovah.”

B. His advice for a long and happy life (34:12-14).

1. “The benefit of life is not the length, but in the use of it. He sometimes lives the least that lives the longest” (Seneca).

2. Augustine said, “Live righteously, and live peaceably. Quietness shall find out righteousness wheresoever he lodgeth. But she abhorreth the house of evil.”

C. The blessings of God are upon the righteous (34:15-22).

1. “The eyes of Jehovah” refers to his omniscience.

2. He ever watches over his children.

3. “A contrite spirit,” i.e., “a beaten-out spirit” like sheets of copper are beaten (Adam Clarke).

4“Many are the afflictions of the righteous” (34:19).

a. While no exemption from afflictions is promised to the righteous, God does promise to deliver them (I Cor. 10:13).

D. The promise: “None... that take refuge in him shall be condemned” (34:22).

1. “Jehovah redeemeth the soul of his servants” is present tense. Thus our salvation and protection is continuous.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Any time is a good and proper time to praise Jehovah (34:1).

B. It is easy to sing a song in the day of prosperity, but David will sing also in the night of adversity” (Scroggie).

C. The person who really knows and loves the Lord will always invite others to join him in acknowledging Jehovah (34:3).

D. An old proverb says, “What you are is seen on your face.” Saints look to God and are “radiant.” (34:5).

E. It is a consolation to know that, “The angel of Jehovah encampeth around about them that fear him (33:7).

F. To every sinner we issue the invitation, to “taste and see that Jehovah is good” (34:8).

G. It will help you be more generous to God’s Cause when you learn that “they that seek Jehovah shall not want any good thing” (34:10).

H. “Christianity is not a dream, but a life,... not a conception, but a character” (Scroggie).

I. When in sorrow remember that “Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart” (34:18).

J. Better to “have a thousand afflictions and be delivered out of them” than have a half dozen and not escape them.

K. “Sin’s punishment if resident in sin itself’ (33:21).

L. “Ungodly men only need rope enough and they will hang themselves” (Spurgeon).

M. If you are Christian, doing your best to be faithful, find confidence in the truth that "none of them that take refuge in him shall be condemned" (34:22).

Psalm 35

A Petition For Help Against His Enemies

Intro: This is a psalm of David. It likely reflects his conflicts with either Saul or Absalom. He protests that he is being persecuted even though he is innocent. The persecution was especially painful because his oppressors were formerly friends whom he had befriended. The key to the psalm is vs. 7. "For without cause have they hid for me their net..." It is the first of the imprecatory psalms. Although he calls upon God to avenge the wrongs he had suffered he was content to leave the judgement in God's hands. "There is agony in this song" (G. Campbell Morgan).

I. His Enemies Intrigue and His Innocence (35:1-10).

A. His plea for help and vindication against his enemies (35:1-8).

1. He asks God to plead his case as his advocate (35:1a).

a. Should his enemies accuse him before the courts, he wants God to represent him.

b. Christ is the Christian's advocate (I John 2:1).

2. Should they come at him on the field of battle, he asks God to be his champion to protect and deliver him (35: lb-7).

a."Fight against them that fight against me" literally means, "devour them that would devour me" (Alexander).

b. The description of God as a warrior is anthropomorphic.

c. The "shield" is the small shield carried upon the arm. The "buckler," a large, full body shield.

d. "Draw out the spear" means take your spear from its carrying sheath and go into action on my behalf.

e. "Stop the way against them that pursue me" means block their approach.

f. Let them be "put to shame" means confounded, confused, defeated.

g. "Be as the chaff' means, driven before him without any resistance.

h. "The Angel of Jehovah pursuing" refers to the Second Person of the Godhead who is often mentioned in the Old Testament as God's representative on earth (Comp. Ex. 3:1-2, 13-15 & John 8:58).

(1). The Angel is depicted as the Champion of God's people (Josh. 5:13-15).

i."Their way be dark and slippery" describes a soldier fleeing from a pressing enemy in a dark, rainy night. On the slippery rocks he falls to his death.

j. Verses 4-8 constitute the first of his imprecations, wherein he asks for God's destructive judgements upon his enemies.

(1) Remember at that time they knew nothing of a future judgement where God would reward good and evil. They thought judgement should be in the present.

3. In verse 7 the metaphor changes to the hunter and the hunted. His enemies pursued him with the determination and skill of trappers

a. He prays his enemies will be snared in the trap they set for him (35:8).

b. Because they persecuted him without cause.

B. His promise of praise when God delivers him (35:9-10).

1. If his tongue were not enough to praise God for his salvation, even his bones would praise Him (35:10).

II. His Enemies' Ingratitude and His Indignation Declared (35:11-18).

A. How the author had treated his enemies (35:11-16).

1. He had been good to them (35:12a).

2. When they were sick, he mourned for them in sackcloth and fasting (35:13a).

3. He prayed for their recovery and well-being.

4. He was concerned for them as if they were his personal family (35:14).

B. How they had treated him (35:12-17).

1. They tried to ensnare him with deceptive questions (35:11).

2. They had returned evil for his good (35:12a).
3. They turned on him when he was afflicted.
4. They attacked him with slanders behind his back (35:15).
5. They tore at him like vicious dogs (35:15b).
6. They ridiculed him like profane mockers in feasts, i.e., those professional buffoons who entertained at feasts by ridiculing and shaming unfortunate guests or neighbors.

C. His prayer and promise (35:17-18).

1. Rescue my soul from their destructions, i.e. their destructive plots.
2. Rescue "my darling" from the lions. "My darling" is a Hebrew idiom referring to his life. It means literally "my only one" meaning the only life he had.
3. "I will praise thee among the people" (35:18c).
   a."In the great assembly" the great national convocations of the people.

III. His enemies Insinuation and His Impotence.

A. He prays that they may not triumph (35:19-21).

1. Any rejoicing over him by his enemies would be "wrongful" for he was innocent of wrong-doing.
2. "To wink with the eye" is to signal trickery or success in deceiving someone.
3. The wrongs they committed (35:19b-21):
   a. They hated him without a cause.
   b. They spread lying slanders against him (35:20).
   c. They falsely swore they had seen him engaged in evil (35:21).

B. He asks for vindication (35:22-26).

1. "Thou hast seen it," i.e., their evil deeds, as well as the truth of David's conduct (35:22).
2. "Stir thyself, and awake" Arise from your rest and come to my rescue (35:23).
   a. This is anthropomorphic. Being omniscient, God needs no rest, but we do. He needed God's help immediately.
3. Judge me and confound them (35:24-26).

C. He entreats heaven's blessing on his faithful friends who had supported his righteous cause (35:27).

D. He pledges himself to praise God for these blessings so long as he shall live (35:28).

Lessons to Remember:

A. It is easy to sing when trouble is gone, but to sing while it lasts is to triumph (35:14,18).

B. "Feet of lead, a sore head; but daring wings for him who sings" (G. Scroggie).

C. Death enters the wicked man's home without pausing to knock.

D. Prayer is never lost. If it bless not those for whom uttered it will at least bless those who pray.

E. As we can tell of what country a person is by his speech, so we can spot those whose homeland is hell by their hateful scoffing against things sacred.

F. A person is far down the road to hell when he can mock at that which is sacred and blaspheme the name of God.

Psalm 36

A Song Contrasting The Wickedness Of Man With The Righteousness Of God

Intro: This is a psalm of David, dedicated to the Chief Musician of the Levites. It is classed with the "wisdom'' psalms and literature of the Old Testament. It is a study of contrasts between the depravity of sinners and the righteousness of Jehovah. The background is unknown. In its three sections, it speaks of the sinner, the Savior and the saints. "The personification of "transgression," as here set forth, is unique in the Psalms" (Oesterley). This Psalm opens with a striking picture of what a wicked man is, who abandons himself, without check or remorse, to the inspirations of his own evil heart" (Perowne). Of the description of Jehovah in this psalm, Perowne writes, "These are some of the most wonderful words in the Old Testament. Their fulness of meaning no commentary can ever exhaust."

I. The Corruption of the Godless (36:1-4).

A. The character of the evil man who chooses to do wrong (36:1-4).

1. "In this section God reveals man's real nature to man himself "

a. A strong description of human depravity.

b. In these verses we see what the wicked man thinks (vs. 1), feels (vs. 2), says (vs. 3) and does (vs. 4).

2. Verse 1 is "one of the most difficult and doubtful verses in the whole Book of Psalms" (J. Alexander).

3. "Transgression is personified and is represented as uttering its counsels to the wicked man..." who is eager to follow them (Perowne).

4. "Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart" (New Revised Standard Version) (36:1).

5. "The transgressor mediates wickedness in his heart, because there is no fear of God before his eyes..." (Syriac Translation).

6."That which Transgression saith to the wicked is written in my heart," i.e., forever the subject of my verses.

7. "Oracle" (KJV), in every other place speaks of a supernatural utterance.

B. "There is no fear of God before his eyes" (36:1b).

1. His wicked subject is no atheist, rather he acknowledges God's existence but chooses to defy His will.

a. Such rebellion is "practical atheism." He acts as if there is no God.

b. He thinks God is no different than himself.

C. The wicked man's complacency will be shattered when the results of his sins come back upon him (Berkley) (36:2-4).

1. "The wicked person deceives himself with the thought that his iniquity will never be found out" (RSV), i.e., dragged to light and punished.

2. "The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit' (36:3). The truth is not in him.

3. "He deviseth evil upon his bed," i.e., even when resting he is plotting evil.

4. "He abhorreth not evil" (36: 4:b). "He never shuns evil" (Anchor Bible).

II. The Gracious Character of God (36:5-9).

A. In this section the author turns from the disgusting image of the godless man to the majestic and adorable character of his God.

1. Here, God reveals himself to man.

2. He sings of God's mercy and faithfulness, his righteousness and judgements (36:5-6).

3. He measures God's attributes (36:5-6):

a. His loving kindness is in the heavens. It encompasses all that men can know or say of God. God is love (I John 4:8).

b. His faithfulness reaches unto the skies.

c. His righteousness towers like the mountains.

d. His judgments are deeper than the ocean, i.e. the great deep.

4. His grace provides for and preserves both man and beast (36:6-9).

a. All find refuge and protection beneath the shadow of his wings (36:7).

(1)This may be a reference to the mercy seat of the temple which was overshadowed by the winged cherubim.

(2) See also Matthew 23:37 where Jesus offers such protection.

b. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house" (36:8).

(1) Fatness means abundance (RSV).

(2) Fat was regarded by the Jews as the finest part of an animal, hence the first and best of anything. When offering sacrifices, the fat of the animal went to God.

(3)This metaphor is derived from the sacrificial meal in which God receives the worshiper at his table (Lev. 3:16-17;7:15; Jer. 31:14).

c. "The fountain of life" is the source, like a spring is the source of a stream.

d. "In (His) light shall we see light" (36:9b). John develops the theme of God as Light in his Gospel and Epistles (John 1:4-9; 8:12; I John 1:5-7).

III. The Confidence of the Believer (36:10-12).

A. He prays for continued grace from God (36:10-12).

1. God's righteousness is extended to the upright in heart (36:10b).
2. "Let not the foot of pride come against me" (36:11a). Let them not prevail against me.
3. "Let not the hand of the wicked drive me away" (36:11b).
    a. Don't let them succeed in driving me from my home to be a wanderer.
4. Let the workers of iniquity be forever cast down, never again to rise (36:12).

Lessons to Remember:

A. No one can stand safely on the slippery slope of sin.

B. A wicked soul cannot long hide its true nature. The smell soon makes it obvious.

C. Whenever you sit down to eat, remember that you are fed by Jehovah's generous hand.

D. When you lie down to sleep and when you awake, remember and give thinks for it is the Lord who persevered you and kept you safe.

E. In 1551 Jeroninus Segarson wrote the following lines to his wife while both were imprisoned at Antwerp, Belgium for their faith:

"In lonesome cell, guarded and strong I lie,
Bound by Christ's love, his truth to testify.
Though walls be thick, the door no hand unclose,
God is my strength, my solace and repose."

F. Beware of the temptation to be tolerant of sin.. God expects us to abhor evil (Rom.12:9).

Psalm 37

On The Prosperity Of The Wicked And The Adversity Of The Righteous

Intro: This is a psalm of David. It is a meditation on the apparent prosperity of the wicked contrasted with the real prosperity of the righteous. It is a sample of the "Wisdom Literature" of the Hebrews and very much like the Proverbs in its style and teaching. Note that its message is a string of aphorisms or wise sayings. Among the Hebrews there were three classes of teachers, priests, prophets and wise men. As Solomon in the Proverbs, David here stands as a teacher of morals and ethics. This psalm is constructed as an acrostic on the Hebrew alphabet, but it is not perfectly formed. Some of the alphabetic characters have more than one line assigned to them. We have no clues as to the occasion for its composition. Verse 25 does indicate that it was written in David's latter years. The author vindicates the providence of God in His administration of the world. The key of this psalm is found in verse 1, "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers." Like the Book of Job and Psalms 49 and 73, it probes the question, "Why do the wicked prosper while the righteous sometimes suffer?" The author's conclusion is that the prosperity of the wicked is only temporary. This problem was more difficult among men of David's day, because they did not have the revelation of future rewards and punishments we enjoy in our Gospel Age. The key thought of the psalm is that commitment to God brings contentment and serenity even in the face of conflicts and hardships in life. In those days, folks thought that material prosperity was a token of God's pleasure and the absence of them a sign of his displeasure. They also held that recompense and retribution would be visited on ones descendants if not on the sinner himself. Tertullian called this psalm, "a mirror of Providence." Isidore called it, "an antidote to murmuring." N. Hardy called it, "a good man's cordial (medicine) in bad times." Luther called it, "a garment for the godly." As he closed his exposition of this psalm, Luther wrote, "Oh, shame on our faithlessness, mistrust and unbelief, that we do not believe such rich, powerful declarations of God, and take up so readily with little grounds of offence, whenever we hear the wicked speeches of the ungodly. Help, O God, that we may once attain to right faith."

I. His Exhortation to Commitment to God (37:1-11).

A. This is addressed to those sorely perplexed about the inequities of life.

1. Do not fret about evil-doers (37:1-2).
    a. Three times this is repeated, vss. 1, 7, 8.
    b. "Fret not" literally means, do not "heat oneself with anger."
    c. This is repeated almost verbatim in Proverbs 24:19. Solomon learned the

lesson from his father.

2. Neither be envious against the wicked.

a. Why envy a person who is self-destructing?

3. They will soon be cut down like the grass, i.e., destroyed.

a. "Green grows the grass, but soon comes the scythe" (Spurgeon).

B. Rather than fret about and envy the wicked, do these things (37:3-7):

1. **Trust** in Jehovah and do good (37:3).

2. **Dwell** in the land and feed on his faithfulness.

a. The land refers to the land of promise which God had given unto the Hebrews.

3. **Delight** thyself also in Jehovah (37:4).

4. **Commit** thy way unto Jehovah (37:5).

a. Commit means "roll upon Jehovah thy burdens," as a burden, too heavy to carry, is shifted to the shoulders of a stronger man.

b. He will make thy righteousness and justice to go forth as the noonday, i.e., as clearly and as obviously as the sun at high noon (37:6).

5. **Rest** in Jehovah and wait patiently for him (37:7), I. e., "wait patiently upon God with calm resignation which places itself absolutely in the hands of God" (Perowne).

C. Things to avoid (37:7b-8).

1. Fret not because of the prosperity of the wicked.

a"Fret not; it only leads to evil" (Moffatt).

b. "Be not wrought up, it only brings harm" (Anchor Bible).

2. Cease from anger and forsake wrath.

D. Reasons for the forgoing admonitions (37:9-11).

1. Evil-doers shall be cut off; but those that wait for Jehovah shall inherit the land (37:9).

a. "Inherit the land" is "a comprehensive expression for all the covenantal blessings of the chosen people" (Alexander).

2. The prosperity of the wicked will be short lived (37:10).

3. The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace (37:11).

a. Compare Matt. 5:5.

II. The Catastrophe Awaiting the Wicked (37:12-22).

A. All but two of the verses of this section speak of the disappointment and disasters awaiting evil people.

1. God, being the moral governor of the world, assures that evil done will return upon the head of evil doers (Ga. 6:7).

B. The futility of the wicked man's war against the righteous (37:12-15).

1. The Lord will laugh at him (37:13), when he

a. Plotteth against the just and gnashes his teeth upon him.

2. God sees the day of his judgement coming (37:14).

a. The wicked cast down the poor and needy. Cowards do not attack their equals. They seek out those who because of their lack of power or gentle spirits they assume will not or cannot defend themselves.

3. The harm he wished to inflict upon the good folk will redound upon his own head (37:15).

a. Returning the evil the wicked intend for others upon themselves is one of the glories of God's providence.

b. Remember Haman who was hung on his own gallows (Esther 9:25).

c. "Malice outwits itself' (Spurgeon).

C. The righteous and the wrongdoer contrasted (37:16-22).

1. Better to be righteous and have little than wicked and possess a lot.

2. God will break the arms of the wicked...i.e. their strength, leaving them helpless (37:17).

3. Jehovah knoweth the perfect man, i.e., the righteous man who is free from chronic defects of moral character (37:18).

4. The wicked shall perish as the fat of lambs (37:20). They are as transient as the fat of lambs burning on the sacrificial altar.

5. Jehovah knoweth our days (37:18). Because he knows our days, nothing can overtake us without his full awareness. Neither in time nor eternity can unforseen ill overtake us.

6. The wicked borroweth and payeth not again...i.e., with no intent of repaying but the righteous

graciously shares his blessings with others.

III. The Confident Assurance of the Righteous (37:23-31).

A. The reward of the righteous is both sure and abiding.

B. His steps or ways are established by Jehovah (37:23).

1. If he should fall he will not be utterly cast down, for with God's help he will rise again (37:24).
2. Not only his steps are ordered by the Lord, so are his stops (George Mueller).

C. He will not be forsaken (37:25).

1. "I have not seen the righteous forsaken." This is a statement of general truth of which there will be occasional exceptions. (Such is the nature of proverbial teaching). Think of Jesus, Paul and Stephen. Human experience confirms David's observation.

D. The righteous have sufficient blessings to share with others (37:26).

1. "All the day long" means he never grows weary in well-doing.
   a. We will not prosper through parsimony, but through generosity.
   b. God will pay back our generosity with interest.

E. Jehovah will not forsake him.

F. Because the law of God is in his heart,

1. He will be wise and just. God's law regulates his conduct
2. He steps shall not slide, i.e., he will not slip and fall (37:30-31).

IV. He Contrasts the Lots of the Wicked and Righteous (37:32-42).

A. God will protect him from the evil intentions and plots of the wicked (37:32-33).

1. The patience of the righteous will be rewarded (37:34).

B. The wicked will be cut down like a tree (37:35-36).

1. "A green bay tree" (KJV) means a tree in its native soil and environment, one not transplanted. Such a tree, no matter how large and flourishing, is vulnerable to the woodsman's axe.

C. "Mark the perfect man; observe that he is happy and things work out to his advantage (37:37).

1. But transgressors shall be destroyed.

D. God is the salvation, i.e., the Savior of the righteous (37:39-40).

1. Because they have taken refuge in Him, he will rescue them.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Remember: "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Fret not thyself..." (vs. 8).

B. Indulge not a passion which can make you a partaker in the guilt of those who are its objects.

C. We must always remember that God is working on a greater, grander scale than we do. He will not be rushed and hurried by our impatience.

D. The evolution of a wicked tyrant is summed up in three words. "Hero, Nero, Zero!"

E. Rather than spend our time fretting about other people's evil, we should spend our time and energy doing good.

F. Never forget that the triumph of the evil is short lived.

G. "The secret of security is in uprightness of heart" (Scroggie).

H. "Well-being can only come from well-doing" (Scroggie).

I. To be happy we must learn to choose and love what Jehovah chooses and loves.

J. "The best cure for dissatisfaction with the present and anxiety about the future is to leave both in the hands of God" (Perowne).

K. Faith cures fretting.

L. A silent tongue can be a demonstration of a wise head and a holy heart.

M. "Better to hunger with John than to feast with Herod" (Spurgeon).

N. If you were the heir of a fortune that would last you a life time, would you envy an actor who pretends to be the king of a wealthy empire?

O. To die well we must live well.

P. "Policy slips and trips, it twists and tacks, and after all is worsted in the long run. But sincerity plods on its plain pathway and reaches its goal" (Spurgeon).

Psalm 38

A Song Of A Suffering Servant

Intro: This is called "a Psalm." The Hebrew word is ***mizmor***. It is a different word than that used for the name of the Book. It mean a, "poem cut up into short sentences and pruned from all superfluity of words" (Bishop Lowth). David wrote this penitential psalm. It relates a time of serious physical illness and persecution. We are not able to assign it to a specific event in his life. "Tortured by pain of body and anguish of mind, deserted by his friends, mocked and menaced by his enemies, the Psalmist lays his cause before God" (Kirkpatrick). This song speaks to us in times of sickness or desertion It will never grow obsolete. It is one of the saddest of the Psalms. It contains the thoughts of a man who thought he was dying.. The sufferings predicted of Messiah by Isaiah are very similar to these (Is. 53:1-11). The Mesoretic note, "To bring to remembrance" likely means, "For making the memorial." See footnote. The Memorial or ***Azkara*** was a technical term in the Levitical ritual referring to the meal-offering which was burned on the altar as "the memorial" (Lev. 2:1-2). Likely this psalm was sung when such a memorial was being offered.

I. His Mental and Physical Suffering Described (38:1-8).

A. His prayer that God will have mercy on him, spare and deliver him from his suffering (38:1).

B. The pain he was suffering felt like arrows driven deep into his body (38:2-3a).

1. "God's arrows are his judgments in general," (Kirkpatrick), but in this case he speaks of illness.
2. "No soundness" in his flesh, meant "no health."

C. He felt his sin had brought on his suffering (38:3b-4).

1. When judgment and suffering come our way, it is well to examine our hearts to see if sin is lurking therein, demanding such chastisements.
2. He likens his sins to an overwhelming flood and a crushing burden on his back (38:4b).

D. His foolishness had caused his problems (38:5-6).

1. He describes in graphic terms the physical maladies he suffered (38:5-8).
    a. His wounds were loathsome and corrupt, which means swollen, infected and draining.
2. Notice that he blames his own foolishness for his plight.
    a. Never forget that all sinning is foolishness, for it always brings misery.
3. "I go mourning all the day" (38:6).
    a. The rabbis insisted that a person who was to stand trial before the high court of the nation should be dress in mourning clothes.
    b. "Whosoever comes before this court of the Sanhedrin to take his trial, presents himself in the guise of humility and fear, appealing to your compassion, with hair neglected, and clad in black garments" (Josephus, **Antiquities**, XIV, 9.3).

E. His loins were filled with burning, meant there was burning fever in his body (38:7-8).

1. To appreciate his words, imagine a man twisted with pain, bowed down with weakness, dragging himself along with the gait of an invalid. His diseased body is completely worn out and broken.
2. "I am faint" means, "I am benumbed, cold like a corpse (Perowne).

II. His Friends Had Deserted Him and Enemies Were Attacking (38:9-14).

A. The light was gone from his eyes, i.e., his eyes were glazed (38:10b).

B. "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my plague" (38: 11).

1. This term is used of leprosy (Lev. 13:3), but here describes the loathsome wounds on his body.
2. People stood far away from a leper lest they be defiled.
3. "My lovers" means "my loved ones" (Berkeley).

C. He was speechless in the face of his attackers (38:13-14).

1. He chose not to listen to his critics nor to answer them.
2. So did Jesus (I Pet. 2:23).

III. His Plea to God for Deliverance (38:15-22).

A. He was "ready to fall," i.e., tottering and about to succumb to his illness and wounds (38:17).

B. He repents of and confesses all of his sins (38:18).

1. "Honest confession is good for the soul."

C.“Mine enemies are lively and are strong” (38:19), in contrast to his weaken state.
D. He pleads with God to not forsake him (38:21-22).
1. But to help him (38:22a).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Always remember that when God chastens us it is because we need it.
B. This psalm teaches us what disaster sin can bring to life of a person who was generally good.
C. When the light of life grows dim in our eyes, the good Shepherd stands ready to escort us through the valley of the shadow of death.
D. David understood what many modems are determined to deny. Illness, physical and mental suffering can be the direct consequence of our own personal sin.
E. Kinsmen are not always kind men.
F. “It is better that the Lord should answer our troublers than that we should” (Scroggie).
G. Even if all other friends and things fail us, in Jehovah we can hope and he "wilt answer” (38:15).
H. “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.”
I. The most effective medicine for one who is sick in heart, mind and soul is to be sorry for his sins and freely confess them to God and any others whom we have wronged (38:17-18).
J. If we conform to the sinful world we will have peace with them, but if we shame them by a godly life, it is an insult they cannot accept. They will turn on us.

Psalm 39

A Song On The Vanity Of Life

Intro: This song of David is of unknown background. It makes an ideal sequel the previous psalm. It might have been written, upon his recovery. It is dedicated to the Chief of the Tabernacle Musicians. It was for Jeduthun, a Levite, one of several accomplished musicians and singers set apart by King David to lead the public worship of Jehovah in praise and thanksgiving (I Chron. 25:1-3). He is also called “the king’s seer” or inspired counselor (II Chron. 35:15). Jeduthun’s name is also affixed to Psalms 62 and 77. His name means “praising or celebrating.” Ewald describes it as, “indisputably, the most beautiful of all elegies in the Psalter.” “It is as one who feels how hopeless the problem of life is, except as seen in the light of God” (Perowne). A fifth century churchman named Socrates, also known as Scholasticus, told a story of man named Pambo who approached a learned brother, requesting him to teach him the psalms. The teacher began with 39:1, “I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.” Hearing those words. Pambo departed saying that would suffice for his first lesson. Two months latter the teacher saw him and asked when he should expect him for his second lesson. Pambo replied he had not yet mastered the first. Forty-nine years later he said the same thing.

I. A Resolution to Hold His Peace (39:1-3).

A. He resolved to bridle his tongue (39:1).
1. “I said, I will take heed to my ways” (39: la), i.e., I thought or resolved.
a. The capacity for introspection is one ability distinguishing us from animals.
2. “That I sin not with my tongue” (39: lb).
a. Compare James 3:1-12.
3. “1 will keep a muzzle on my mouth, whilst a wicked man is before me” ©. Carter).
4. He actually held his tongue when he should have spoken (39:2)
B. At last he said what his heart demanded (39:3).
1. “My heart was hot within me...the fire burned (39:3a).
a. “The smoldering fires of passion within could no longer be restrained” (Kirkpatrick).
2. “Then I spake with my tongue” (39:3b), “the muzzled tongue burst all its bonds” (Spurgeon).

II. He Prays that God Would Help Him Properly Understand the Brevity of Life (39:4-5).

A. Thou hast made my days as a handbreadth” (39:5a).
1.Compare James 4:14.
2. “Handbreadth” literally four fingers; less than half a span.
3. See also Psalm 90:10.

B. “Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity” (39:5c).
1. “Surely, all mankind, so self-confident, is as a breath.” (Berkeley).
2. No matter how rich, how strong, or how important, in view of eternity he is nothing.
C. “Selah” is thought to signal a musical interlude.
1. Modem Jews on the authority of Aben-Ezra, take ‘***Selah***’ to be equal to ‘Amen.’

III. He Acknowledges the Vanity of Earthly Life (39:6-11).
A. “Surely every man walketh in a vain show, i.e., as a shadow or phantom.
1. This is also the theme of Ecclesiastes. (See Eccle 2:18).
2. Vanity means emptiness or without meaning.
3. “He is a curious picture of nothing” (Trapp).
B. “He heapeth up riches...” as with a rake (30:6b).
1. Compare Job 27:16
C. “Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee” (39:7).
1. His sufferings were not over, but his hope and trust in God had removed the poison from them and made them tolerable.
D. He prays for forgiveness (39: 8).
1. He recognizes his sin as the cause of his problems.
E. He recognizes God’s power to consume man and his accomplishments (39:10-11).
1. “I am consumed by the blow of thy hand” (39:10b), i.e., by the punishments delivered.
F. “Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth” (39:1 lb).
1. This can describe either the moths that eat and destroy beautiful clothing,
2. Or the beautiful flying moth, whose frame is so fragile that its loveliness is easily marred and ruined by the slightest touch..

IV. His Plaintiff Cry for Help (39:12-13).
A. Hear my prayer, my cry; see my tears (39:12).
1. Stranger and sojourner were terms used to describe “aliens residing in a country to which they did not belong and where they had no natural rights of citizenship” (Kirkpatrick).
2. He felt alienated and alone.
B. Spare me before it is too late (39:13).
1. That I may recover strength” i.e., “brighten up,” footnote.
a. “Let me cheer up before I go and am no more” (Alexander)

Lessons to Remember:
A. “Grief suppressed is increased; locked lips makes hearts hotter...” (Scroggie).
B. No lesson is so difficult to learn as that of the proper control of the tongue.
C. “Tongue sins are great sins: like sparks of fire ill-words spread, and do great damage” (Spurgeon).
D. “There is hope for him whose hope is in God” (Scroggie).
E. It is a rare soul who truly recognizes and respects the brevity and uncertainty of life.
F. We must never forget that our God is not only full of compassion and mercy, he is also the judge of humanity and the destroyer of the wicked.
G. We who once were alienated from God’s family are now “made nigh in the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2: 12-13).

Psalm 40

A Song Of Sacrifice, Service And Trust

Intro: This hymn was penned by David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, and dedicated to his Chief Musician. Thus it was intended for use in public worship. It is messianic. It describes a time when God delivered the author from an extremely bad situation (40:2). Verses 13-17 are repeated in Psalm 70. Some theorize that vss. 1-12 and vss. 13-17 were originally two separate psalms. This psalm consists of two major divisions. Verses 1-10 tell of God’s mercies in saving him in days past. Verses 11-18 are a cry for similar help and deliverance in the calamities now before him. It is grouped with the Messianic psalms because of verses 5-8. This psalm along with 16, 22 and a few others,

reflects the case of pious servants of God who are enduring hardships and suffering.

I. The Reward of Patience (40:1-3).

A. "I waited patiently for Jehovah; and he inclined unto me," i.e., He leaned over to hear his request (40:1).

B. He had been in a dire situation.

1. His predicament was as hopeless as that of one who had been cast into a well or pit (40:2).

a. "Horrible pit" is literally "a roaring pit" (Purkiser).

b. "Miry clay" means literally, "mire of mud" (Perowne).

C. His patient trust and waiting for God's deliverance had been rewarded.

1. He who would serve God must learn to do so in patience. God will not be hurried.

D. Now he has composed this song as a tribute of praise (40:3).

1. He wanted others to learn from his experience (40:3b).

II. Praise to God for His Wonderful Works (40:4-5).

A. His beatitude: "Blessed is the man that maketh Jehovah his trust..." (40:4).

1. "And respecteth not the proud." "The word for 'proud' suggests the idea of overbearing arrogance and ostentatious self-assertion" (Kirkpatrick).

B. God's wonderful works are beyond number (40:5).

III. The Lesson He Had Learned (40:6-10).

A. God wants much more from us than sacrifices and offerings.

1. "Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in..." (40:6).

a. The ellipsis must be supplied: "Sacrifice and offering *(alone)* thou has no delight in..."

b. Compare I Samuel 15:22.

2. Formal public worship by itself is insufficient (40:6).

3. Vss. 6-9 are cited by the author of Hebrews as applicable to Christ and his sacrificial death (Heb. 10:5-10).

a. Seeing that man's misery could not be remedied by sacrifices and offerings of beasts, Messiah stepped forth and said "Lo I am come;..to do thy will, O my God..." In this he resolved to come down and give his life for our sins.

4. "Mine ears hast thou opened." "Ears hast Thou dug (or pierced) for me" (Perowne).

B. Above all, God wants an obedient heart (40:7-8).

1. "In the roll of the book, " i.e., the scroll of the Torah or Law.

2. This resolution of David is later applied to the Lord Jesus.

C. This lesson we must share with all (40:9-10).

1. "I have proclaimed (published) glad tidings (good news)...in the great assembly"

a. "Great Assembly" refers to one of their national festivals such as Pentecost.

2. "I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness" (40:10a). It is a terrible wrong when the saint holds within his heart that which other sinners desperately need to hear in order to be saved.

3. "The good news which he can proclaim is the certainty of the just moral government of the world, and Jehovah's faithfulness to His people" (Kirkpatrick).

D. The writer of Hebrews uses these words to describe Christ's sacrifice which surpassed all those of Moses's law (Heb. 10:5-10).

IV. His Prayer For Deliverance From His Enemies (40:11-15).

A. He needed forgiveness for his own personal sins (40:12).

B. He needed protection from those who sought his ruin (40:13-15).

1. He called for God's help to defeat those who sought after his soul (40:13a-15).

2. They taunted him with their "aha, aha" (40:15-b).

V. He Prays For Blessings Upon the Righteous (40:16-17).

A. "But as for me, miserable and helpless though I be, the Lord thinketh upon me" (Perowne).

B. "Yet the Lord thinketh on me," i.e., designs good for me (Purkiser).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Patience before God is always rewarded.
B. "The Lord asks not for oblation, but for obedience" (Scroggie). See I Samuel 15:22).
C. "Religion is greater than ritual, and conformity to God's will should always take precedence over ceremony" (Scroggie).
D. "The witness of the lip is fruitful only as it supplements the witness of the life" (Scroggie).
E. "If life were but one battle we could put off our armor when it was won, but as life is a campaign we can never afford to do that" (Scroggie).

Psalm 41

A Song Of A Seriously Ill Man

Intro. This psalm of David tells of a dangerous time in his life. He was desperately ill and among closest counselors there was disloyalty and a desire to see him dead and gone. A wave of slander had been launched to discredit the king and shake the loyalty of his subjects. In that circumstance, David could not be sure of who was or was not his true friend. His only certainty was his God. His faith was unshaken and fully rewarded. This song he dedicated to the Chief Musician of the Levite singers.

I. He Relates the Blessings of the Sympathetic (41:1-3).

A. His beatitude: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: Jehovah will deliver him in the day of evil" (41:1).

1. He has in mind here, not the financially poor, but those poor souls who are suffering from grievous illness.
2. "Blessed are the merciful" (Matt. 5:7).

B. Consider the blessings promised: deliverance, preservation, blessings in this life, protection from his enemies, support in time of illness (41:2-3).

1. "The couch of languishing" means his sick bed.
2. Jehovah "will support him," means be his physician.

II. He Pleads for Help in His Distress (41:4-12).

A. To understand this section, imagine yourself standing in David's sickroom as he languishes in serious illness. See his disloyal servants appearing solicitous in his presence, but then when outside his room, eagerly hoping for his end.

B. He was very conscious of his sins and failures (43:4).

1. He feels his own personal failures have brought this illness upon him.

C. Like vultures, his enemies hovered around, waiting for his demise. (41:5-6).

1. When in his presence they feigned words of concern for him, but upon leaving, they hoped for his demise (41:6).
2. When John Wycliff lay upon his sick bed, Catholic friars gathered around him, not to wish him well, but to press him to renounce his commitment to reformation and the publishing of the Word of God in the common language. They were like thorns in the side of the sick man.

D. A whisper campaign of slander was loosed against him (41:8).

E. His condition: "an evil disease...cleaveth fast unto him." (41:8).

1. "Cleaveth fast" is rendered "courses in his veins" by Moffatt.
    a. They may have hinted that some evil curse had fallen upon him.

F. His familiar friend had betrayed him (41:9).

1. In David's case this was Ahithophel (II Sam. 15:12).
2. For Jesus, it was Judas Iscariot (John 13:18).
3. "Who did eat my bread" means who dined at my own table with me.
    a. Among the Orientals to be invited to eat at the king's table was a signal honor.
    b. To then betray your host was the grossest treachery.
4. To lift up the heel against him, meant to kick him when he was sick in his bed.
    a. The imagery is of the horse who kicks his master who feeds and cares for him.

G. He was confident that God would deliver him from those who wished him harm (41:10-12).

1. He prays that God will enable him to requite them for their evil deeds (41:10b).

2. If he lost all else, he still had his "integrity," the most priceless of all personal treasures (41:12).

III. His Benediction: (41:13).

A. "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel"

B. "Amen and Amen." This verse marks the close of the first of the five books of the Psalms.

Lessons to Remember:

A. To have no sympathy for those who suffer is to invite calamity upon your own soul.

B. Happy is the man who has Jehovah for his physician (41:3).

C. "He that lays up his gold may be a good jailer, but he that lays it out is a good steward" (F. Raworth).

D. "An open and avowed foe is infinitely preferable to a treacherous and traitorous friend" (Scroggie).

E. The kiss of the traitor wounded our Lord' s heart as much as the nails wounded his hands (Spurgeon).

F. If all else is lost never surrender your integrity, for with it goes your reason for living (Job 27:5).

BOOK II

Psalms 42 and 43

A Song Of A Depressed And Weary Soul

Intro: With Psalm 42 begins the second great division of the Book of Psalms. In this collection of songs the writers generally use the name ***Elohim*** when referring to God. The writers speak often of Israel's ruin, redemption and Redeemer. It is generally thought that Psalms 42 and 43 were originally a single song. Many of the ancient manuscripts combine them. We will study them from that perspective. The author is not named. Some see in them allusions to David's life. The present author thinks it reflects the condition of the Hebrews when in Babylonian Captivity. It is called a ***maschil*** which means, a song of meditation or instruction. It is dedicated to the Chief Musician for the Sons of Korah. Korah was a Levitical priest who led a rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron. He, Dathan and Abiram were destroyed when the ground opened up and swallowed them and their families (Num. 16:1-33). Later we learned that some of Korah's descendants escaped their father's fate (I Chron. 9:19). Evidently they learned well from his mistake and ever afterward served faithfully as temple musicians and singers. These psalms reflect the anguished cry of a soul far removed from the house of God and its ordinances of worship. His circumstances are hard and his enemies taunt him. He is greatly depressed and discouraged but finds comfort in his faith and hope in his God.

I. His Fervent Desire for God (42:1-5).

A. His depression described (42:1-3).

1. As a hunted deer pants for water, so he needs God (42:1).
2. His tears are continual (42:3a)
3. His enemies taunt him, saying, "Where is thy God?" (42:3b).

B. He finds consolation in remembering pleasant scenes from the past when he worshiped with God's people (42:4).

C. His refrain (42:5).

1. Why am I depressed and disquieted?
2. I must hope and wait for God's deliverance (42:5b).

II. In Prayer and Contemplation, He Will Find Hope (42:6-11).

A. When he is "down" he remembers the happy past (42:6).

1. He counts his past blessings.

B. He contemplates God's never-ceasing mercy (42:8a).

C. He remembers the hymns of faith that have blessed him in days past (42:8b).

D. He prays (42:8c).

E. He will ask God to explain why such misfortunes have come upon him (42:9-10).
1. Ten times in these psalms he asks "Why?"
2. He had to learn that God is not obliged to reveal all of his ways to us.
a. Even if He did, we could not comprehend them (Is. 55:8-9).
3. Rather than insist on an explanation, we must trust God implicitly, whatever our circumstances may be. "We walk by faith" (II Cor. 5:7).
a. This is the great lessons of the Book of Job.

F. His refrain (42:11).
1. When cast down and upset,
2. I must hope in God who is my helper.

III. He Prays That God Will Be His Advocate Before His Enemies (43:1-3).

A. Christ is our Advocate who pleads our case (I John 2:1).
B. "The ungodly nation" likely refers to Babylon who had conquered and deported Judah (43:1b).
C. He struggles with self-doubt and weakened faith (43:2).
D. His urgent request, "Send out they light and they truth...Let them bring me unto they holy hill" (43:3).
1. "Thy light" refers to the ***shekinah*** that led Israel in their Exodus from Egypt.
2. " The holy hill" refers to Mt. Zion where were Jerusalem and the temple.

IV. His Pledge and Promise (43:4-5).

A. I will worship at God's altar (43:4-a).
B. I will sing his praise
C. His refrain (43:5).
1. Why am I depressed and agitated?
2. I must trust God and expect his deliverance.
3. He is my unfailing help (43:5b).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Emotional depression is a major health problem. Over 4 million Americans seek medical treatment for the condition each year. Every day, around the world, more than 2,000 people commit suicide. Most of them act out of depression. Chemicals and therapy may help, but the ultimate relief will be found by turning your life over to God and letting his counsel guide your life.

B. When facing hard and difficult circumstance, the most important thing is not how can we escape it, but what can we learn from it? Rather than ask God to shelter us from things that try and test us, we should ask him for strength to overcome them.

C. Looking back to better days can be helpful, but be aware that the past can be like an anchor that holds us back. Let the lessons of the past be like a rudder to guide you through today's problems. We learn from the past, and we are happy in the present because we look hopefully to the future.

"Yesterday God helped me;
Today He'll do the same
How long will this continue?
Forever! Praise his name! (Author Unknown).

D. Hope is the antidote for our depression. Not hope in our own strength, or a vague inclination that maybe things will work out. Our hope is Christ (I Tim. 1:1). He will never fail us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). He will work all things out for our good (Rom. 8:28). Through him we will be more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

E. We must walk by faith, not by sight (II Cor. 5:7). We must never doubt in the darkness of tribulation what God what taught us in the daylight of better days.

F. We can ask God questions, but we must never question God.

G. Remember, when your outlook is grim, try the up look. It is always bright.

(Many of the thoughts of this conclusion are taken from Warren Wiersbie's **Meet Yourself in the Psalms**, 1986).

Psalm 44

An Appeal to God in A Time of Unmerited National Disaster

Intro: This song is dedicated to the Chief Musician, or leader of the temple chorus. There is a question if the Mesoretic notes should read "of' or "for" the Sons of Korah. It is called a "***maschil***" which means a meditation. The background reflects a serious reverse which the Hebrew people had suffered at the hands of their enemies (vss. 9-16). Some scholars think the occasion of this suffering was the time of the Macabbean Wars when Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria oppressed them (II Macc. 5:11-23). Others find it in the raid of the Edomites against Judah while David and his army were away campaigning against the Ammonites and Syrians (II Sam. 8:12-13) (Perowne). "This psalm stands alone in its confident assertions of national fidelity to Jehovah..." Since God had blessed and delivered them in the past, they called on Him for present deliverance. The hope of their present and future rested on the acts of the past. In this psalm we are taught that we ourselves must be ready to struggle and suffer in order to receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10). It has always been cherished by Christians who were under persecution. Oesterley called it a "Lament of one caught between his theology and the facts of life." Ambrose, the great Christian preacher and scholar of Milan, labored to write a commentary on this Psalm. He was contemplating vs. 23 when he expired: "Up Lord, Why sleepest Thou? Awake, and be not absent from us for ever" (d. 397).

I. He Recalls the Mighty Deeds of God On Behalf of the Hebrews in Days Past (44:1-3).

A. "Our fathers have told us" (44:1).

1. This was their duty under the Law (Deut. 6:20-25).

a. It is our Christian duty as well (Eph. 6:4).

b. "Godly fathers are both by the order of nature and grace, the best instructors of their sons."

2. "They made their mouths, as it were, book, wherein the mighty deeds of the Lord might be read to his praise..." (Basil).

B. The works God had done in days past (44:2).

1. He had defeated their enemies and planted his people.

C. Their great victories had not been won by their strength (44:3).

1. They did not rise up and defeat their Egyptian overlords.
2. They did not defeat Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea.
3. They did not defeat the fortress of Jericho.
4. God had given those victories by his mighty power exhibited on their behalf.

A. "Thy right hand, and thine arm..." are symbols of God's power.

(1). The use of such terminology to described the invisible God is call "anthropomorphism" it describes God to our limited understanding by using the likeness of man.

b. "The light of thy countenance" likely refers to the ***shekinah.***

II. From Those Past Mercies He Expected Assurance for the Present (44:4-8).

A. He pleads with God to speak the word and bring about their deliverance (44:4).

B. Then, as in the past, we will push down our adversaries (44:5).

1. "Push down." Literally, we will toss them in the air with our horns, like a bull tossing a dog which attacks him.

C. "For I will not trust my bow...my sword." They had already proved worthless to deliver the nation.

D. Over the years they had boasted that their God would protect them and give them victory over their enemies.

1. Do so again and we will be praising thy name forever.

III. But Disaster Had Befallen Them (44:9-16).

A. It seemed as though God had cast them off (44:9):

1. He did not go forth with their hosts, i.e., as their leader and champion in combat.
2. He had left them to be beaten in the battle (44:10).
3. The victorious enemy had "taken spoil for themselves," i.e., plundered them.
4. "Thou has made us like sheep appointed for food," i.e., led to the slaughter house.

5. “Thou sellest thy people for nought,” i.e., it seemed He had let them go into slavery as worthless. He had surrendered them to their enemies without a straggle.

a. When Titus overran Jerusalem, “Many were sold for a small price: there were many to be sold but few to buy” (Eusebius).

6. They were “a reproach” to their neighbors, who scoffed at and derided them. (44:13-14).

7. “My confusion” (44:15 KJV) is better rendered “dishonor” (ASV) or disgrace.

a. The poet makes himself the representative of his nation and declares his own constant distress of soul.

IV. Their Suffering Was Undeserved (44:17-22).

A. “We have not forgotten thee.” Their allegiance was still true.

1. “We have not dealt falsely in thy covenant.”

a. That covenant had been first made with Abraham (Gen. 17:7).

b. It was confirmed to the nation at Sinai (Ex. 19:5).

c. Its outward seal was circumcision (Gen. 17:10ff).

d. Its visible symbol was the ark of the covenant (Num. 10:33).

e. Its code of conduct was the ten commandments (Deut. 9:9).

f. Its charter and constitution was the Torah.

2. They expected Jehovah to honor his part of the covenant, “My covenant will I not break...” “ Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail” (Ps. 89:33-34).

3. The writer’s claim of their innocence is not to be taken in an absolute sense. Rather, the general tenor of the people was one of faithfulness..

B. Yet for all of that, “Thou hast sore broken us in the place of jackals”

1. They had been driven from their homes and were dwelling in desert places when wild beasts lurk.

2. “Covered us with the shadow of death” Death is personified. He was so close his shadow loomed over them.

C. It would be impossible to hide ones apostasy from the all-seeing God (44:20-21).

1. “He knoweth the secrets of the heart” (44:21).

a. Heb. 4:12-13.

D. “If we...spread forth our hands to a strange god;” an Eastern expression of devotion and worship.

E. “For thy sake are we killed all the day long” (44:22).

1. Rather than from apostasy, they had suffered for their faithfulness to God.

2. They were treated as no more than sheep for slaughter.

3. Paul cites this verse in Romans 8:36 to described what he and his fellow- Christians were up against. a. He quotes from the Septuagint translation.

b. Note the difference in tone in the Psalmist’s perception of his hardships and that of Paul. The first cannot understand why and complains to God. Paul rejoices in his persecutions and says in all of these things we are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

4. John saw the souls of martyred saints crying, “How long, O Master...dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them...?” (Rev. 6:10).

5. The Eastern tyrant, Maximius warred against the Christians, “who contemned death and despised tyranny. The men endured burning, beheading, crucifying, ravenous, devouring beasts, drowning in the sea, maiming and broiling of the members, goring and digging out of the eyes, mangling of the whole body; moreover famine and imprisonment...they suffered every kind of torment for the service of God rather than they would leave the worship of God, and embrace the adoration of idols...” (Eusebius, **Ecclesiastical History**).

V. His Urgent Appeal For Speedy Help From Heaven (44:22-26).

A. Awake O Lord and arise in our behalf (44:23).

1. “God does not sleep (Ps. 121:3-4). He is omnipotent. He does not need rest.

2. This is an anthropomorphism. He uses this to explain God’s inaction on their behalf.

3. In the time of John Hyrcanus (B.C. 135-107), certain Levites called “Awakeners” daily ascended a pulpit in the Temple and cried “Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord[1]" Hyrcanus put an end to the practice, citing Psalm 121:3-4, “He that keepeth thee will not slumber.”

B. Why do you not move to our relief? (44:24).

1. “Avenge O Lord thy slaughtered saints,
Whose bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even those who kept they truth so pure of old...
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep.” (Author Unknown).

C. Their desperate plight: “Our soul is bowed down to the dust” (44:25).

1. That is, beaten down and left lifeless and helpless on the ground.

D. “Redeem us for thy loving-kindness’ sake” (44:26).

1. Compare Exodus 34:7-8: He is “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness...”

Lessons To Remember:

A. No normal parent would hide their children’s inheritance where they could not find it, nor should we fail to tell our children where God’s mercies can be found.

B. “Those who follow God for what they get, will leave Him when persecution is stirred up, but not so the sincere believer” (Spurgeon).

C. Serious piety has become a ludicrous subject with which the wits of the atheistic world sport themselves...but “here is the faith and patience of the saints, shining as gold in the fire” (John Flavel).

D. "The less confidence we have in ourselves or in anything besides God, the more evidence have we of the sincerity of our faith in God” (David Dickson).

E. The joy of the present and the hope of the future rest upon the fact of how God has dealt with us in the past.

F. Remember that not all reverses, suffering and sorrow are the result of personal sin. Some come as discipline and moral training. This is the lesson of the Book of Job.

G. If we must suffer, let us be sure it is for “His sake” and not because of our own sins.

H. One of the beneficial results of suffering is that it drives us to prayer as a few things can.

I. These words are from a prayer written by Leonard Schoener during the hard days of persecution of those who dared to be different for Christ’s sake. “We have been compelled to forsake house and home...our chambers are in holes and crags...we wander in the woods, they hunt us with dogs. They lead us away, seized and bound, as lambs that open not their mouths. They cry out against us as seditious persons and heretics...Many set oppressed and in bonds which even decay their bodies. Some have sunk under their sufferings and died without fault...The faithful have they hanged on trees, strangled, hewn in pieces...drowned. Not only men but likewise women and maidens. The world still rages, and rests not; it raves as if mad. They invent lies against us....”

Psalm 45

A Song Celebrating The King’s Marriage

Intro: This is said to be “a song of loves” or “love song” because it celebrates marriage. It is grouped with the kingly or royal psalms. It is ascribed to the Sons of Korah, a family of Levites devoted to the musical service of God’s temple. It is dedicated to “The Chief Musician” of the temple choir. It is a ***maschil***, a song for instruction or meditation. It is set to ***Shoshannim*** which literally means, “lilies of the testimony.” This likely is the name of the melody to which it was to be sung. This psalm is similar in style to the Song of Solomon. It was written first to celebrate King Solomon’s wedding most likely to the daughter of Pharaoh (I Kings 3:1). Across the ages, believers have held that it typically speaks of Christ and his bride, the church. Both David and Solomon were types of the coming messiah-king. Thus it is messianic. The author of Hebrews ascribes vss. 6-7 to Christ (Heb. 1:8-9). Even the ancient Jews counted it to be messianic. The Targum paraphrases vs. 2 “Thy beauty, O King Messiah, exceeds...” (Kirkpatrick). To understand its message we first look at its application to Solomon and then to Christ and his bride, the church. Our lovely hymn, “Out of the Ivory Palaces” is based on this psalm.

I. The Preface (45:1).

A. The joy he found in his subject (45 :1a).

1. His heart overflowed, or boiled and bubbled up with his subject.
2. “I address my verses to the king” (RSV).

B. His inspiration: “My tongue is the pen of a ready writer” (45:l b).

1. The Holy Spirit inspired him to write (II Sam. 23:2).

2.“A ready writer” means “a skillful scribe,” one that is fluent and accurate (Purkiser).

II. The Groom’s Character and Reign Described (45:2-9),

A. His beauty (45:2).

1. Is above all others (45:2a).

a. “Thou art fairer;” the Hebrew means “Thou art double fairer” (Trapp).

2. His lovely speech (45:2b).

3. His spirituality (45:2c)

B. His valor and glory (45:3).

1. Ancient warriors carried their swords in scabbards hung from a belt placed over their shoulders. The weapon was suspended on their thigh.

C. His prosperity (45:4).

1. The integrity of his administration (45:4b).

2. The righteousness of his judgements (45:4c).

a. “Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things;” is rendered “Let Your right hand guide You to tremendous things” (Amp. Bible).

3. His success over his enemies (45:5).

D. The stability of his kingdom (45:6a).

1. He is called God, ***Elohim***.

2. This verse is applied to Christ (Heb. 1:8-9).

3. This verse is sufficient to show the messianic foreshadowing of this psalm.

E. The equity of his reign (45:6b).

F. His character (45:7a).

G. His heavenly investiture (45:7b).

1. Notice that although Messiah is himself God, another called his God anointed him.

a. This of course would be God the Father (See Dan. 7:13-14).

2. We see this fulfilled at Jesus’ baptism (Matt. 3:16-17).

3. His anointing would be an occasion of great happiness for all the world.

H. The superiority his reign (45:7c).

I. His splendor (45:8).

1. “Myrrh, aloes and cassia” were costly, fragrant perfumes suitable for a king.

2. “Ivory palaces” refers to quarters decorated with lavish amounts of ivory. King Ahab had such a palace and Amos mentioned such (I King 22:39; Amos 3:15).

III. The Bride Instructed and Described (45:9-17).

(As Solomon was typical of Christ, so his bride is typical of Christ’s church Eph. 5:22-23).

A. Her attendants (45:9a).

B. Her attire (45:9b).

1. She is the “queen-consort” according to the Hebrew; a distinguishing title for the new bride.

2. She stands and sits at his right hand, the place of honor.

3. Ophir was notable source of gold in ancient time and was located in southern Arabia or eastern Africa (I Kings 9:26-28).

C. Advice given to her (45:10-11).

1. Forget thine own family and land (45:10).

a. Find your happiness here in your new home with your husband

2. Reverence your husband, your king (45.T 1).

D. Her honor (45:12).

1. “The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.” Hiram, king of Tyre, was a friend, ally and trading partner of Solomon.

2. “Daughter of Tyre” is an idiom referring to the people of that city.

E. The glory of her bridal attire (45:13).

1. In the inner palace. The author does not have in mind her inner beauty.

2. “All glorious is the king’s daughter within (the palace)” Berkeley.

F. Her bridal train (45:14).

G. Her new home and family (45:16).

1. A euphemistic way of saying that he wishes that she will be blessed with many children by and for the king.

H. Her honor (45:17).

Lessons to Remember:

A. When we think, speak or sing of Christ, our hearts should "overflow" with our subject.

B. Our Lord is "fairer than the children of men." Thus we sing, **"Fairest Lord Jesus**."

C. Never forget that the sacred writers spoke of Christ as God without blush or hesitation (John 1:1).

D. Christ loves righteousness and hates wickedness and so should we.

E. Read verse 11, "For he is thy lord; and reference thou him" and then take inventory of your towards the Savior.

Psalm 46

A Song Praising God As The Refuge Of His People

Intro: This psalm was composed by the Sons of Korah and dedicated to the chief temple musician. It was "set to ***Alamoth***" which means "young maidens," and perhaps prescribes for it to be sung by young female (soprano) voices. It may refer to a particular type of psaltery whose sound was called Alamoth (I Chron. 15:20). The great Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, loved this hymn. Thus it has been called Luther's Psalm. From the thoughts of this psalm he composed his classic hymn, **A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**. Charles Spurgeon called Psalm 46, "the Song of Holy Confidence." Graham Scroggie called it, "A psalm for every time of trouble." The key thought is the confidence God's people have when Jehovah is in their midst. The psalm was likely written at the time when the invading Assyrian army, under King Sennacherib, was destroyed outside Jerusalem's walls (Is. 37:21-37). Psalms 46, 47, 48 form a trilogy of praise to Jehovah for his greatness and adequacy to save his people. When the Catholic authorities of Europe roared against and threatened Luther and his Reformation, he would often say to co-worker, Philip Melancthon "Come Philip let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm."

I. His Declaration of Faith in God (46:1-3).

A. God is their refuge or fortress (46: la).

1. It was not their army or fortress that saved them, it was Jehovah.

B. He is "very present," i.e., always near at hand (46:l b).

C. Even when wars rage and governments fall, God's people can be confident in his protection (46:2-3).

1. "Mountains" are frequently used poetically to indicate governments (Is. 2:2).

2. ***Selah*** calls for a musical interlude and encourages worshipers to think on these things.

II. His Reflection On God's Protection of Zion (46:4-7).

A. Jerusalem was the city of God (46:4a).

1. The "river... which makes glad the city of God" is a figurative expression for God's presence, i.e., (the ***shekinah***) in the "holy place of the tabernacle" (46:4b). There was no literal river in the city.

2. Compare Jeremiah 2:13. He is the fountain of living waters. Also see Revelation 22:1.

B. She was the site of his holy tabernacle (46:4b).

C. God is in her midst (46:5a).

1. His ***shekinah*** dwelt in the Holy of Holies of the temple in Jerusalem.

D. He will protect and save Jerusalem (46:5b).

E. Gentiles enemies raged against Jerusalem (46:6a).

F. At Jehovah's spoken word they were destroyed (46:6b).

G. His righteous claim (46:7).

1. Jehovah of hosts, i.e., God of the armies of heaven.

2. The God of Jacob, who delivered our fathers in days, past will deliver us.

III. His Invitation (46:8-9).

A. Come and see what God has done (46:8).

1. History is filled with examples of the desolations God had sent upon wicked people,

a. The Flood, Sodom, the Assyrian army etc.

B. He made war to cease (46:9).

1. He broke the bow and spear. This is a description of ending strife by destroying the weapons of war

2. "He burned the chariots." The Hebrew word never refers to war-chariots and is thought to mean baggage wagons used for hauling military supplies (Kirkpatrick).

IV. His Conclusion (46:10-11).

A. Be still means be patient (46:10a).

B. Remember that God exists and will act as sovereign ruler of the world.

C. Jehovah is the protector of His people.

D. He is our fortress.

1. ***Selah*** means "ponder this."

Lessons to Remember:

A. God is a refuge on to those who flee to Him.

B. The Lord God is a "very present help" to his children who are in trouble.

C. As God was in the midst of ancient Jerusalem, He dwells in the hearts of all true Christians today (John 14:23).

D. When we consider the desolations God has wrought in the earth it should sober us and prompt us to live before him in godly fear.

E. One of life's greatest challenges is to "Be still, and know that I am God."

F. No matter how many or how fierce our enemies may be, remember "Jehovah of hosts is with us...(He) is our refuge" (46:11).

Psalm 47

A Song Calling On People To Glorify God

Intro: This psalm was composed by the Sons of Korah. There are two views about the occasion of its writing: (1). When David had the ark carried up to Jerusalem or, (2). When God destroyed the Assyrian army outside Jerusalem. It is a song of praise and adoration. The author calls upon all the peoples of the earth to praise Jehovah as their King and ruler. It looks forward to the coming day when believers of all nations will be with the Hebrews in serving Jehovah. It is dedicated to the Chief Musician. It is traditionally sung in Jewish synagogues on their New Year's Day. It is messianic. The ancient rabbis regarded it as referring to Messiah. Perowne calls it "A Hymn of Triumph." The same author suggests that it was sung antiphonally The first group would sing vss. 1-2, following by a second singing 3-4. The first would sing 5-6 and the responders would sing 7-9. Both would unite in the two closing verses.

I. A Call to Praise Jehovah (47:1-4).

A. A call to publically recognize the great Jehovah as a conquering king (47:1).

1. With applause (Comp. Nahum 3:19).

2. With shouts of triumph.

B. Reasons we should honor Jehovah (47:2-4):

1. He is terrible, i.e., wonderful, awe-inspiring.

a. He "excites terror, awe and dread" in the hearts of his enemies (Amplified Bible).

2. He is the great king of all the earth (47:2).

3. He has subdued Israel's enemies (47:3).

4. He has chosen their inheritance, i.e., the land of Canaan (47:4).

a. "The glory of Jacob" is the inheritance he had chose for them.

II. All Men of All Nations Should Praise God (47:5-9).

A. Because God has "gone up with a shout."

1. The picture is that God came down to fight on behalf of his people and secured the victory. Now he ascends back to his heavenly throne.

a. This would reflect the people's sentiments following His destruction of the Assyrian hordes.

2. Some see in this picture the procession that carried God's ark of the covenant up to its permanent resting place in Jerusalem.

3. The phrase "gone up" is commonly used of a king ascending his throne.

B. Sing God's praises (47:6-7):

1. For his reign is universal (47:7a).

a. "For God is king of all the earth" is literally *has become* King (Perowne).

b. This great truth the Jews of Jesus' day could not accept.

2. Sing his praise with understanding (47:7b).

a. Compare I Corinthians 14:15.

b. On this verse Spurgeon asks, "What has a sensuous delight in organs, anthems, etc., to do with devotion? Do not men mistake physical effects for spiritual impulses? Do not they often offer to God strains far more calculated for human amusement than for divine acceptance?"

C. God reigns even over the Gentiles (47:8-9).

1. Even rulers of the Gentiles will look to Him as their God.

a. This was fulfilled under Christ.

b. Princes of the nations will lead their people to the God of Abraham. This occurred when the gospel went forth into the world.

2. The shields of the earth are the princes or rulers whose responsibility it is to protect their subjects.

a. "Shields" is a metonymy for those who carry shields, that is protectors of the people.

b. Rulers derive their authority and might from him, and are his. It is fitting therefore that they honor their sovereign Lord.

3. Our God is greatly exalted.

Lessons to Remember:

A. We must never forget that Jehovah is king over all the earth, not just our nation or race.

B. "The best hope of all nations is that Jehovah ruleth over them" (Spurgeon).

C. How fortunate are we that God chooses our blessings for us. He knows so much better than we, what we really need.

D. Remember when you lift your voice in worship, that God expects you to "Sing...praises with understanding" (I Cor. 14:15).

E. Even those occupying honorable offices of power are expected to honor to the great Jehovah.

Psalm 48

A Song Celebrating The Deliverance Of Jerusalem From The Assyrian Siege

Intro: This song is attributed to the Sons of Korah, a Levitical family of temple singers. The word "Song" in the notations means "song of praise." The praise of Zion and of Jehovah's providential deliverance is its theme. The key thought is seen in vs. 2, "The glory of the Lord is revealed among his own people, Israel." This and the two previous psalms all relate to the same momentous occasion when God delivered them safely from the invasion and siege of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, recorded in II Kings 18:19-19:37 and Isaiah 36ff. Jerusalem was helpless before the great Assyrian horde. They would soon be reduced to starvation. They could not possibly withstand the assault that was coming. Then, suddenly, in a night, "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. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed..." The author of this psalm was evidently an eyewitness of the siege and their deliverance. From vs. 9 we can conclude that this was written for the Temple service. The Septuagint (LXX) tells us it was "for the second day of the week." The **Mishnah** relates that on that day the Levites read it in the Temple services.

I. The Glory of Jehovah and His Holy City Jerusalem (48:1-3).

A. Praises ascribed to Jehovah (48:1a).

1. Great is Jehovah. Just how great, we are incapable of conceiving.
2. Jehovah was always the object of Israel's praise.

B. Jerusalem praised (48:lb-3).

1. It is the "city of our God;" the place where His glorious presence was revealed within His Holy Temple. That was her true glory.
2. It's location is beautiful.
   a. "Beautiful in elevation." "Rising aloft in beauty" (Perowne).
      (1). The city sits on the edge of a tabletop mountain which rises abruptly 200-300 feet above the surrounding valleys. It averages 2400 ft. above sea level, with its highest point being 2,450 ft. This makes it highly visible to all approaching it from the south, east and west.
   b. Jerusalem was called "the Queen of the East."
      (1) Before the Babylonians reduced her to ruins she was called, "The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth" (Lam. 2:15).
      (2) When the world in heathen darkness wandered, Jerusalem was the bright north star that guided men to God
3. "On the sides of the north" (48:2b). Jerusalem did not lie on the north of the mountain top, but on the south side. The temple however, did stand in the northeast portion of the city.
4. It was the city of "the great King." This is an appropriate title to give to Jehovah, for the Assyrians whom He had just destroyed, called their king, "the Great King" (Is. 36:4). Now it was evident to all just whom the truly Great King was.
5. "God had made himself known in her..." (48:3a), i.e., in his Holy Temple within the city.
6. In her, his people had found their refuge from the invading hosts (48:3b).

II. The Consternation of Israel's Foes Described (48:4-8).

A. Note the succession of scenes that flash before us.

1. The invading "kings assembled themselves" (48:4a).
   a. "Kings" refers to the petty kings and allies who accompanied the Assyrians.
   b. "Assembled" is a word describing a formal confederation.
   c. "Lo" indicates something unexpected occurred.
2. "They passed by together," speaks of their march to their battle positions (48:4b).
3. "They saw it and were amazed," describes their first sight of the holy city.
4. They "were dismayed," describes how they responded when Jehovah smote them (48:5a).
5. Their wild panic and flight is pictured in "they hasted away" (48:5b).
   a. Their reaction when they saw what was happening: " trembling took hold of them."
   b. "Pain as of a woman in travail," i.e., birth pains (48:6).
6. The results of God's intervention: They were broken as ships at sea, caught in a great storm that drove and smashed them upon the rocks (48:7).

B. "Ships of Tarshish" This is a metaphorical description of the army of Assyria.

Looking down from the ramparts of Jerusalem, to the valley below, the tents of the Assyrians reminded him of a great fleet of ships.

1. Ships of Tarshish were the largest and most seaworthy vessels of ancient times. They plied the Mediterranean from the Palestine shores to Spain. Tarshish refers to the ancient Spanish port of Tartessus.

C. The "east wind" (48:7), speaks of the great storms that blew across the Sea from the east that often devastated the ships caught therein.

D. ''As we have heard, so have we seen..." (48:8). This tells us the author had personally witnessed this great deliverance.

III. The Lessons That Deliverance Taught Them (48:9-14).

A. It reminded them of God's loving-kindness or mercy (48:9).

1. "In the midst of thy temple" indicates that the song was to be sung there in the services as a reminder of God delivering mercies.

B. “So is thy praise unto the ends of the earth” (48:10). Others in distant places would hear of their deliverance by Jehovah and praise their God.

C. “Thy right hand is full of righteousness,” means that what God had done by his strength was a fair and righteous judgement, on behalf of Israel and against Assyria.

D. “Let mount Zion by glad” (48:11). That is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem should rejoice.

1. “Let the daughters of Judah rejoice” i.e., the smaller cities and villages of the nation for they too were freed from the Assyrian yoke.

E. He invites the citizens to “Walk about Zion..number the towers thereof...consider her palaces...” (48:12-13a). By this he means, walk about her, inspect the walls and towers standing safe and secure after the Assyrians had been driven away.

F. “That ye may tell it to the generation following” (48:13). The lesson of their divine deliverance must never be forgotten, but passed on to succeeding generations.

They had not defeated their powerful adversary, Jehovah alone had done so.

G. God alone “is our God for ever and ever” (48:14).

1. He will guide us even unto death, i.e. forever.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Too often privileges are held lightly and loosely until we are in danger of losing them. Then we realize their value.

B. “If we would have God to be dear to our children, He must be dear to us” (Scroggie).

C. Should all the people in all the world renounce Jehovah, we who wear the name of Christ must continue to worship and adore him and teach his divine message until he returns.

D. Have you pondered how many times God has intervened to deliver you from peril? Have you remembered to thank and praise Him for so doing?

E. As earthly Jerusalem was precious to the Hebrews, so should the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the living God, be to us (Heb. 12:22-23).

F. It is a consolation to know that no enemy, no matter how strong, can stand before our Jehovah. Like Assyria they all will be smashed and broken.

G. Have you made arrangements for your guide to accompany you through death and into eternity?

Psalm 49

An Exhortation Not To Envy Wealthy Sinners

Intro: This is one of the ten songs of the sons of Korah. It is dedicated to the Chief Musician of the temple chorus. This psalm is very similar in content to Psalms 37 and 73. It is classed as “wisdom literature. It is a philosophical discussion of the problem of wealth or the lack thereof. It is similar in style to Ecclesiastes and Job. The author is a moral philosopher. He offers his observations regarding one of the enigmas or riddles of life which troubles folks and tries their faith. His theme is the universal question of money and its influence. He deals with the age old temptation to envy those who enjoy the financial means for luxurious living. This, the heart of his discussion, is set forth vss. 5-6. He writes to console the righteous who are under trials arising from the prosperity and the enmity of their wicked neighbors. His solution is to point out the limitations of wealth and the limited tenure of those who possess it. All the world’s wealth cannot purchase exemption from death. All wealth must be abandoned when the possessor breathes his last breath. Note that he does not condemn the wealthy as tyrants or oppressors, but because they have made their wealth their god and have flattered themselves regarding their fine material possessions. It is not their wickedness but their worldliness that appalls him. Note that he addresses his thoughts to all people, for his theme is of common interest to all nations and races in every generation.

I. His Invitation to All Men to Hear His Message (49:1-4)

A. “Hear this, all ye... inhabitants of the world” (49:1).

1. The wisdom teachers of Israel viewed the problems of life from a wider perspective than their own Hebrew nation.

2. His message is for both those with and those without worldly wealth (49:2).

B. His method of instruction (49:3-4).

1. “My mouth shall speak wisdom.”

a. Among the Hebrews there were three distinct classes of teachers: priests, prophets and wise men.

2. He was sharing with his hearers "the meditation of (his) heart."

b. And the understanding he had derived therefrom (49:3).

3. He was offering his thoughts in the form of a "parable."

a. The word ***mashal,*** rendered parable, means, "a comparison, a proverb, a poem."

b. His poem is set to music played upon his harp (49:4b).

4. He describes his theme as a "dark saying."

a. From the Hebrew term ***chidah***, which means an enigma or riddle.

II. Why Should the Power of Wealth Be Feared? (49:5-12)

A. The prosperity of the wicked and the hardships of the righteous were the enigma which he would analyze (49:5-6).

1."Why should I fear?"

a. Meaning, he should not fear because riches cannot save a man from death, nor can the owner thereof take them with him when he dies.

b. No man can prolong his life with money, for death is no respecter of persons.

2. "When iniquity, at my heels, compasseth me about?" Is better rendered, When the iniquity of those who would supplant me surrounds me on every side" (Amplified Bible).

a. When the injustice of his wealthy neighbors dogs his footsteps and threatens to trip him up and bring him down under their control.

b. Remember, the Old Testament saints knew very little of a future life, where inequities would be corrected.

B. The folly of those who trust their wealth to save them (49:6-9).

1. The rich trust their wealth, making it their god (49:6).

2. "They boast themselves in the multitude of their riches," thinking to impress and intimidate others.

3. Their money cannot redeem their brother from death (49:7a).

4. God will not accept ransom money to postpone ones demise (49:7b).

a. The expressions "redeem" and "ransom" are taken from Exodus 21:30. If a man allowed his dangerous ox to roam about and cause another's death, he could redeem his own life by paying a ransom to the victim's relatives. A murderer however, could not purchase pardon (Num. 35:31). "For redemption of their life is costly, and it faileth for ever"

(1). There is not enough money on earth to buy back life for the dead.

5. "That he should not see corruption," speaks of the body moldering in the grave (49:9).

C. Wisdom is better than wealth, but even wisdom cannot deliver one from death (49:10a).

1. Whether wise or brutish, all die and leave their wealth to others (49:10b).

D. The mistake of the worldly, wealthy man (49:11-12).

1.They think "their houses shall continue forever," i.e., that they shall have their names long remembered in their posterity (49:11).

a. But history shows that in time all are forgotten. Their lineage dies out.

b. Their fine homes and properties pass to other occupants.

2. They think by calling their estates after their own names they will perpetuate their memory.

a. But even names of estates and cities are eventually changed.

E. His refrain: "But man being in honor abideth not" (49:12a)

1. Honorable men of wealth and influence abide not.

a. "Abideth" in the Hebrew means, "to stay or lodge for the night."

2. "He is like the beasts that perish" (49:12b).

a. Note the simile "like." This does not teach that man, like the beast, has no soul and no life beyond this. Ecclesiastes 12:7 teaches the opposite. It only means that no matter how rich and powerful a man may be he is going to die just as his dog is going to die.

III. He Contrasts the Destinies of Those Who Make a God of Their Wealth and Those Who Find Their Wealth in Jehovah (49:13-20).

A. We should not fear the wealthy because the future lot of the godless rich man is one of misery, while that of the God-fearing man is bright with hope.

1. "Such is the fate of the self-satisfied; the end of all whose faith is in themselves" (Moffatt).

a. "Their folly" is from the Hebrew ***kesel*** and denotes stupid self-confidence.

2. "Selah" A musical interlude that reminds us to think on these things.

B. The wicked rich will be driven down into Sheol like a flock of sheep. Death is their shepherd (49:14).

1. Sheol is the grave which shall consume them.

C. But the upright, in contrast, shall have dominion over them in the morning (49:14b).

1. "The morning," means the future. In the natural cycle of things, as morning follows night, the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked will be punished.

a. This is surely a hint of the coming revelation of immortality which was only fully revealed by Christ (II Tim. 1:10).

2. But the "beauty of the wicked the grave shall consume." No matter how imposing a man's wealth and power, it will all come to an end in death.

a. "There is no habitation for it," no place for their beauty beyond this life.

D. "But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol" (49:15a).

1. What the wicked cannot do for themselves, God can and will do for the righteous.

2. Here we have a certain hint of the resurrection and immortality just as in Job 19:25-27.

3. "He will receive me" (49:15b), even as he did Enoch (Gen. 5:24).

E. The wicked cannot carry his wealth beyond the grave (49:16-19).

1. Do not be afraid of nor envy the evil rich man for his life will soon be over.

a. He will leave every cent of his wealth behind.

2. "While he lived he blessed his soul" means that he congratulated himself on his good fortune, thinking that with his wealth he could avoid misfortune.

3. "He shall go to the generation of his fathers," i.e., he will die as have all of his predecessors.

4. "They shall never see the light," that is the light of life again.

5. His refrain: "Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, Is like the beast that perish" (49:20). This is both the key and the moral of the song.

Lessons to Remember:

A. He who lives a brutish life will die a brutish death.

B. Remember, while wealth cannot help you avert death, God can and will deliver his faithful children from its morbid grip.

C. "Death comes and wealth cannot bribe him; hell follows and no golden key can unlock its dungeons" (Spurgeon).

D. Daily remind yourself that not one coin, or one rag, one share of stock can be carried beyond this life.

E. It is not riches per se' that are condemned here but the trusting of them to save one.

F. Wealth does not make a man wicked anymore than poverty makes one righteous.

G. Man's ultimate folly is to seek any kind of immortality in earthly things.

H. The godly poor should not fear nor envy the wicked rich for their success is only temporary. They will lose it all at last.

I. The inequalities of life may never be corrected in this life but death equalizes all things. All come to the same end, all face a just God to receive their reward or punishment.

J. Money can buy almost anything the world has to offer, but it cannot buy off death.

K. No matter how imposing a man's wealth and power, it will all come to an end at death.

L. The wealthy man has but a leasehold on his land and property and death will end his tenure.

Psalm 50

A Hymn Praising God, The Judge Of All Men

Intro: This song was written by Asaph, one of twelve ascribed to him. Asaph was a Levite, and a leader of David's temple musicians (I Chron. 6:31-39). He was celebrated as a seer, that is, an inspired spokesman for God (II Chron.

29:30). David instituted the office of "Chief of Singers" for the temple (Neh. 12:46). The office seems to have remained heredity in Asaph's family and members were called "the Sons of Asaph." It is a song of instruction. The psalm depicts a courtroom scene with Jehovah sitting as judge and all men both, righteous and wicked, as defendants before him.

I. The Heavenly Judge In His Awesome Glory (50:1-6).

A. His names: (50:1a).
1. El, The Mighty One.
2. Elohim, The God of Gods.
3. Jehovah, The Self-existing One, The God of the Covenant.

B. The Summons (50:15).
1. All of humanity from east to west are called.

C. The location of his court (50:2).
1. Zion, refers to Jerusalem, where the Lord's temple stood.
2. "Shined forth" refers to his ***shekinah.***

D. His exaltation and the purity of his judgements (50:3).
1.Tempest and fire remind us that sinful creatures cannot approach the righteous God (50: 3).
2. Fire is the emblem of justice which consumes the wicked and purifies the righteous (II Thess 1:7-8).
3. The tempest is a token of his overwhelming power.

E. The righteous will be gathered before his throne to hear the judge exonerate and bless them (50:5-6).
1. Compare Matthew 25:34-40.
2. God himself is judge (50:6b). This verse provide the key to the interpretation of this psalm.
3. God has now delegated all judgment to his son Jesus (John 5:22,27).

II. The Judge's Address to the Righteous (50:7-15).

A. "I am thy God." (50:7c).

B. "I will not reprove thee" or condemn thee (50:8).
1. Because your sacrifices are continually before me.

C. They offered correct forms of worship but did not fully understand God and the purpose of their offerings (50:9-13).
1. He did not need their sacrificial animals.
2. All the creatures on the earth are his because he created and sustained them.
3. God is no beggar, dependant on the charity of man (50:12).

D. Proper understanding of worship (50:14-15).
1. It is evidence of our thankfulness (50:14).
2. It is proof our faithfulness in keeping the vows and promises we have made to God (50:14b).
3. In worship we recognize God as the Most High who has authority over us and deserves our obeisance (50:14c).
4. In worship we call upon God for provision and protection (50:15a).
5. In worship we glorify him (50:15b).

III. His Indictment of the Wicked (50:16-21):

A. Wicked teachers are rebuked for pretending to speak for God (50:16).

B. They hated instruction and rejected his word (50:17).

C. They had consented with the wicked (50:18).

D. They were liars (50:19).

E. They were slanderers (50:20).

F. They contemptuously thought God was no different than themselves (50: 21).

G. God had been silently observing their sinful actions. Now he was ready to deal with them (50:21).
1.They misjudge God's silence for approval, unconcern or inability to act.

Conclusion (50:22).

A. The wicked had better "consider this," or pay attention to God's warning, lest he tear them in pieces, like a lion would a lamb.

B. Those who worship him as he has ordained, he will save.

Lessons to Remember:

A. When the our might God speaks, wise men will listen (50:1).
B. God's authority and rule are universal and have always been so (50:1b).
C. The Lord's church should be as ancient Zion, "the perfection of beauty" (50:2).
D. Every person, especially sinners should understand that God will judge them (50:4).
E. We must understand that God is not dependent upon our sacrifices and offerings, but we are. They are proof of our love for God and our obedience to Him (50:8-15).
F. A fool hates instruction from God's Word (50:17).
G. A sinner's biggest mistake is to assume that God is unaware of his transgressions or that He will not punish them.

Psalm 51

A Convicted Sinner's Prayer for Pardon

Intro: This poignant psalm was written by David following his rebuke by Nathan the prophet for his sin with Bathsheba and his guilt in ordering Uriah's death (II Sam. 12:1-4). This and Psalm 32 compliment each other. It is classified as a "penitential psalm" because it is full of the author's penitence and contrition. It is dedicated to the Chief Musician to be used for the public worship of Israel.

"This Psalm is the brightest gem in the whole book, and contains instruction so large, and doctrine so precious, that the tongue of angels could not do justice to the full development" (Victorinus Strigelius, 1524-1569). It has been labeled, "The Sinners Guide." In days past, no other psalm was sung or prayed more often in the churches (Martin Luther). This is the first time is Scripture when God's Spirit is called "holy Spirit" (51:11). Thomas Chalmers said, "This is the most deeply affecting of all the psalms, and I am sure the one most applicable to me."

I. His Prayer for Forgiveness for His Shameful Deeds (51:1-9).

A. His plea for mercy (51:1a).
B. His petition for soul-cleansing (51: lb-2).
C. His contrite confession of his sin (51:3-4a).
    1.Note: he realized that his sin was first against God.
    2. This did not overlook or excuse the wrongs done to Uriah and Bathsheba, but it did put his sin in proper focus.
    3. He called it "evil." He did not seek to soften his deed as do most moderns.
D. He concedes the justness of God's condemnation of his conduct (51:4b).
E. His introspection (51:5-6).
F. His fervent plea for forgiveness (51:7-9).
    1. Like a leper, he desperately needed cleansing (Comp. Lev. 14: 1ff).

II. His Plea for Restoration and Renewal (51:10-12).

A. He begs for a clean (forgiven) heart;
B. A right (proper) spirit or attitude.
C. Reconciliation with God;
D. That God's holy Spirit would not be taken from him;
E. That his lost "joy of salvation" would be restored.

III. His Pledge to Teach Others the Lessons He had Learned (51:13-17).

A. "I will teach" sinners "thy ways."
B. I will sing thy righteousness.
C. I will praise thee
D. I will offer the sacrifices you expect, i.e., "a broken spirit" and a "contrite heart."

IV. His Prayer For His Nation (51:18-19).

A. He was aware that his foolish sins had put the entire nation at risk.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Sin cannot be hidden nor its consequences escaped. For every sin there will be a payday someday (Rom. 6:23).

B. Only by repentance and confession can sin properly be dealt with.

C. Like David, we must cast ourselves upon the mercy of God.

D. When forgiven, we must devote ourselves to helping others escape the snares of sin.

E. Remember that our personal sins do harm to the Lord's kingdom of which we are part.

Psalm 52

A Song Of Rebuke To A Wicked Man

Intro: This Psalm is attributed to David and is called a ***maschil,*** i.e., a sacred composition for instruction. "Sing ye praises with understanding," means literally, "Sing ye a maschil" (Ps. 47:7). It is dedicated to the Chief Musician or preceptor of the temple worship. It is a wisdom psalm expressing the resentment felt by a godly victim of a man, who without fear of God, had slander him. The subject of his rebuke was a man,"who unscrupulous in the exercise of his power and proud of his wealth, finds delight in all the arts of a practical liar" (Perowne). The Mesoretic scribes attribute the origin of this song to the evil doing of Doeg the Edomite who supplied information to King Saul against David in hopes of seeing him suffer harm (I Sam. 22:9). Of Doeg, we know that he was an Edomite, the descendants of Esau who bore perpetual hatred toward the descendants of Jacob. He was chief herdsman of the royal flocks of King Saul. The LXX identifies him as "keeper of his mules." He was a godless, vicious man, who at the instigation of Saul, murdered the eight-five priests of God's tabernacle and then slaughtered all of their dependents (I Sam. 22:17-19). He was a slanderous liar and an inveterate enemy of David. Note that what Doeg told Saul about David and Ahimelech was true, but it was intended for harm to David. The Key Thought is the folly of boasting in ones wickedness rather than in God's mercy and goodness. "Even short psalms, if they record but one instance of the goodness of the Lord and rebuke but briefly the pride of man, are worthy of our" study (Spurgeon). When King Charles of England was a prisoner of the Scotts at Newark, his captors taunted him by having Psalm 52 sung. "Why boasteth thou thyself, thou tyrant, That thou canst do mischief...?" Charles responded by asking them to sing Psalm 56. "Be merciful to me, O God, for man goeth about to devour me. He is daily fighting and troubling me: Mine enemies are daily in hand to swallow me up."

I. His Expostulation Against his Enemy (52:1-5).

A. Why do you boast in your mischief? (52:1).

1. Doeg had nothing noble to boast of, only his bloody slaughter of innocent, defenseless men of God and their families.

a. It is a small thing to kill a man. A snake, a scorpion, an infection, even a noxious plant can do that. Certainly it is nothing of which to boast!

b."O mighty man" is spoken with biting sarcasm, for he was really a cowardly liar and assassin.

2. "The loving-kindness of God," El, the strong and mighty, the everlasting God, is set forth in contrast to weak and cowardly Doeg.

B. The evil he is charged with (52:2-4).

1. His "tongue deviseth very wickedness," i.e., pure, unmitigated wickedness.

a. Note that David's description is not of a bold, bullying, bad man who grinds down all before him. but of one who accomplishes his will by sneaky lies and slanders.

2. His tongue was "like a sharp razor, working deceitfully" (52:2b).

a. A sharp razor working deceitfully means instead of fulling its intended purpose of shaving the hair, it became a wounding instrument. So his ability to speak had been perverted from its God-given purpose for slander.

(1)Murder with a razor is no less evil than murder with an ax. A deceitful slanderer is no less evil than a bald-face liar or character assassin.

(2)“A sharp razor” is one that has been whetted for a purpose or occasion.

3. He loved “evil more than good” (52:3).

a. He preferred evil over good and lies over truth.

(1). He had a taste for slander and cruel language that hurt others.

4. He loved “devouring words” (52:4).

a. Some people use words to swallow or devour their victims even as a boa constrictor swallows his victim.

5. “O thou deceitful tongue,” is a metonymy of the adjunct, where a part of the man stands for the man.

B. "God will destroy thee forever” (52:5).

1. As you have destroyed others, God will destroy you in perpetuity.

a. He had used his office and power to destroy helpless priests, but God would use his power to destroy Doeg.

2. Three descriptions of his destruction:

a. Like a house he will be destroyed, i.e., demolished (Comp. Lev. 14:45).

b. Like a tent is plucked up, he would be destroyed.

(1)“He shall take thee up.” The Hebrew term is that of a man wielding tongs to grasp a burning ember and remove it.

c. Like a tree that is ripped out of the ground he shall be rooted out.

II. The Satisfaction of the Righteous When His Abuser is Overthrown (52:6-7).

A. The righteous will see his judgement:

1. “And fear” at the swift and terrible judgement God inflicts upon the wicked.

a. It will not be some quite, private rebuke, but a widely seen and known punishment.

2. They “shall laugh at the man that made not God his strength” (52:6-7a).

a. There is such a thing as a shout of righteous joy at the downfall of the tyrant and oppressor” (Perowne).

b. Jesus calls on his followers to rejoice over Babylon’s fall (Rev. 18:20).

c. There is a malicious joy over a beaten foe that is condemned (Prov. 24:17).

d. His fatal mistake was that he made not God his strength.

e. “Lo, this is the man,” this is not the usual word for man, but one implying great strength and power and is used here in sarcasm.

3. He “trusted in the abundance of his riches and strengthened himself in his wickedness, but these could not save him.

III. The Confidence and Security of the Author (52:8-9).

A. “I am like a green olive tree in the house of God” (52:8a).

1.There was no temple when this was written. The tabernacle stood at Nob, a village on the north side of the Mount of Olives. Hence his allusion to olive trees.

2. He compares himself, in the house of God, to an olive tree: i.e., ever green, long living, fruitful and useful.

3. Green refers not to the color of the olive tree, but to its state or condition: alive, flourishing, vigorous, fruitful.

a. The color of the olive is yellowish to gray, not a bright green.

B. “I will trust in the loving-kindness of God” (52:8b.).

1. Note the contrast between him and Doeg who boasted himself in his mischief (52:1).

C. I will give thanks...because thou has done it” (52:9a), i.e., delivered him.

D. I will hope in thy name for it is good, in the presence of the saints” (52: 9:b).

1 “I will declare how good thou art, in (the) presence of thy followers” (Moffatt).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Those who will not let others live, forfeit their right to live.

B. Note how God so easily returns the punishment on the heads of wicked men.

C. What we say of others need not be a lie in order to be malicious, if malice is our motive.

D. Our gift of speech is for beneficial purposes not to hurt or harm others (Eph. 4:29).
E. “The heart is a fountain, our language the stream flowing therefrom (Matt. 12:34).
F. “The slander, whose edge is sharper than a sword” (Shakespear)..

Psalm 53

A Song About The Deadly Disease Of Sin

Intro: This psalm is attributed to David. It is a ***maschil,*** i.e., a song of instruction. This title is used of 13 psalms. It was set to ***malialath*** which literally means “sickness” and is likely the first word of a tune to which it was to be sung. The attentive reader will notice immediately that it is virtually identical with Ps. 14. There are two exceptions: in 53 the name ***Elohim*** is exclusively used for God, while in 14 the author uses both ***Jehovah*** **and** ***Elohim.*** The use of Elohim is a peculiarity of the second book of the Psalms. Kirkpatrick suggests that the “compiler’s object (in exchanging Jehovah for Elohim) was to show that the God of Israel was not merely a national God, and to counteract the Jewish spirit of exclusiveness.” Comparing Psalms 14:6 and 53:5 we see the second variation. “For God is in the generation of the righteous” (14:6). “For God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: Thou hast put them to shame, because God hath rejected them” (53:5). The latter is much more concrete, referring perhaps to some attack against the saints which God had helped them to beat back with great loss to their enemies. On the basis of vs. 7, some theorize it was produced during or following the deliverance from Sennacherib’s great Assyrian army. Alexander supposes that David rewrote the psalm with modifications necessary to address a later situation confronted by his people. That would explain why both are kept in the collection with David’s name affixed. As you read, note that he begins his instruction with the words of a fool who denies God and ends it with the words of a wise believer who trusts God for every blessing.

I. The Unbeliever Described (53:1-4).

A. The wishful thinking of the unbelieving fool (53:1a).

1. “Fool” is the Hebrew ***nabal*** which denotes moral perversity, not just ignorance or weakness of reason (Kirkpatrick).
    a. Fool describes a man with a withered soul.
2. It speaks not just of a bold, denial of God’s existence, but the refusal to accept the reality of a God to whom we are accountable.
    a. The fool says, “No God for me.”
    b. They refused to have God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:28).
3. This is the secret, continual prayer of wicked souls.
4. The consequence of such thinking was illustrated in the way the unbelieving Jews treated God when he came down in human form.

B. A terrible portrait of fallen humanity (53: lb-4).

1. “Corrupt are they,” like soured milk or spoiled dough.
    a. This speak of moral corruption (Comp. Job. 15:16).
2. Guilty of “abominable iniquity." i.e., enormous, or awful iniquities.
3. “There is none that doeth good:” the problem is universal (53:1c).
    a. This is also the assessment of Paul (Rom. 3:10-12).
4. There were none that sought after God (Elohim, the God of creation).
    a. Remember that God made himself known to the Gentiles as well as the Jews in ancient times:
        (1). Through creation (Ps. 19:11-6; Rom. 1:20).
        (2). He spoke to the fathers (Heb. 1:1).
        (3). He had prophets and priest among them like Jethro Ruel and Melchizedek.
        (4) By his providential provision and care of mankind.
        (5) By the presence of the Hebrews and their Mosaic Law in their midst.
        (6) By their conscience (Rom. 2:13-16).
5. “Every one of them is gone back, or turned their backs on God (53:3a).
    a. All of them have “become filthy” or putrid.
6. There is not one of them “that doeth good.” (53:3b). To do so seems to be beyond them.
    a. As it was in Noah’s day and in Sodom. Paul applies this verse to the condition in

Roman society of his day (Rom. 3:38).

7. They are workers of iniquity (53:4)

8. Their corruption is exemplified by their persecution of God's people (53:4).

9. None of their evil thoughts or deeds are hidden from the omniscient God (53:2). He sees their evil as he did that of Sodom (Gen. 18:20-21).

C. His amazement at their ignorance (53:4).

1. "Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, Who eat up my people as they eat bread?" (53:4).

a. Have they not gained knowledge, by experience or from history sufficient to deter them from their mad persecution of God's people?

b. So ignorant are that they cannot distinguish right from wrong.

2. They have no more scruples about hurting the saints than in eating a piece of bread.

II. God's Righteous Judgement of Such Unbelievers (53:5).

A. God will scatter the bones of all who dare to encamp against his people (53:5b).

1. Compare II Kings 19:35-36 when God destroyed the Assyrian host.

2. It added humiliation to defeat when the bones of the slain were left unburied (Ezek. 6:5).

B. Their hearts will be filled with great fear (53:5a).

1. This refers to cases of terror that swept over a strong enemy, inspired, not by the strength of the Hebrews, but by their God (See I Sam. 14:15; II Kings 7:6; 19:71).

III. His Prayer for Deliverance (53:6).

A. "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion" (53:6a).

1. A metonymy of the effect, where salvation stands for the one who saves

2. "Out of Zion" where his temple stood.

B. "When God bringeth back the captivity of his people" (53:6b).

1. When he reverses the fortunes of Israel.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Human corruption, wherever found, is the product of rejecting and denying God.

B. Neglecting God is the cause of human corruption and the judgement of God the effect of it.

C. "There can be no good where there is no God " (Scroggie).

D. Note well the total life history of the two types of men: the smug, arrogant, self-willed unbeliever who says, "no god for me," and the believing, heaven-governed soul who acknowledges God in every stoep of life.

E. What a fearful hell a guilty conscience is.

F. The bigger the fool, the more likely he is to dispute with the greatest mind and power of all.

G. It is idle talk to compliment atheists as sincere doubter, and kindly philosophers. God says they are putrid.

H. In atheism the heart is foul, the moral nature is corrupt and decayed.

I. "Bad principles soon lead to bad lives" (Spurgeon).

J. They who choose to devour God's people will find themselves soon desperately sick for having so done.

K. It is good now and then, to visit the field where the bones of God's enemies lie.

L. "There is no God, the fool in secret said:
There is no God that rules on earth or sky.
Tear off the band that binds the wretch's head,
That God may burst upon his faithless eye!
Is there no God?—The stars in myriads spread,
If he look up, the blasphemy deny;
While his own features in the mirror read,
Reflect the image of Divinity.
Is there no God?— The stream that silver flows,
The air he breathes, the ground he treads, the trees,
The flowers, the grass, the sands, each wind that blows,
All speak of God; throughout, one voice agrees.
And eloquent, His dread existence shows;

Blind to thyself, all see him, fool in these."
(Selected).

Psalm 54

A Plea For Divine Help

Intro: This is another psalm of David. It is a lamentation. The notations describe it as a ***maschil***, i.e., a song cf instruction. It is dedicated to the Chief Musician and was to be sung on ***neginoth***, i.e., stringed instruments. The ancient scribes related it to the time when the men of Ziph betrayed David to his mortal enemy. King Saul. David and his 600 men fled from the treacherous citizens of Keilah and went to the little town of Ziph in the wilderness of Judea, some 15 miles SE of Hebron. The Ziphites reported his presence to Saul, thus putting David at great risk (I Sam. 23:19-26; 26:1-4).

I. His Cry for Help (54:1-3).

A. "Save me, O God, by thy name" (54:1a).

1. His only hope for escape was by the help of God.
2. In the Old Testament, the expression the "name" stands for the person it represents.

B."Judge me in thy might" (54:1b).

1. That is, vindicate me.
2. By thy strength.

C. "Hear my prayer, O God" (54:2).

1. "Give ear to the words of my mouth" are parallel to the previous line and have the same meaning..

D. His danger described (54:3).

1. Strangers were risen up against him.
    a. Some ancient manuscripts read "proud men."
    b. They were men not previously known to him, men with whom he has no quarrel.
    c. These strangers would be the Ziphites.
2. Violent men sought after his soul.
    a. His soul means his life. They wished to kill him.
3. "They have not set God before them," i.e., that had no regard or respect for God.
4. "Selah," a notation for a musical interlude.

II. His Confidence That God would Deliver Him (54:4-7).

A. "Behold God is my helper" (54:4):

1. "Behold" means look and see that God is saving me.
2. Referring to God, he uses the name ***Adonai***, the Lord God, which stresses his sovereignty.
3. "The Lord is of them that uphold my soul."
    a. He looks about and sees God there among his allies; the champion ready to protect and deliver him.
    b. Some translations read, "God is the upholder of my soul," i.e., his supporter and strength.

B. Even though peril was all about him, he sings his song of deliverance as though it were already reality.

1. Our God is "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1).

C. God will requite the evil unto his enemies" (54:5).

1. This means He will return the evil they would do to David upon their own heads (Comp. Ps. 7:16).
2. He would destroy them in his truth (54:5b).

a. That is, according to his promise of protection for those that faithfully serve Him (Ps. 118:6-8).

III. His Vow to Offer Appropriate Thanks for the Blessing Received (54:6-7).

A. He promises to offer a freewill offering to God (Comp. Num. 15:1-10).

1. "I will give thanks unto thy name," i.e., unto Jehovah.

B. For it, i.e., the name Jehovah, is good (54:6b).

1. See Matt. 19:17.

C. The evidence of his goodness being "He hath delivered me out of all trouble" (54:7a).

D. "Mine eye hath seen my desire upon mine enemies" (54:7b).

1. That is, he had gazed in triumph on his defeated enemies.

a. He had looked upon them in defeat with delight or satisfaction.

Lessons to Remember:

A. If you truly believe that God is your helper and live by that faith in all circumstances, you will be more than conqueror in every conflict (Rom. 8:37).

B. If God is our helper what can men do unto us (Heb. 13:6)?

C. As did David, our petitions must always be mingled with praise and thanksgiving to our Lord.

D. Faith can see the glory of the future in the gloom of the present (Scroggie).

E. There can be no triumph without trouble, no help where there is no fear, no crown where there is no cross (Scroggie).

F. As we sing praises to our God, we should both learn and teach (Col. 3:16). That is the meaning of ***maschil.***

Psalm 55

A Prayer For God's Judgement On The Wicked

Intro: This psalm was written by David. It seems to reflect the turmoil of Absalom's rebellion (II Sam. 16:20ff). "Here is a man living in a world of violence and treachery which threaten to overwhelm him. longing to escape from it all, and yet confident in the God to whom he has committed himself..." (Oesterley). It is an imprecation, i.e., a plea for God's wrath and punishment upon his enemies. It is a ***maschil***, or a song of instruction dedicated to the Chief of the Musicians. It has been called "a Ballad of Betrayal" (W. T. Purkiser). Verses 12-14 are reflective of the betrayal of Christ by Judas. Psalm 41 should be read in connection with this one. Our hymn "Unto Thee I Pray," is based on vs. 17.

I. His Plight and His Prayer Forgiveness (55:1-8).

A. His plea for a hearing before God (55:1-3).

B. His trouble described (55:4-8).

1. Fear gripped his soul (55:4-5).

a. Terrors of death, means the fear of death was very real and close.

2. He longed to escape his painful predicament (55:6-8).

II. His Imprecation On His Enemies (55:9-15).

A. He asks God to destroy them and confound their plans (55:9).

1. "Divide their tongue" means confound and confuse their communications so they will fail as at Babel (Gen. 9:7-9).

a. When he learned of Ahithophel's defection, David prayed "O Lord, I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness" (II Sam. 15:31).

2. The author asks that those who had occasioned his fear become the subjects of God's wrath and vengeance.

3. "Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof." Like sentinels on the walls of a city, look for danger, they were looking for opportunities to overthrow David.

4. He describes their wicked plot to overthrow him as "wickedness in the midst thereof" (55:9a-11).

C. Their treachery described (55:12-14).

1. He most likely refers here to Ahithophel, his trusted friend and advisor who defected (II Sam. 15:37).

2. New Testament writers use these Psalm 41:9 and verses to describe Judas' betrayal of the Lord (See John 13:18).

3. "We walked in the house of God with the throng" at their holy day services.

D. His request for their destruction repeated (55:15).

III. His Faith Brings Confidence (55:16-21).

A. Prayer is the only remedy for his problems (55:16-17).

1. Not just occasional prayer, but regular and frequent communion with God.

B. He knew by experience that God would protect and save him (55:18-19a).

1. "He that abideth of old." Alexander renders this 'Inhabiting antiquity."

C. How his enemy had betrayed him (55:19b-21).

1. "His mouth was smooth as butter" describes his effective, lying, deception.

2. "His words drop from his lips like cream, or butter" (Ewald).

IV. His Closing Exhortation and Meditation (55:22-23).

A. God will sustain the righteous (55:22).

B. The wicked will be brought to destruction (55:23a).

1. "The pit of destruction" refers to the grave.

2. "Men of blood shall not live out half their days." This should not be pressed as a literal ordinance of God, rather experience shows that the violent die early deaths.

C. He will trust God and place his welfare in His divine hands (55:23b).

Lessons to Remember:

A. The troubles of a persecuted saint are vastly better than those of a backslider.

B. "Prayer is not telling God what to do, but committing ourselves to His will" (Scroggie).

C. If we wish to be a burden-bearer for our Lord, we must be a burden-sharer for others.

D. Men in every age and in every place have sometime longed for an escape from the daily conflicts of life.

"Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade;
Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more. My ear is pain'd
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd" (Cowper).

E. "Cast thy burden upon Jehovah, and he will sustain thee."

Psalm 56

A Psalm About Trouble And Trust, Fear And Faith

Intro: David wrote this song as he reflected on his captivity in Gath at the hands of the Philistines (I Sam. 21:11-22:1). He had to feign insanity to save his life. Psalm 34 is reflective of this same experience. It is a petition for help and a declaration of faith. David took a great risk in seeking refuge in Gath since it was their champion, Goliath, that he had slain in years past. The psalm was dedicated to the Chief Musician and set to ***Jonath elem rehokim***, which means, "the silent dove in distant places." This most likely is the name of the tune to which it was sung. It is called a "***michtam***." This term is connected with the root word for "gold" and suggests that this psalm is to be regarded as a "precious jewel" worthy of being engraved for permanent use. Five other Psalms are called **michtams**, 16 and 57-60 (T. H. Robinson). Archbishop Ussher (d. 1655), known for his famous chronology of the Bible, was repeatedly forced to flee for his life as Catholics and Protestants fought for control of Britain. He often quoted Psalm 56: 8 with sighs: "Thou numberest my wanderings: Put thou my tears into thy bottle."

I. He Complains that Wicked Men Would Devour Him (56:1-2).

A. He desperately needed God's merciful help (56:1a).
1. Evil men had no mercy, but God's mercy was abundant.
B. His enemies, like ravenous beasts, would devour him (56: l b).
C. Their persecution was unremitting (56:lc-2a).
D. His enemies were abundant in number (56:2b).
1. Persecutors, like bullies, commonly run in packs as they pursue the righteous.

II. He Expresses His Confidence in God to Deliver Him (56:3-4).
A. Fear was countered by faith (56:3a).
B. What can men do against the man in God's keeping?
1. Compare Romans 8:33-39 "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him..."
2. Ignatius, the Christian martyr, said to his enemies, "I care for nothing visible or invisible, that I might get Christ. Let fire, the cross, the letting out of beasts upon me, breaking of my bones, the tearing of my members, the grinding of my whole body, and the torments of the devils come upon me, so be it I may get Christ" (Eusebius).
C. His refrain: "In God (I will praise his word)
In God have I put my trust,
I will not be afraid:
What can flesh do unto me?" (56:4).
1. He stood confident with the "Great God against frail flesh" (Scroggie).

II. The Actions of His Enemies Described (56:5-6).
A. They distorted his words and used them against him (56:5).
1. Wolves always find in a lamb's discourse sufficient reason for eating him (C. H. Spurgeon).
2. In doing this they were endeavoring to poison Saul against David (I Sam. 24:9).
B. They conspired against him (56:5b).
C. They plotted to ambush him (56:6a).
1. They marked his steps like a hunter tracks his prey.
D. They wanted his life (56:6b).
1. Nothing less would satisfy them.

IV. He Expresses His Hope in God (56:7-9).
A. God will deal with his adversaries (56:7a).
B. God knew his problems (56:7b).
1. He appeals to God's righteousness which would be stirred to anger by their evil doings.
C. God would remember his tears of suffering (56:8b).
1. Ancients actually had decorative vials in which people sought to capture and save their tears as a memorial of their suffering.
a. They were called a lachrymatory, or tear bottle.
2. These were usually used only by those of position.
3. His point is that God would not forget the suffering they had caused him and that justice would be meted out.
4. Like ancient kings, God is said to have a book of remembrance (Compare Esther 6:1-11; Mal. 3:16).
D. "I know, that God is for me" (56:9b).
1. This verse should be as precious to us as Psalm 23 and John 3:16.
E. **From iniquity** there is an escape. **By iniquity**, there is no escape (Charles Spurgeon).

V. He Sings His Thanks To God (56:10-13).
A. His refrain (56:10).
B. Trust displaces fear (56:11).
C. He remembered the vows he made to God and promised to fulfill them (56:12).
1. Acts 21:23.
D. True gratitude will allow no less (56:13).
1. "He sees as already done what he believes God will do for him" (56:13a) (Scroggie).
2. "Thou...has delivered my feet from falling," when he was under assault by his enemies.

3. To walk in "the light of the living." Moffatt renders this "in the sunshine of life."

Lessons to Remember:

A. When men open their mouths against us, we should open our mouths in prayer (Spurgeon).
B. Like wolves, persecutors tend to hunt their victims in packs (56:2b).
C. "In this world we have 'affliction sorted, anguish of all sizes'" (Scroggie).
D. Faith exercised banishes fear. "Faith groweth valiant in fight" (David Dickson).
E. One godly man in prayer has the strength of twelve legions of angels as God responds to his petitions.
F. "There is nothing like faith to help at a pinch; faith dissolves doubts as the sun drives away the mists" (John Bunyan).
G. Learn to fear God (Eccle. 12: 13). If we fear Him, we need fear no other person.
H. "Your step will be light when you walk in the light" (Scroggie).
I. While the wicked readily twist the words of the righteous, let us never follow their wicked example.
J. It is no credit to us if we win by lowering ourselves to the methods of the wicked. There must be honor in our spiritual warfare.

PSALM 57

A Prayer For Rescue From His Enemies

Intro: David wrote this song when he fled from King Saul and hid in a cave at En-gedi (I Sam. 24:1-12). It too is a ***michtam***, or golden treasure. It was set to ***Al-tashheth*** which means "Destroy not." The 58, 59 and 75th psalms also have this note attached. This term likely identifies the melody to which it was to be sung. It is interesting that while David was hiding deep in the heart of the cave, King Saul entered it to rest. While he slept, David stealthfully slipped up and cut away part of the king's skirt. David forbade his troops to harm Saul, since he was God's anointed king (I Sam. 24:4-7). This song and the preceding one are very similar. Verses 7-11 of this psalm are repeated in Psalm 108:1-5. A refrain, "Be thou exalted, O God," occurs in verses 5 and 11. The song contains no new truths. It does teach us that faith does not free us from trials, but it enables us to be victorious over them. Faith in God is David's confidence. Twenty-two times he refers to God in these 11 verses. Our hymn, "**In the Shadow of His Wings**," is based on vs. 1.

I. His Plea For Mercy (57:1).

A. We all need a double portion of God's mercy (57: la).
B. Bodies can hide in caves but souls can hide only in God (57:1b).
C. Like a baby bird seeks refuge beneath the sheltering wings of its mother, so David sought refuge with God (57:1c).
    1. "There is nothing more remarkable in the Psalms than this ever recurring expression of a tender personal affection on the part of the sacred Poets to God. There is no parallel to this in the whole range of heathen literature" (Perowne).

II. His Motivation For Imploring God's Help (57:2-7).

A. Because God has aided him before and will help him again (57:2-3).
    1. ***Elohim Elyon***, rendered God Most High, implies God's power to help him, as the Supreme Ruler of the world and His willingness to do so (Kirkpatrick).
B. If there are no suitable helpers on earth, God will send his angels from heaven to succor and save his children (57:3).
    1. Compare Matthew 26:53 and Hebrews 1:14. Angels minister to God's children.
    2. Wicked men devour the honor and good name and usefulness of their neighbors.
    3. God's two attributes, loving-kindness and truth are personified as "ministering spirits" to protect his beleaguered child.
C. Because of the enemies he faced (57:4):
    1. They were fierce as lions.
    2. They were aflame with hatred for him.
    3. They were cruel and violent.
    4. Evil people carry a whole arsenal in their mouths.

5. No weapon is so terrible as a tongue sharpened on the devil's grindstone" (Spurgeon).

D. His refrain: "Be thou exalted O God above the heavens:
Let thy glory be above all the earth" (57:5).

E. God had turned the tables on his adversaries (57:6).

III. His Resolution To Give God The Praise (57:7-11).

A. His heart was fixed, i.e., resolved or determined (57:7a).

B. He would sing God's praises to all (57:7b-9).

1. Awake "my glory" refers to his spirit, the most noble and glorious part of man.
2. A psaltery was a 12 stringed instrument.
3. A harp or lyre was a 10 stringed instrument.
4. As Christians we sing and make melody with our hearts (Eph. 5:19).
5. "I will awake right early." "I will wake the morning" (Perowne). Rather than the dawn awakening him, he would greet the dawn with his joyful songs.

C. He wanted all people to know of his gratitude for what God had done for him (57:9-10).

D. His refrain (57:11).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Although faith does not free us from the trials and tribulations of life, it does give us the strength to triumph over them.

B. "God is a safe place in sore peril" (Scroggie).

C. "There can be no triumph where there is no trouble" (Scroggie).

D. When safe beneath their mother's wings, baby birds do not fear the hawk in the sky, nor should we be fearful when under God's protecting hand.

E. If there be no suitable instruments on earth, God will send help from heaven for his saints.

F. "No weapon is so terrible as a tongue sharpened on the devil's grindstone" (Spurgeon).

G. "Grace makes the promise, and providence the payment" (Spurgeon).

H. The soul whose heart is fixed on praising God will not be tossed about in the storms of life.

Psalm 58

A Bitter Outcry Against Unjust Judges

Intro: This song is attributed to David and dedicated to the chief Musician who led the temple musicians and singers.. It is set to ***Al-tashheth*** which means "destroy not." It is thought to be the first words of a vintage song to which this psalm was sung. It is a ***michtam*** which means "to engrave as an inscription is engraved upon stone. The thought is, it is worthy of being written in stone to assure its preservation. The author addressed the perennial problem of corrupt judges and the injustice they allow or do themselves. It is an imprecation, calling down God's wrath upon them. "This is a call for the public vindication of God's righteous judgment" (Purkiser). It may reflect David's experience when the judges of King Saul's court gave their approval to the king's evil schemes against David. The Hebrew text of the first verse is obscure and thus the interpretation has been difficult. New translations, particularly the new Revised Standard Version and the New International Version are very helpful in getting the proper meaning of this psalm. This "psalm is remarkable for the vigor of its language and the boldness of its figures" (Kirkpatrick).

I. The Sins of Unjust Judges Exposed and Protested (58:1-5).

A. His pointed questions (58:1).

1. "Do ye indeed in silence speak righteousness?"

a. Rather than render unpopular verdicts favoring innocent defendants, they said nothing, thus allowing evil to prevail.

(1). "Are ye dumb" or speechless? (King James Version).

b. "Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?"

(1) Note that the second line expands and explains the first.

c. It was their duty as judges to speak truth and justice, yet they sat silent and allowed evil to proceed unchecked.

(1) Compare Deuteronomy 1:16-17.

d. "O ye sons of men." Because of their office, they thought they were of a higher class than those whom they judged, but in reality they were but "sons of men," mortals, who would soon answer to their God, Creator and Judge.

B. His answer to the question (58:2).

1. No! Rather than administer justice, "you work wickedness in your hearts!"

a. They approached cases with preconceived opinions or instructions.

b. Their hearts were like a secret shop where they contrived and forged their wicked plans.

2. Rather than weigh out true justice, they weighed out violence toward the innocent.

a. Job pleaded, "Let me be weighed in an even balance" (Job. 31:6).

b. The Hebrew term render wickedness, "properly signifies the inclinations of scales, when the scale weighs down to one side" (Venema).

c. Not only did they fail to administer justice equitably, they were among the chief offenders.

d. Justice and righteousness are characteristics of God's judgement (Ps. 9:8) and He expects it of those who are judges of others.

e. Among the Hebrews, judges were addressed with the title of ***elohim***, or god because they represented Jehovah and administered his divine law (Ps. 82:1). To this day the English judges are call "My Lord."

3. They were totally corrupt, wicked from their earliest days (58:3).

a. "Estranged" means alienated from God (Eph. 4:18).

b. Some mistakenly use this passage in an attempt to substantiate a faulty doctrine that teaches that infants inherit Adam's sinfulness and are born totally depraved.

(1) Ezek. 18:20, ''The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father."

(2) Jesus says we must become like little children in order to be saved (Matt. 18:3). Thus they must be pure and innocent.

c. This a hyperbole to emphasize that some people are given to wickedness from their earliest days.

(1). "For the imagination of man is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21).

4. He illustrates this human wickedness with one example.

a. "Speaking lies." (58:3b).

. (1) Lying is the first sin that most of us learned.

(2) It is the universal sin of mankind.

(3) It is the sin that most identifies one as a child of Satan (John 8:44).

C. Those corrupt judges were as dangerous as venomous serpents (58:4-5).

1. The serpent referred to is the cobra.

2. They were like the deaf adder which could not be charmed.

a. This refers not to a particular species of snake, but to any viper that will not listen and respond to the charmer.

b. There are some varieties of adders which are not susceptible to the skills of the snake charmer.

3. Not the snake, but the corrupt judges stop their ears to the real facts and truth that established the innocence of those before them.

4. "They were not only insidious and venomous as serpents, but obstinately opposed to all attempts to control them" (Kirkpatrick). They were incorrigible.

II. His Appeal to God for Judgment Upon Them (58:6-8).

A. He asks God to disarm and disable them.

1. His seven-fold judgement suggests that it would be total and complete.

B. "Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Jehovah" (58:6).

1. Note that he has changed his metaphor from that of a serpent to that of a lion.

2. He speaks not of an infant lion, but young adult animals in all of their strength and vigor (Ezek. 19:3).

a. The corrupt judges were as deadly and dangerous as a pride of young lions.

3. Since they have no capacity for good, he asks God to destroy their ability to do harm. Breaking out their teeth would render them harmless.

C. Let them melt away as water that runneth apace" (58:7a).

1. Like a steam that dries up and disappears in the desert.

a. Or, like water spilled upon the ground and forever gone.

D. Let their evil arrows of malice be cut off or blunted. Thus rendered harmless.

1. Let all their plans and schemes be thwarted so they can do no harm.

E. Let them be as a snail which melteth and passeth away" (58:8a).

I. Like our slugs which dehydrate and die in the heat of the sun, may they perish.

F. Let them be like an untimely birth or miscarriage. Thus they will have no future, no ability to do evil in this life.

1. It is a tragedy of life that the world would be much better off had some people never been born. Even they themselves would better never to have been born (Matt. 26:24).

III. His Vision of Justice Executed On the Wicked (58:9-11).

A. An illustration from a bedouin's campfire (58:9).

1. No verse in all of Scripture is so variously translated as this.

2. Imagine a traveler camping in that dry arid land. He gathers the thorny brush for his fire. He places his pot over it, but before the fire has time to heat the pot, a whirlwind scatters the burning material fire, thwarting his plans for supper.

a. Thus while the schemes of his enemies are cooking, God disrupts them.

b. Thorns burn hot and quickly but not fast enough to avert God's judgement.

c. They planned harm to righteous people. His confident prayer is that God will defeat their plans.

B. The righteous would see God's work of judgement on those wicked judges and rejoice (58:10a).

1. Revelation 19:1-2: Thus will we rejoice when we see God's justice at work in our age.

2. Vengeance is mine, and recompense...For Jehovah will judge his people..." (Deut. 32:35-36).

3. There comes a time when evil can no longer be tolerated and must be exterminated. While we must not seek to usurp God's role as the judge, we can rejoice when we see the triumph of good and the destruction of evil.

C. The righteous man would wash his feet in the blood of the wicked (58:10b).

1. The picture is of a victorious warrior walking about the field of battle, his sandals soaked in the blood of his fallen enemies.

D. The consequences of God's righteous judgements (58:11).

1. All men shall see it and say "Verily (truly) there is a reward for the righteous" (58:11a).

a. The reward is certain. Only we can determine if we will be among the righteous who will receive it.

2. "Verily there is a God that judgeth the earth."

a. Sinners can learn this lesson now or at judgement day.

Lessons to Remember:

A. One of the great mistakes of humanity is to think, "What everyone says must therefore be true."

B. "Silence gives consent. He who refrains from defending the right is himself an accomplice in the wrong" (Spurgeon).

C. Wicked people hate the righteous because each are sprung from a different parentage. We are the children of God through faith in Christ (Gal. 3:26). Others have Satan as their father (John 8:44). There has always been enmity between the serpent's brood and the children of the promise.

D. That which the hands do and the mouth speaks first incubates in the heart.

E. A viper's poison can hurt the body and bring death, but the poison of wicked rulers and teachers can corrupt and destroy families, nations, and even souls of people.

F. Ungodly hearts are seldom won by arguments, even of the most logical kind or the most sympathetic appeals. Some sinners are like the deaf adder. Try as we may, we cannot persuade them.

G. There is nothing in Scripture which forbids the righteous from rejoicing when God's judges their enemies who are corrupt, evil and violent.

H. How early do men learn to sin, how late they wait to repent.

I. Of all our sins, none more clearly ties us to Satan than lying. He is the father of lies (John 8:44).

J. “A liar is as much like the devil as he can be and as unlike God as he ever can be” (Richard Capel).

K. There are three stages in the growth of sin: (1). Secret sins, where in shame and timidity we hide our faults. But they secretly grow like a cancer; (2). Open sin, when shame has been overcome and the fear of God weakened; (3). Hardened, brazen sin, wherein the conscience is dead, the shame is banished and God is defied.

L. God calls all men to repent (II Pet. 3:9). If they refuse, then as Creator, Ruler and Judge, He is justified in sending storms of affliction and armies of trouble to lay siege upon them. He sends sickness upon their bodies, consumption upon their estates, robbers to take their wealth, shame to their reputation, fire to take their homes and even death to their households until they acknowledge Him or perish.

M. “There are some people who exhibit a diabolical aptitude for evil and opposition to good” (Kirkpatrick).

N. If it is right for God to judge and destroy the wicked, it cannot be wrong for his servants to rejoice at what He does” (Scroggie).

Psalm 59

A Prayer For Deliverance From Enemies

Intro: This psalm is a lament and a prayer for deliverance from vicious enemies. The Mesoretic notes indicate it was written by David after he escaped from King Saul’s agents who were sent to kill him (I Sam. 19:11-18). Many commentators see a different event as the background. It reflects his unshaken trust in Jehovah even in the most trying of circumstances. It is very much like the four preceding Psalms in its tone and expression. The author was an innocent man under attack by implacable enemies who were determined to destroy him. It was dedicated to his Chief Musician. It was set to ***Al-tashheth*** which means “do not destroy.” It too was a ***michtam*** which means a golden jewel. The same notes are found in Psalms 57 and 58. It contains an imprecation.

I. His Plea (59:1-2).

A. Save me from my enemies.

1. David’s wife Michal, daughter of Saul, helped him escape by lowering him from a window and then placing a covered image in his bed to deceived those who were waiting to size him.

B. They are blood-thirsty men.

II. His Complaint About His Plight (59:3-8).

A. They wanted nothing less than his life (59:3a).

1. Literally, “They have woven” plots to destroy me (Perowne).

B. He had done them no wrong (59:3b-4).

1. “They run and prepare” is a military expression describing troops rushing forward to attack a besieged city.

C. His imprecation (59:5).

1. ***Yahweh Elohim Tsebaoth***, means“God of hosts” and describes God as the leader of the armies of heaven. The meaning of the names conveys his message: “The Eternal, Self-existent God, the Sovereign of the Universe” is the God of Israel (Perowne).
2. Compare Christ’s mention of twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26:53).
3. “Arise to visit all nations” (59:5b). He sees his God as the universal judge of humanity.
4. “Spare not any...that are faithless in (their) iniquity” (Perowne) (59:5c).

D. His enemies described (59:6-8).

1. They belch out with their mouth, like a snarling dog, or like a bubbling spring.
2. Stray dogs were common in eastern cities. They ran in packs and were a danger to pets stock and people.
    a. Such dogs were despised, unowned, loathsome, degraded, lean and hungry. Such were his enemies.
    b. God will laugh at their puny efforts.

III. He Foresees God’s Judgment On The Wicked (59:9-10).

A. “His strength”(vs. 9) is that of his enemy.

B. God is his “high tower," i.e., David’s fortress or battlement for safety and defense.

C. “The God of mercy shall prevent me" (59:10 KJV). In the Old English, “prevent meant go before”

1. The American Standard Version correctly renders it "'Mv God with his loving-kindness will meet me.”

IV. His Imprecation (59:11-15).

A. “Slay them not,” i.e., not suddenly (59:11a).

1. Lest people forget the evil they had done and the punishment they deserve.
2. Let them suffer in their misery as living monuments of divine judgment.

B. Scatter them and bring them down (59:1 lb).

1. That is, make them wander like Cain or the Hebrews in the wilderness.
2. “Bring them down.” This request was answered in the case of Saul who became insane.
3. “For the sin of their mouth” (59:12a). “Every word they utter is sin” (Kirkpatrick).
4. He refers to the inflammatory lies and slanders they spoke against himself.

C. Consume them (59:13a).

1. Such imprecations we Christians are not to pray (Matt. 5:43-45).

D. “Let them know that God ruleth in Jacob” (59:13b).

E. Let them be like stray dogs (59:14-15), unloved, unwanted and driven away.

1.The prey or food they sought was David (59:15a).

V. His Thankful Praise (59:16-17):

A. For God’s strength.

B. For His Loving-kindness.

C. For His mercy.

Lessons to Remember:

A. When enemies, of whatever stripe, set themselves against us, we must always look to God for deliverance.

B. The existence of Evil is demonstrated when people make war on others, not because of wrong they have done, but because they are good, righteous people and are hated for it.

C. The righteous soul who is patient will one day see his desire upon his enemies.

D. What a privilege it is to be numbered among those who fear God’s name.

E. In our strong tower, i.e., in the Lord, we will be safe from all enemies.

F. As God’s physical laws govern dew drops and constellations, so his spiritual laws govern men and nations.

G. “There is nothing so absurd and hopeless as to challenge God to a test of strength” (Scroggie).

Psalm 60

A Lamentation Over A Lost Battle And A Prayer For Help

Intro: This song of David was written following a military defeat at the hands of Israel’s enemies. It seems that while David and his troops were engaged in battle with Syria in the north east, Edomites and their allies attacked on the southeast and defeated the local troops of Israel. David then despatched troops under Joab and crushed the Edomites (II Sam. 8:13-14). It was dedicated to the Chief Musician and set to ***Shushan Eduth*** which means “the lily of testimony” and most likely refers to the tune to which it was sung. It is a golden ***michtam***, to be taught, i.e., memorized. The first section of the song deals with the past defeat while the second deals with the later victor. Notice the eight “Thou hasts” attributed to God and the three “I wills” of David.

I. His Mournful Cry (60: 1-3).

A. He felt God had abandoned his nation (60:1a).

1. “Cast off’ as something rancid and foul.
2. Compare Joshua chapters 7-8 where God withdrew his support from Israel in their attack against the city of Ai because of sin in their midst.

a. God also chastens disobedient Christian (Heb. 12:6).

B. He begs for restoration to God’s favor and healing for his people (60: l b-2)

C. "Wine of staggering" refers to harsh medicine, a purgative.

II. A Gladsome Song Anticipating Victory (60:4-8).

A. God's royal banner is given to the victors (60:4).

1. A banner is a symbol of national pride and a rallying point in combat.
2. We sing of God's **Royal Banner** given to soldiers of the Cross.

B. God had now given them victory (60:5-6).

C. The tribe of Ephraim provided the military strength for the victory (60:7b).

D. Judah was his scepter, i.e., provided the lawgivers and administrators.

1. The anointed kings of Judah always came from Judah (Gen. 49:10).

E. Moab was his wash pot, i.e., his servant who would wash his feet.

F. Upon Edom he would cast his shoe, i.e., put his foot on their neck signifying total defeat.

G. Philistia would shout because of David, i.e., praise him as conqueror.

III. His Prayer For The Future (60:9-12).

A. The strong city was Petra, the fortress of Edom (60:9).

B. He appeals to God for help (60:11).

C. His faith in the outcome (60:12).

Lessons to Remember:

A. It is a fearful thing for a person to conclude that God has turned his back on him and will not help him (60:1).

B. We cannot expect God's blessings in our life if we refuse his rule in our life.

C. Sometimes it takes the chastening of defeat or loss to turn us back to God.

D. Christians are soldiers who march under the banner of Christ (60:4).

E. A nation has a choice to serve God as his scepter or as his wash pot.

F. One of the blessings of being a disciple of Jesus is that we can pray and expect that God will give us help against our adversaries (60:11).

G. "Through God we shall do valiantly" (60:12).

Psalm 61

A Song Celebration God's Providential Protection

Intro: This hymn of David is one of petition and praise; a lamentation. Its seems to relate to his restoration to power following Absalom's rebellion. It was dedicated to the Chief Musician and was to be accompanied with a *Neginoth,* a harp of eight strings. Several hymns have been based on verse 2, "the rock that is higher than I." Also we have a hymn, "**In the Shadow of thy Wings**" based on vs. 4. Spurgeon says of it, "This Psalm is a pearl. It is little, but precious."

I. His Prayer For Divine Protection (61:1-3).

A. "Hear my cry," i.e., my shout or shrill call for attention (Aquinas).

B. His heart was overwhelmed (61:2), i.e., wrapped in gloom.

1. "Overwhelming troubles...sweep over a man just as the mighty billows of the ocean sweep over and submerge the sands" (P. B. Power).
2. David's victory had cost him his beloved son and the loss of many of his subjects.
3. "From the end of the earth" expresses his desire to be home again.
4. "To the saints of the Old Testament, exclusion or involuntary distance from the sanctuary seemed equivalent to exile in the remotest countries" (Alexander).

C. He asked God to lead him to "the rock" of shelter and protection.

1. God is that towering rock of safety and defense.
2. An old hymn says, "**Lead me to the Rock That Is Higher Than I**."
3. He knew God was the only safe refuge, but he needed help in finding and knowing God's will.

a. Imagine a safe ledge on the rocky cliff where one would be safe from the swirling flood below. But there is no way for the shipwrecked victim to reach it without help.

4. It also implies that God has power and resources far beyond any man's power, be he ever so strong.

II. His Pledge To Serve God Always (61:4).

A. In the tabernacle, i.e., the tent of the great king, Jehovah.

1. "Dwell" means to sojourn and suggests one who a guest in another's home.

B. He thinks of God as a mother bird sheltering her chicks under her wings.

1. Compare Matt. 23: 37 where Jesus expressed this very thought regarding Jerusalem.

2. Perhaps the winged cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat in the holy of holies inspired this thought.

III. His Confidence in God's Providence (61:5-7):

A. That God had heard his prayers (61:5).

B. That He had given him the throne of Israel for a heritage (61:5b).

1. "Those that fear they name" means "who revere Him."

C. That He would prolong his i.e., David's) life (61:6).

D. That He would preserve him (61:7).

1. He likens God's loving-kindness and truth to two angelic protectors sent forth to shield him. Compare Hebrews 1:13-14.

2. That he should "abide before God forever" can refer to his dynasty, that they would always hold power by God's favor, or to his greater son, Messiah (II Sam. 7:16).

Conclusion: His Concluding Vow (61:8):

A. He would ever praise God in song.

B. He would daily perform his vows of thanksgiving to God.

Lessons to Remember:

A. When the heart is overwhelmed, the best medicine and therapy is to take it to the Lord in prayer.

B. God is our rock: an unmovable place of refuge and safety.

C. It is God's mercy and fidelity that assures us that He will protect and save us.

D. Let our resolution be, that we will sing praise unto God's name for ever and daily perform our vows.

E. No spot on earth is too remote, too dreary or too deplorable for prayer. Wherever we find ourselves it is suitable to pray to Jehovah.

F. The faithful child of God is as safe in Him as the chick beneath his mother's wings.

Psalm 62

Faith Is The Victory that Overcomes Every Adversity

Intro: This is another Davidic psalm. The background is not stated but is thought by some to reflect the conflict with Absalom and those who joined him in revolting against David. It is a didactic psalm and is dedicated to the Chief Musician of the temple singers. "After the manner of Jeduthun" seems to refer to the family or choir that derived from the Chief Musician by that name. Perhaps they had developed a particular style of singing that he referred to. Jeduthun is one of three chief musicians or singers appointed by David to serve in the public worship (I Chron. 16:41-42). His sons or descendants continued to serve in that capacity following his death (I Chron. 25:1-3). Psalms 39 and 77 are also dedicated to Jeduthun. The phraseology of this psalm resembles that of Psalm 39 leading some to conclude they both originated in the same time and circumstances. This psalm is one of the most forceful exhortations to trusting faith in God. Its key thought is the confidence that faith brings the believer. As David's faith grew stronger by experience, he was able to encourage and strengthen others. Note his repeated use of the word ***only*** when referring to God. By this he emphasizes that God alone can meet his needs.

I. His Confidence in Adversity (62:1-4).

A. In silence he patiently waited for God's deliverance (62: la).

1.His confident faith kept him from complaining.

a. "Leave it all quietly to God my soul" (Moffatt).

b. By “soul” he speaks of himself.

2. Only God could meet his need. Note that six times he tells us that only God can suffice for life’s great challenges.

3. His salvation would by God’s hands (62: 1b).

a. He speaks primarily of being saved from the hands of his enemies.

B. What God was to him (62:2):

1. His rock, i.e., his place of refuge and defense.

a. “Rock” symbolizes “the strength, faithfulness and unchangeableness of Jehovah” (Kirkpatrick).

2. His salvation, i.e., the one who would come to his rescue like a strong and brave warrior.

3. His high tower, i.e., his fortress with its high walls and turrets.

C. Because God was all of those things, he would not “be greatly moved” (62:2 b).

1. Although he may shudder under the blows of his adversaries, with God’s strength he would not be brought down or destroyed.

2. His reign as king would not be ended.

D. The attack his enemies were waging against him (62:3-4).

1. "How long will ye set upon a man?” i.e., rush upon him as an attacking army.

2. Their goal was to slay him (62:3b).

3. They saw him as a leaning wall or a tottering fence i.e., a wall that was leaning and about to topple down (62:3c).

a. They misjudged his strength because they failed to take into consideration the fact that God was with him.

4. They conspired to thrust him down from his dignity, i.e., his throne (62:4a).

5. They used lies and deception to accomplish their goal (62:4b).

a. They blessed with their mouths but cursed him in their hearts (62:4c).

6. **Selah** indicates a musical interlude during which worshipers should contemplate the lessons set forth.

II. He Exhorts Himself to Trust God Implicitly (62:5-9).

A. Note that verses 5-7 repeat the identical thoughts of verses 1-2.

1. Think what great consolation this portrait of God provides us when we are tempted, tried, troubled or threatened.

B. But now he exhorts the “people “ to place their faith and trust in Jehovah (62:8).

1. And pour out their hearts in prayer before him (62:8b).

2. Because He would be their refuge as well as his (62:8c).

3. His audience was most likely the loyal troops who stood by him.

a. Perhaps some of them were fainthearted and needed to be bolstered.

III. The Clearer Vision of Faith (62:9-12).

A. Faith helped him to see that their enemies were only men who could not prevail against God (62:9).

1. Men of low degree and high degree refers to all men, be they great or small.

2. “Men of low degree are vanity,” i.e., no more than a breath (ft. note).

a. Compare James 4:14. Our life is a vapor!

b. So is every man that dares to go against Jehovah and his people.

c. It is interesting that Adam named his second son Abel, which meant breath or vanity.

3. “Men of high degree are a lie,” i.e., a disappointment. They make claims, promises or threats they are unable to fulfill.

4. All of their enemies, if placed in a balance opposite God, will not even register on the scale for they are no more than air before Him (62:9b).

A. Remember haughty King Belshazzar who was weighed in the balance of God and found wanting (Dan. 5:27).

B. His exhortation to his comrades (62:10).

1. “Trust not in oppression and”

a. “Become not vain in robbery.” He speaks of wealth gained by violence.

b. Such is the way of the wicked world and can only bring harm to those who follow that path.

2. “If riches increase, set not your heart thereon.”

a. “Increase” suggests they sprout up of their own accord like volunteer plants, as distinguished from those acquired by oppression and robbery.

b. Even if God blesses you with wealth, your trust must always be in the Giver, not in the gift (See I Tim. 6:6-10).

c. Most people of that age mistakenly viewed wealth as a proof of divine favor.

(1). David saw the flaw in this thinking. (62:10b).

C. The moral he would share with those who read or heard his song (62:11-12).

1. The great lessons he had learned:

a. “Once hath God spoken; these two things have I heard: (1). That strength or power is Jehovah’s; and 2). That loving-kindness belongs to him” (Adam Clarke).

b. God has both the power and the will to save His people. Therefore those who trust Him should not be afraid.

2. This is a beautiful cameo of our God:

a. Power belongs to Him. He is Almighty God..

b. Loving-kindness belongs to Him. He delights in saving, not in destroying His creatures (II Pet. 3:9).

c. He renders justice to every man according to his work (Gen. 18:25).

(1). Paul cites this verse in Rom. 2:6.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Waiting upon God is nothing more than hope and trust lengthened (John Trapp).

B. "They who wait on God are waited on and for by God” (Scroggie).

C. "Riches, whether rightly or wrongly won, are wrongly used if they are trusted in” (Scroggie).

D. Only when God has become a reality to us can we evaluate everything and everyone correctly.

E. "Wealth gained at the cost of honesty is bought at too high a price” (Purkiser).

F. Neither status nor wealth can deliver all that they promise.

G. A wise man will take heed to any truth God sees fit to reveal to him.

H. "Against all attempts upon thy body, thy state, thy soul, thy fame; temptation, tribulations machinations, defamations,” David tells us to cast ourselves wholly upon God (Athanasius).

I. Our God possesses unlimited power and abounding love. “ Power without Love is brutality and Love without Power is weakness. Power is the strong foundation of Love and Love is the beauty and crown of Power” (Perowne).

J. With God on our side we may be moved but never removed.

K. "The excellencies of the righteous are obnoxious to the wicked, and the main object of their fury” (Spurgeon).

L. “We should desire nothing but that it would be right for God to give...” (Spurgeon).

M. There is no place in God’s kingdom for people with divided loyalties. God only, is our Lord and our Hope.

Psalm 63

A Song Of A Satisfied Soul

Intro: David is the author of this lovely song. Ancient scribes believed that it grew out of events connected with Absalom’s rebellion. The writer is a king (vs. 11). He is away from home in a weary land (vs. l b). He longs to be back near God’s sanctuary (vs. 2). Enemies were seeking his life (vs. 9). He is confident of their overthrow (vs. 9-10). He himself rejoices in God (vs. 7).

The **key thought** is that of the spiritual satisfaction that comes to those who seek after God. The words and thoughts of this psalm are addressed to God, not about him. The author is engaged in a mortal conflict with earthly enemies and he hopes to see them crushed and destroyed. When Absalom and his supporters attempted their coup, David and his loyal troops fled in the direction of Jericho (II Sam. 15:23-28). Their hardships were great (II Sam. 16:2, 14; 17:29). Truly they were weary pilgrims in a weary land. “At a distance from the sanctuary and in peril of his life, the Psalmist throws himself upon God” (Kirkpatrick). What he longed for most of all was a sense of God’s presence like

he had known when worshiping in the sanctuary in Jerusalem. Students of the psalms have been exuberant in their praise of this chapter. “This is unquestionably one of the most beautiful and touching Psalms in the whole Psalter” (Perowne). “The earnest yearning for God, and the insight into communion with him on the part of the a truly good man, as there are set forth in this psalm, are unrivaled in the Psalter” (Taylor). “This is Old Testament religion at its best” (Purkiser). “This Psalm is “a precious confession of a soul thirsting after God and his grace, and finding itself quickened through inward communion with him, and which knows how to commit its outward lot also into his hand” (Hengstenberg). Two great lessons are taught in this psalm, the value of a personal relationship with God and the need for earnestly seeking after God. John Chrysostom (344-407 A.D.) wrote, “The spirt and soul of the whole Book of Psalms is contracted into this Psalm.” He noted that, “It was decreed and ordained by the primitive Fathers that no day should pass without the public singing of this Psalm.”

I. His Need for Spiritual Satisfaction (63:1-3-4).

A. The object of his prayer.

1. “O God, thou art my God” (63:1a).

a. The Hebrew is “O **Elohim**, my **Eli**”

b. Remember that each separate name ascribed to God has a specific significance.

c. H. P. Liddon renders this “Oh Thou ever-awful one, my strength, or strong God.”

B. The depth of his commitment is stated: “earnestly will I seek thee” (63:l b).

1. The KJV renders this “early will I seek thee” but the idea not of the early hour of the day. Rather it implies impatience or importunate desire to find God.

2. David earnestly sought for God, but his enemies sought as earnestly for his life.

C. “My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee...” (63:1c).

1. “Soul” and “flesh” used together indicates the whole person.

2. Thirst for water is one of our most demanding appetites and cannot be long denied. So was his need for communion and fellowship with God.

3. His flesh longed or pined for God like a person pines when his parent or mate who is absent a long time.

D. “In a dry and thirsty land” (63:1d).

1. The wilderness where David fled is the whole area east of the tribe of Judah and southward to the end of the Dead Sea. In scripture, the term wilderness describes a district not regularly cultivated and inhabited, but used for pasturage. It was generally limited in available water, but not totally devoid of vegetation.

2. Though David was in a desert, there was no desert in his heart. In mind, he could imagine himself in the pleasant places of home where God’s tabernacle stood.

E. His source of strength (63:2).

1. He looked upon God in His tabernacle and found his strength renewed.

2. He contemplated His power and glory and mercy (63:2b-3a).

F. His resolution (63:3b).

1. “My lips shall praise thee”

2. “I will bless thee.”

3. “I will lift up my hands in thy name” (63:4).

a. Lifting up the hands to heaven in prayer, towards the place where God resides, was an ancient practice of worshipers. By so doing they were imploring the attention and assistance of God (I Tim. 2:8).

b. This was an attitude of prayer, an outward symbol of an uplifted heart (Compare Psalms 25:1 and 28:2).

II. His Hope of Satisfaction (63:5-7).

A. His confidence that satisfaction would be realized (63:5).

1. “My soul shall be satisfied.”

a. In section one his soul thirsted for God, in this he says “my soul shall be satisfied.”

2. “As with marrow and fatness”

a. Note, the “***as***” makes this a simile.

b. The fat and marrow were reserved for God’s altar. To be given these treats as his portion is a poetic way of saying that God would satisfy his spiritual appetite with the riches of divine worship.

(1). In reality the marrow and fat were burned on the altar as God's portion (Lev. 3:14-17).

c. God feeds the hungry soul with rich bountiful food from his own table (Comp. Deut. 32:13-14; Ps. 22:26; 23:5).

3. In gratitude, he promises, "And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips"

B. In remembrance and meditation of God's past blessings he found consolation and hope (63:6-7).

1. "Sleepless hours at night turn to joy when I remember upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches" (Purkiser).

2. Night watches were kept at the tabernacle by appointed Levites (Ps. 134:1). Others could observe and participate in those exercises of worship.

3. As God had been his helper in days past, so would He now deliver him (63:7a).

4. Therefore in the shadow of God's wings he would find peace and happiness.

a. The image is that of a mother bird whose nestlings are sheltered and protected under her wings (Matt. 23:37).

5. God is our help (63:7):

a. He helps us **with** temptations and harm by prevention.

b. He helps us **in** our struggles and warfare by his support within.

c. He helps us **out** by rescue and deliverance from danger.

d. He helps us **by** leading us in right paths (Ps. 23:1-2; Rom. 8:14).

III. The Way of Satisfaction (63:8-11).

A. His commitment to God: "My soul followeth hard after thee" (63:8a).

1. Literally, "followeth hard" means "is glued to" God. We would understand it as cleaves to God just as a husband is to cleave to his wife (Gen. 2:24).

2. We speak of a posse being hard on the criminal's heels.

3. Following after God expresses an ardent and intensive desire. We must follow as near and close to God as we can...like the child following his parent in a strange, crowded place.

4. In the hymn, **Rock of Ages,** we have the phrase, "Hangs my helpless soul on Thee: still support and comfort me."

B. His confidence: "Thy right hand upholdeth me."

1. The right hand was considered the strongest hand.

C. As for his enemies (63:9-10).

1.They "shall go into the lower parts of the earth," i.e. the grave.

2. They shall be given over to the power of the sword; i.e., smitten by the sword.

3. They shall be a portion for foxes (jackals KJV).

a. Beasts were given to men for their food; but here wicked men are to be given to beasts, even small ones, for prey.

b. They should be a prey of jackals when their dead bodies were left for these and other beasts to scavenge.

D. As for David himself, "He would live to rejoice in God" (63:1 la).

1. He expresses full confidence that God would give him victory over his enemies. The armies clashed in the woodlands of Ephraim, across Jordan and there was a great slaughter that day of 20,000 men. "And the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured" (II Sam. 18:7-14).

a. This means many were lost the forest and unable to find their way, they perished.

E. Every one that sweareth by him shall glory, i.e., who swears by God (63:11 b).

1. Every one that takes an oath of allegiance to God shall glory in his success.

2. "He who binds himself by God's authority, acknowledging his supremacy and devoting himself to His glory and service alone" (Amplified Bible).

F. "For the mouths of them that speak lies shall be stopped" (63:11c).

1. The lies of which he speaks were the slanders spoken against David and his administration by those in insurrection against him.

2. "If shame will not do it, nor fear, nor reason, then let him be stopped with the sexton's (gravedigger's) shovel-full of earth" (Spurgeon).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Our vision on the mountain of victory should comfort us in the valley of sorrow.
B. “In days of rapture we should store up delights for days of depression” (Scroggie).
C. When we are in solitude, memories of happy days in God’s house should warm our hearts.
D. “The historic fact is that no happiness, nor power has ever been attained by human creatures unless in that thirst for the presence of a Divine King; and that nothing but weakness, misery, and death have ever resulted from their desire to destroy their King...” (John Ruskin).
E. David found a useful occupation for the sleepless hours of night.
F. “A weary place and a weary heart makes the presence of God the more desirable” (Spurgeon).
G. Our souls shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness:
1. When we feast with Him at the sacred table (I Cor. 10:16).
2. When He shows us his glory in the face of Christ (John 14:9).
3. By shedding abroad his love in our hearts (Rom. 5:5).
4. With the rich promises of his New Covenant (Heb. 8 :6).
5. By being filled with his Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
6. When our memories recall the many former kindnesses by which he has blessed us (63:6-7).

Psalm 64

A Plea For Protection Against Slanderous Enemies

Intro: This song is attributed to David. Nothing within the psalm gives a positive indication of the occasion. It could have been when Doeg the Edomite accused him before Saul (I Sam. 22:9-10) or when slanders were made against him during Absalom’s rebellion (II Sam. 15:3-6,12). It is dedicated to the Chief Musician. Spurgeon observes, "It were well if the chief musicians of all our congregations estimated their duty at its due solemnity; for it is no mean thing to be called to lead the sacred songs of God’s people and the responsibility is by no means light.” This song is in the form of a lament. He describes his enemies as “evil doers” and a noisy crowd who sharpen their tongues like a whetted sword and their words are like deadly arrows (vs. 3). The topic of the slanderous tongue is mentioned in Psalms 5, 7, 12, 32, 55, 57, 58, 140. His theme is God’s sure judgement upon the enemies of the righteous. In his song we see expressed his plea, his plight, his petition and his promise.

I. His Complaint (64:1-6).
A. His plea (64:1-2).
1. Hear my voice, i.e., my prayer (64:1a).
a.“It often helps our devotion if we are able to use the voice and speak audibly” (Spurgeon).
b. His complaint: he was under attack by deadly enemies.
2. Preserve my life (64: lb).
a. From my enemies.
3. Hide me, i.e., shield me (64:2).
a. From their secret counsels, i.e., their conspiracy.
b. From the tumult they have raised against me.
B. His plight. Note his description of his enemies:
1. The are “evil-doers” (64:2a).
2. They are “workers of iniquity” (64:2b).
3. They are a clamorous crowd (64:2b). They succeeded in stirring up a tumult against David.
C. The weapons his enemies employed against him (64:3-4).
1. Their tongues, whetted like swords (64:3a).
a. The metaphor of sharpening the tongue was a favorite of David (See Psalms 52:4; 57:4; 59:7).
b. They carefully rehearsed their evil schemes.
2. Their **bitter words** were like poisoned arrows (64:3b).
a. “Bitter words” are hurtful, venomous words.
3. They laid snares to entrap him (64:5b).
4. “They sharpened their tongue like a sword: they bent a bow, a bitter thing, to shoot secretly a blameless man."

5. A. sword does it damage only to those close by, but the arrow can wound even at a great distance.

6. In vs. 4 the enemy shoots at David, but in vs. 7 God drives his arrow into them.

In vs. 4 the enemy does not fear that they do evil, but in vs. 9 all men shall fear when they see the overthrow of the wicked.

7. In vs. 3, the edge of the wicked tongue cuts the innocent, but in vs. 8 their tongue shall hurt themselves.

D. The method of his enemies (64:4).

1. They attacked him secretly.

2. Their slanderous charges were like an armed ambush.

a. Their attack was launched suddenly, without warning (64:4).

E. They were totally confident that they would succeed (64:5-6).

1. As they made their plans they encourage themselves (64:5a).

2. “They work out wicked schemes; they are ready with a well-conceived plan; for the inner man and heart are fathomless” (Berkley).

3. They are confident that no one knows of their scheme (64:5b).

4. They searched high and low to find any charge they might bring against David to discredit him (64:6).

5. Their scheme was well hidden, deep in the hearts of the conspirators (64:6).

a. They said, “We have accomplished a well thought-out thing” (Cheyne).

b. They failed to remember that God sees into the deepest recesses of the human heart and knows every evil scheme (Heb. 4:12-13).

c. They wrongly imagined that they had nothing to fear for their evil deeds

d. David believed that their secrets would be met by the secret providence of Jehovah and their counsels of malice by His counsels of love.

II. His Consolation (64:7-10).

A. The grounds of his consolation (64:7-8).

1. God will destroy them before they can destroy His servant.

a. He perceives how surely and suddenly God will smite them by turning their evil deeds back upon their own heads.

b. “Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19).

2. He is conscious of his enemies and their evil schemes, but he is also conscious of his God and of the secret fortress where he can hide from their evil attacks.

a. The author has no fear of his enemies because he knows that God shall destroy them in His own good time.

3. His enemies had used many arrows against him (vs. 3), but God will need only one arrow (vs. 7) for He never misses his mark.

B. God will turn their own weapons against them (64:8a).

1. “Their own tongue being against them,” and so they shall be destroyed by the words of their own mouths.

a. This is God’s law of retribution. “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” be it good or evil (Gal. 6:7).

2. People shall see their disaster and mock them with scorn (64:8b).

b. This is the meaning of “wag the head.”

c. They will see the slanderer’s evil purpose (vs. 5) and God’s work of judgment (vs. 9).

C. Men shall see God’s righteous judgement and fear (64:9).

1. Even if the enemy did not fear (vs. 4), all who observed their punishment would.

2. "‘They shall declare the work of God,” telling others how He dealt with the wicked.

3. They will be filled with fear and awe by God’s just retribution as were the Canaanites when God punished the Egyptians and delivered Israel (Josh. 2:9-10).

4. “They will wisely consider of his doing.” Having seen God’s righteous judgements demonstrated, they will take heed and walk circumspectly before Him.

D. The righteous shall be glad in Jehovah and take refuge in him,” for he knows that in God alone is there sure and dependable aid and protection (64:10).

1. “All the upright (God-fearing souls) will both glorify God and rejoice in His righteous reign.
2. As did the heavenly band when God overthrew spiritual Babylon (Rev. 19:1-5).

Lessons to Remember:

A. When the slanderer shoots his arrows at the righteous, he should remember that God will see that he will be shot in return.

B. “One of God’s arrows is enough, for he never misses his aim” (Spurgeon).

C. The righteous need not retaliate for their avengement is in much better hands than their own (Rom.12:19).

D. It is a sure sign of malice in a man’s heart when he is eager to find out shameful, hurtful things about his neighbor.

E. He is truly a great soldier who can conquer his tongue (Scroggie).

F. Folks of base character are rarely victims of slander. The truth is sufficient to destroy them.

G. God never leaves the issues of life to the designs of the wicked.

H. "Prayers which are unheard on earth may be among the best heard in heaven” (Spurgeon).

I. "I hate the man who builds his name on ruins of another’s fame” (Gay).

J. "There is a lust in man no charm can tame,
Of loudly publishing our neighbor’s shame;
On eagle’s wings immortal scandals fly,
While virtuous actions are but born to die” (Juvenal).

K. “Slander, the foulest whelp of sin” (Pollock).

L. Be as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny” (Shakespear).

M. “Assail’d by scandal and tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life.” (Cowper).

N. “If a lie will do better than the truth, tell a lie.” “Heap on reproach; some of it will stick” (Proverbs from Hell).

O. The methods of the slanderer are ancient and universal: “fresh faults discovered, evil motives imputed, exaggerations invented, lies forged, innuendoes suggested, old slanders refurbished, ancient hatreds rekindled” (Spurgeon), to which we add, virtues dismissed, good deeds discounted and actions misrepresented.

P. If ever you are tempted to do harm to another, remember God has the means to bring your evil back upon your own head.

Psalm 65

In Praise Of God’s Providential Goodness

Intro: This is a hymn of David and is dedicated to the Chief of the Temple Musicians. This title is rendered “choirmaster” by the RSV. It is introduced as “a ***shur***, psalm and a ***mizjner***, song.” “Psalm” likely indicates a song accompanied with instruments and “song” suggest a hymn designed to be sung in public. These two terms together suggest a lyrical poem. Psalms 30, 48, 66, 67 and 68 also have this terminology attached to them. It praises God’s greatness, his grace and his goodness. It is a psalm of adoration and thanksgiving to be sung on the occasion of a bountiful harvest. The author stands looking on fields white unto harvest and is moved to praise God for the wonderful blessings. It is possible that the crop had earlier been threatened by a drought. He also reflects on the deliverance of his nation from a deadly enemy (vss. 5ff). It was likely intended to be sung at the presentation of the first fruits at the Passover service in a year of exceptional harvest (Lev. 23:10-14). The theme of this song is, “The nature of and joy of divine worship." Perowne called a “beautiful Psalm, marked by the brilliant vivacity of its poetic coloring.” In the Psalms Chronologically Arranged, it is described as “a song of praise to Jehovah as the God of history and the God of nature alike.” It teaches us that we encounter God’s holiness, power and kindness in his sanctuary; within our own soul and in the soil.

I. The Glory of God in His House (65:1-4).

A. “Praise waiteth for thee, O God” (65:1a).

1. This suggests a grateful people assembled to render thanks to God, quietly waiting for the service to begin.

2. “Waiteth” literally means silent, i.e., resting quietly before him.

a. “A sacred reverence checks our songs and praise sits silent on our tongues.”

3. The Revised Standard Version renders vs. 1, “Praise is due to thee, O God, in Zion;”

B. “In Zion”

1. The KJV reads Sion, a variant spelling of Zion.

2. Zion was Jerusalem, the place where God’s house rested.

a. In Zion God is known, there he is praised and worshiped.

C. “Unto thee shall the vow be performed” (65:1b).

1. “A vow is a voluntary and deliberate promise made unto God in an extra ordinary case” (H. Hurst). “It is a holy promise, whereby we bind ourselves to offer somewhat unto God” (Peter Martyr).

2. This alludes to some vow made during the time of drought or political danger.

a. We must always be prompt in fulfilling our vows to God (Eccle. 5:4-5).

D. “Oh Thou that hearest prayer” (65:2).

1. This is His name, his nature and his glory.

2.The Hebrew is literally, “Hearing, Thou who habitually hearest prayers” (Alexander).

3.He is thus addressed because he had heard their prayers and blessed them with rain and a bountiful harvest.

4. “God can no more be deaf to the prayers of his people than He can deny himself” (Calvin).

E. “Unto thee shall all flesh come” (65:2).

1. “All flesh” means all people of all nations.”

a. God always intended his temple to be a house of prayer for all people (Mark 11:17).

2. “Flesh” suggests mankind’s weakness, frailty and sinfulness in contrast to the all powerful, righteous and eternal God.

F. “Iniquities prevail against me” (65:3a).

1. Iniquities stand for iniquitous things, words and deeds which he was conscious of in his life.

a. His remembrance of his sins presents a terrible obstacle to his approach to and acceptance by God (Compare Is. 59:1-2).

b. It is likely that he sets himself forth as an example of the sinfulness of the whole nation. So did Daniel (Dan. 9:20).

G. “Thou wilt forgive them” (65:3b).

1. Sin unfits them for approaching God in worship.

a. Sin is an enemy they cannot defeat alone. They must have God’s help in overcoming it.

b.“Though our sins be too much for us, ‘tis thine to cancel our transgressions (Moffatt).

2. God himself will make the atonement for them.

a. KJV “Thou shalt purge them away.”

b. The Hebrew stresses, “Thou alone” wilt forgive them.

H. His beatitude (65:4).

1. “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee.”

a. “That he may dwell in they courts.” Priests were chosen and brought near to God to serve in his house (Num. 16:5). Here he speaks of all who were privileged to come before him in worship.

2. “We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house” (65:4b).

It is the universal need of mankind to be satisfied with that which only God can give.

3. “The goodness of thy house” alludes to the sacrifices which were devoted to God, of which the priests partook.

4. In the blessings of God’s house, they will find true happiness. To a devout Hebrew, nothing offered greater joy and satisfaction than the opportunity to visit the house of God at Jerusalem and worship his Lord.

5. “The privilege described is not merely that of public worship at the place of God’s appointment, but of residence in his family and participation in the privileges of his household” (Alexander).

II. He Celebrates the Glory of God Among the Nations and Nature (65:5-8).

A. “By terrible things thou wilt answer us in righteousness" (65:5a).

1. “By dread deeds thou dost answer us with deliverance’ (RSV).

2. God had proven his righteousness in days past with awe-inspiring acts on behalf of his people

(See Deut. 10:21). So will he do again.

a. “Terrible things” are things which inspire awe, the wondrous, spectacular acts of God such as his judgments on Egypt and his deliverance of Israel.

b. His righteous acts on behalf of his people, fill his enemies with dread; his people with admiration.

3. He will “answer us in righteousness” (65:5b).

a. Righteous is the principle of divine government (Pss. 48:10; 98:9).

B. “O God of our salvation.” This fact alone should motivate all men to bow before Him and worship him.

1. He saves us both now and in eternity, both physically and spiritually.

C. “Thou art the confidence of all...” (65:5c).

1. “Thou wilt answer us” reflects his ultimate confidence in God’s attentiveness.

2. God is the confidence of all men, even to the ends of the earth and far off on the sea.

3. “His mighty deeds on behalf of His people in destroying their tyrannical oppressors will lead all the oppressed and needy throughout the world to turn to him in conscious trust” (Kirkpatrick).

a. “Them that are afar off upon the sea” refers to island dwellers.

D. God’s sovereign power revealed in nature (65:6-8).

1. He created and sustains the world.

2. He controls the nations as he controls the natural forces (65:7b).

a. He quiets the “tumult of the peoples,” i.e., the clamor of the nations.

3. “Thy tokens” (65:8) are the irresistible forces of nature.

4. “The outgoings of morning and evening speaks of sunrise (east) and sunset (west).

III. The Glory of God Seen in the Harvest (65:9-13).

A. Scroggie calls this, “the most perfect harvest song ever written.”

1. Some have theorized that this was a separate psalm that was later joined to the earlier verses.

B. “Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it...” (65:9a).

1. God visited the earth when he sent his blessing of rain.

A. From this we conclude that there may have been a dangerous lack of rain and God had responded to their prayers.

2. “When a visit is made by rich and affectionate friends, they do not come empty, but bring with them a blessing or good gift to testify of their favor and love” (Perowne).

C. “The river of God” refers to the streams of heaven, i.e., the rains, in contrast to those of the earth. With those he waters the earth (Deut. 11:11; Job. 38:25).

D. Thou providest them grain.” Scripture attributes the blessings of the earth to God’s generous provision.

1. Worldly souls think they themselves have carved out their blessings.

2. The King James Version renders this “corn.” Our maize corn was unknown to the ancient inhabitants of the Middle East. Corn was a generic name for cereal plants: wheat, barley, spelt and millet.

E. The furrows and ridges refers to the plowed fields.

1. “Thou waterest its furrows abundantly” means drenched or soaked them.

F. "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness” (65:11a).

1. A full and plentiful harvest is the crown of the agricultural year.

2. The herbs, fruits, vegetables and flowers of the earth are presented as a beautiful, bejeweled crown bestowed by God.

G. “Thy paths drop fatness" (65:11b).

1. "Paths” is literally, “chariot tracks.”

2. When ancient kings visited their people, as they rode along in their chariots they would toss out gifts for the people. He likens God’s gift of rain and the resulting harvest to such an event.

3. When a cruel conqueror journeyed through a community, his tracks left ashes, death and destruction.

H. "The wilderness” refers to open, uncultivated land, used for pasturage, in contrast to inhabited and cultivated land.

I. The Results of God’s generous gift of rain (65:12b-13).

1."The hills rejoice.”

2. "‘The pastures are clothed with flocks.”

3. “The valleys also are covered over with grain.”

4. “They shout for joy, they also sing.

a. He personifies the grateful land, describing it as joyful maidens, adorned by a loving father, celebrating for the gifts they had received.

(1). Without the much needed rain, all would have been desolate and dreary.

Lessons to Remember:

A. “A church, bowed into silent adoration by a profound sense of divine mercy, would certainly offer more real praise than the sweetest voices aided by pipes and strings” (Spurgeon).

B. “God is most exalted with fewest words” (Alexander Carmichael).

C. We should wait in joyful and quiet anticipation for the time and opportunity to praise Him.

D. Silence is the nutriment of devotion” (Thomas aKempis).

E. God’s honor is pledged to hear their prayers and deliver His people (Is. 41:10-11).

F. “You may as well doubt that he is God as doubt that He will not reward nor hear prayers” (D. Clarkson).

G. Nearness to God is the foundation of all personal happiness.

H. It is appropriate that a grateful people should gather at the Temple to praise their Creator and Provider. Its It’s their duty.

I. Never forget to be thankful for the ordinary day to day blessings of nature. Should God withhold them we would soon perish.

Psalm 66

Praise To God For Past And Present Deliverances

Intro: The author of this hymn is not identified. It is dedicated to the Chief Musician or choirmaster of God’s house. It is identified as both a Song and a Psalm by which he means a song of public praise to be accompanied with instruments. This song was composed on the occasion of some special national deliverance of the Hebrews. G. Scroggie thinks it reflects the circumstances faced by Hezekiah and Judah when the Assyrians laid siege to Jerusalem and God delivered his people. Its theme is “praise to God for deliverances past and present.” The writer first celebrates what God had done for the nation and then what he had done for him. In the temple worship, the first portion was sung by the choir of Levites (66:1-12) and the latter part by a single voice (66:13-20). In the Greek Orthodox Church this Psalm is recited on Easter Sunday. In 1856, the poet, John Ruskin wrote from Salenches, “How little I thought God would bring me here again...and I am here, stronger in health, higher in hope, deeper in peace, than I have been for years...I cannot be thankful enough, nor happy enough: Ps. 66:18-20.

I. He Exhorts the Whole World to Give Glory to God (66:1-4). (To be sung by the choir).

A. “Make a joyful noise unto God” (66:1-2).

1. Let your joy be evident in your songs of praise.
2. Be outspoken, vocal in your praise to Jehovah.
   a. Singing the honor of his name and praising his glory.
3. There is no place for the morose and sullen worshiper in God’s house.
4. The parallel, “Sing forth the glory of his name” explains “make a joyful noise.”
5. Those who observe and hear our praise to God should see His glory, not ours.
6. “All the earth” means all people of all nations.

B. “Say unto God, how terrible are thy works” (66:3a).

1. “Say unto God.” It is both a privilege and a duty to commune with God through our appointed mediator (I Tim. 2:5).
   a. If you feel inadequate to express yourself to so August a being as Jehovah, the Holy Spirit will help you in your prayers (Rom. 8:26).
2. “How terrible are thy works” means awesome, wondrous, fearful because of the greatness of his power.
   a. “How awesome and fearfully glorious are your works” (Amplified Bible).

C. “Thine enemies submit themselves unto thee”

1. “Thine enemies cringe before thee” (RSV).
2. The Hebrew means “thine enemies feign allegiance to Thee,” i.e.. a forced retreat and submission based on fear.

a. Such folks would quickly withdraw their necks if they thought they could avoid punishment.

b. "In time of affliction, every hypocrite, all tag and rag, will be ready to come.

unto God in outward profession" (Jeremiah Burroughs).

D. "All the earth shall worship thee and shall sing unto thee" (66:4).

1. This means all the inhabitants. It is a metonymy where the container stands for those contained therein.

2. "Worship thee" means to prostrate themselves in humble submission.

II. He Recounts God's Great Acts in Days Past on Behalf of His People (66:5-7).

A. "Come, and see the works of God" (66:5a).

1. The Hebrew is actually "Go and see." It conveys the same meaning as our "come and see."

2. He challenges those who doubt, to go see for themselves what God had done for the nation. Imagine him pointing to the battle field where the wreckage of the enemy army was scattered.

3. The things he had done for Israel were "terrible," i.e., awesome.

B. He recounts God's great deliverances of the past (66:6)

1. He made a path through the Red Sea for the fleeing Hebrews (Ex. 14:21-22).

2. He opened the Jordan River that they might cross on dry land (Josh. 3:14-17).

C. His rule is mighty and incontestable (66:7a).

1. His eyes observe the nations, i.e., he keeps watch upon the nations, ruling, blessing, protecting and judging them, especially Israel.

a. Man can neither evade nor resist God's great power.

2. The Hebrew literally reads, "His eyes shine," i.e., he is ever bright and alert to see all that is transpiring.

a. "The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, Keeping watch upon the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3).

b. Therefore "the rebellious" must not think of exalting themselves (66:7b).

III. The Wonderful Deliverance Recently Experienced (66:8-12).

A. He calls on his countrymen to praise God who had saved them from disaster (66:8).

B. "Who holdeth our soul in life."

1. Who kept our soul alive by rescuing us from our great peril.

2. He puts life into our souls like he did for Adam (Gen. 2:7).

C. Looking back he understands that in their hardships God had been proving them (66:10-12).

1. "Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried," i.e. refined us (66:10b).

2. "Thou broughtest us into the net," i.e., subjected them to the discipline they needed at the hands of their enemies. Like a bird or beast caught in the hunter's net, they were snared. This could refer to prison or to being shut up by siege.

3. "Thou layedst a sore burden upon our loins," i.e., subjected them to servitude and hard labor. The image is that of a man require to bear heavy burdens.

a. "Loins" are the seat of a man's strength.

4. "Thou didst cause men to ride over our heads (66:12a).

a. They were forced to serve others. The rider sits above the head of the camel, making *him* serve him.

b. The idea is that they were trampled down as a defeated people,

c. The Hebrew term for man here denotes, "an obscure, mean man who deserves not this preeminence over them (Lorinus).

5 "We went through fire and through water" (66:12b).

a Both fire and water are pitiless and destructive but God protected them through it all.

b. The fires of Egypt's brick kilns and the waters of the Nile took a dreadful toll on the Hebrews yet God delivered them.

c. The spoils of war had to be purified by fire and water (Num. 31:21-23).

d. Deliverance through fire and water were favorite phrases of the Hebrews.

6. "But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (66:12c).

a. After the purification came the blessing.

b. Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey, was that wealthy place.

IV. The Author's Promise to Bring Rich Gifts to God in Appreciation for His Goodness (66:13-15). (Note the shift from singular to plural persons speaking).

A. "I will come into thy house with burnt-offerings"

1. "I will pay thee my vows."

a. In the crisis he had made a solemn vow to God as he prayed for deliverance, now he was prepared to honor that vow.

b. It would be paid publicly in God's house before his peers.

2. "Which my lips uttered...when I was in distress"

a. "lips uttered" suggests impulsive words blurted out (Judg. 11:30-31).

B. The sacrifice he is prepared to make (66:15).

1. Burnt-offerings of fatlings, i.e., fat lambs.

2. "Incense of rams" i.e., rams whose burning flesh upon the altar would be pleasant to God.

3. Bullocks with goats.

a. No offering would be too large or too costly for his God.

V. He Invites All to Hear His Testimony of God's Answer to His Prayers (66:16-20).

A. "Come, and hear...what (God) hath done for my soul" (66:16).

1. The grateful recipient of God's mercy wants all to know his joy and gratitude.

B. He had "cried unto" God, i.e., prayed and "extolled" him, i.e., praised him highly

1. "Under my tongue"(KJV), i.e., stored up for ongoing praise.

C. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (66:18).

1. Literally, "if I cherish iniquity in my heart."

a. Prov. 28:9 "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination."

B. Insincerity or secret sin closes the channel of prayer.

2. Can we really honor God while expecting Him to ignore our cherished sins? If he accepts our devotion while we delight in our sins, he would be a God of hypocrites.

3. An imperfect petition he will accept (Rom. 8:26), but not one that is stained by wilful sin (Heb. 10:26).

D. But the Lord hath heard: He hath attended to ...my prayer" (66:19). He finds reassurance in the fact that God had heard and answered his prayers.

E. Again he praises God for his gracious response to his prayers (66:20).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Remember, we can no more evade God's power than resist it.

B. All worship belongs to God alone.

C. The name, nature and person of Jehovah are worthy of man's highest honor.

D. Let not God's worship be sullen or weary but full of joyful praise.

E. It is heart felt worship and joyful praise that God desires, not vestments, incense and the performance of musicians and songsters (Spurgeon).

F. Let your praise be directed to God, not men, for the latter is no more than the wind a blowing.

G. Power can bring a person to his knees, but only love can win his heart.

H. It is the glory of Christ to displace our sighing with singing, our misery with joy.

I. The God who could make paths through the Red Sea and Jordan can do anything.

J "The path of sorrow and that path alone, leads to the land where sorrow is unknown" (Spurgeon).

K. Like Joseph, God's chosen ones will rise from the prison to the palace.

L. Whatever gifts we bring, "O Lord, of thine own have we given unto thee" (I Chron. 29:14).

M. When troubles come, the profane swear and the godly pray.

N. He who is miserly with God is the most wretched of all.

O. They saw terrible God's terrible judgments (vs. 5) but they heard how gracious he was (vs. 16).

P. We must be careful lest we furnish worldly sorts with subjects for their profane comedies and burlesque ridicule of Christianity.

Q. Our grateful praise must keep pace with our humble prayers.

R. The best sacrifice we can give to God is obedience (I Sam. 15:22).

Psalm 67

A Charge To All Men Of All Nations To Praise God

Intro: This anonymous psalm is dedicated to the Chief Musician, to be sung with the ***neginoth*** or eight stringed harp. It is a hymn of praise. The author was conscious of Israel's true mission to the world; to direct all men to Jehovah. Sadly, most Hebrews did not embrace the spirit of this hymn. It foresees the world-wide scope of the Christian age. "It is rather, the fervent expression of a well-grounded hope" (Perowne). It is an ideal prayer for the church today. Ancient Bible scholars called this "the Lord's Prayer of the Old Testament." Scroggie called it, "a literary and spiritual gem." John Ker called it. "the missionary Psalm." "It is the joyful outpouring of a heart which longs to see the God and King of Israel acknowledged and worshiped as the God and King of the world" (Perowne). Verse 6 indicates that it was a harvest song.

I. A Missionary Prayer For All Nations (67:1-2).

A. His request for God's mercy (67:1).

1. "Cause his face to shine upon them" means to smile with favor on them.
2. These words are adapted from the high priest's benediction of Num. 6:24.

B. Other nations will see God's mercy on Israel and praise him (67:2).

1. And know his salvation.

a. The KJV renders this "thy saving health" which "in old English meant healing, power, deliverance, salvation" (Kirkpatrick).

II. His Charge To All Nations That They Glorify God (67:3-5).

A. He sees the day when even Gentiles will praise Israel's God (67:3).

1. And rejoice in that privilege.
2. With this and other clear predictions of the ingathering of the Gentiles, still the leaders of Judaism and even many Jewish Christians could not see and appreciate its fulfillment in Christianity.

B. "Let the nations... sing for joy" (67:4a).

1. "Some sing for form, others for show, some as a duty, others as an amusement, but to sing from the heart, because overflowing joy must find a vent, this is to sing indeed." (Spurgeon).

C. God is equitable and just in his judgements (67:4b).

D. He governs all nations, not just Israel (67:6-7).

III. His Delight In God's Graciousness (67:6-7).

A. God had blessed Israel with a bountiful harvest (67:6).

1. This was likely the occasion for writing this hymn.

B. All nations will reverence Jehovah (67:7).

C. This must be the mission of the Lord's Church till he returns.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Our daily prayer should be, "God be merciful to us, and bless us" (67:1).

B. Another daily prayer should be that God's way "may be known upon the earth, Thy salvation among all nations" (67:2).

C. In granting us salvation, God expects we Gentiles to "be glad and sing for joy" (67:4).

D. Never let the people of God be negligent or niggardly in expressing their praise to Jehovah (67:5).

E. Just as the inspired poet foresaw the day when all nations would be recipients of God's mercy, the church today must see its mission to be a vehicle to take the good news to them.

F. One need never worry about the fairness of God's judgments. He wilt judge the peoples with equity (67:4b

PSALM 68

A Song Praising The Victorious God Of Battles

Intro. This is a song of David, a Psalm. As noted in earlier psalms, this combined mention of psalm and song connotes a song of praise to be sung with instrumental accompaniment. It is dedicated to the Chief of the temple musicians, i.e.. the choir master. The theme of the song is the victory of God over his enemies and on behalf of his people. The occasion reflected in this psalm is when David had the ark of God removed from the house of Obed-Edom and transported to His sanctuary on Mt. Zion (II Sam. 6:1-19). It is described under the image of the triumphal entry of a victorious king whose captives and celebrants follow in the procession. In it we have first a reference to the past and the then present and future history of Israel. The latter portion was used by Paul to describe the victorious Christ ascending to heaven. Portions of this psalm are messianic. The reader should note the many different names of God used by the author: Elohim (vs. 2), Adonai (vs. 12), Shaddai (vs. 15), Jehovah (vs. 17), Jah (Vs. 19), Al (vs. 20). Each of these names carries a distinct meaning often unseen in our English translations. The ancient Hebrews sang this psalm at the Feast of Pentecost which commemorated the giving of the law and the celebration of the finished harvest. Scholars have been profuse in their praise of this psalm. It has been called, "the grandest and most elaborate of all the Dedication Odes," "One of the masterpieces of the world's lyrics." "This superb hymn is unsurpassed, if not unequaled, in grandeur, lyric fire, and sustained rush of triumphant praise" (A. Maclaren). "A patriotic and religious ode of wondrous range and compass, and in the grandest style" (Cheyne). Binnie called it "the loftiest effusion of David's lyrical muse." It has always been a favorite battle song of those combatants who felt their cause was God's Cause. It was sung by Crusaders, Savonarola and his followers in Italy, the Huguenots in France and Cromwell and his Protestant army in England. After reading 68:18, "He hath received gifts for the rebellious," John Bunyan wrote, "I once loved Him, feared him, served Him but now I am a rebel...but yet He has gifts for rebels...why not for me? (**Grace Abounding**).

I. A Retrospect of God's Past Victories on Behalf of Israel (68:1-18).

A. God's victorious march described (68:1-6).

1. "Let God arise" (68:1a).
    a. This thought reflects the words of Moses when the priests moved forward bearing the ark of God upon their shoulders (Num. 10:35).
2. "Let his enemies be scattered" or routed from before Him (68: lb).
    a. His enemies will be as helpless as smoke before the wind,
    b. As wax before fire.
    c. These images may have been prompted by reflecting on the pillar of fire that traveled before Israel in the Exodus.
3. The elation of God's people when He moves against their enemies (68:3).
    a. They will rejoice and sing His praises.
4. "Cast up a highway for Him that rideth through the deserts" (68:4).
    a. As a great king, God is poetically described as traveling through the land.
    b. Some translations read, "who rideth upon the clouds" (RSV).
    c. In ancient times local citizens were expected to clear and repair the roads in anticipation of a visit by a royal person. This phrase is often used in Scripture (Is. 40:3; 62:2).
5. "His name is ***Jah***," a contracted form of Jehovah (68:4b).
    a. Jah is often joined to personal names in Hebrew. It is then rendered "iah."
    b. Thus we have Jeremiah, (appointed by Jah); Isaiah, (salvation is of Jah).
6. Reasons why people should worship Jehovah (68:5-6).
    a. He is "a father of the fatherless and a judge of widows" (68:5a).
        (1). Judge of widows means the defender and vindicator of their rights (Luke 18:1-7).
    b. He "setteth the solitary in families."
        (1) He "brings the lonely home" (Moffatt).
        (2) "He gives the desolate a home to live in" (RSV).
    c. He bringeth the prisoners into prosperity"

(1)This perhaps alludes to the deliverance of the Hebrew slaves and His giving them the prosperous land of Canaan for their own home.

d. "But the rebellious dwell in a parched land."

(1)This could refer to the idolatrous Canaanites who were driven out of their good land and made to dwell in desert borderlands.

B. He reflects on the experiences of their Wilderness Wanderings (68:7-10).

(His survey of Israel's history is set forth as proof of God provision and protection of his chosen people).

1. "When thou didst march through the wilderness" (68:7a).
   a. God led his people in the pillar of cloud and fire (Ex. 13:21).
   b. The priests always carried the ark of the covenant before the people (Josh. 3:14).
2. "The earth trembled" when God met Moses on Sinai (Ex. 19:16-19).
3. "The heavens dropped (plentiful) rain at the presence of God" (68:8-9).
   a. Plentiful rain is most unusual in the desert of Sinai, but was desperately needed by the hordes of pilgrims and their livestock.
   b. This likely refers symbolically to "a rain of free gifts'' sent down by God, such as manna, quail and rain. "I will rain bread from heaven" (Ex. 16:4).
4. "Thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary" (68:9), i.e., His people.
   a. "Thou didst restore thy heritage as it languished" (RSV).
5. "Thy congregation dwelt therein" (68:10a),
   a. "Thy flock found a dwelling in it," i.e., they were able to live in the wilderness through the 40 years, which was proof of God's providential love.
      (1). God "didst prepare of (his) goodness for the poor," by providing manna and quail for the hungry pilgrims (68:10b).

C. Jehovah's mighty victories recounted (68:11-14).

1. Maclaren spoke of 68:11-14 as "the despair of commentators." Perowne said, "It is indeed almost hopeless now to understand the allusions" in this section.
2. "The Lord giveth the word" (68:1 la).
   a. "The command" (Berkley), "the news" (Alexander).
   b. This refers to God's leadership in their battles with the various enemies encountered during their Exodus and the subduing of Canaan. He gave Moses and Joshua instructions on how to proceed to assure victory (See Josh. 6:1-5).
3. "The women that publish the tidings are a great host" (68:1 lb).
   a. The women of Israel joyfully celebrated the victory God had given them (See Ex. 15:20).
4. "Kings of armies flee," i.e., kings with their armies flee.
5. "She that tarrieth at home divideth the spoil"
   a. She that tarried at home stands for all the non-combatants.
   b. Those who stayed to watch the baggage, wives who stay at home to mind the children, flocks, the aged and infirm, etc.

II. He Looks to the Future and Foresees Heavenly Triumphs Yet to Come (68:19-35).

A. What it means to be among God's chosen people (68:19).

1. He daily beareth our burden.
2. He is our savior.

B. He is different things to different people (68:20-21).

1. He is the deliverer of his people.
   a."Unto Jehovah...belongeth escape from death."
   b. "Unto Jehovah...(belong) the means of escape from death" (Perowne).
2. He is the destroyer of his enemies.
   a. "The hairy scalp" alludes to the Eastern custom of soldiers letting their hair grow until the battle was over and they returned home.
   b. "Smite through the hairy scalp" describes a crushing blow to the head that literally cleaves the skull.
3. "The Lord... will bring again from Bashan...will bring them from the depths of the sea" (68:22).
   a. Perhaps this means he would bring their enemies to be smitten by Israel.
   b. It could refer to past deliverances when He saved Israel from the hosts of Egypt at the

Red Sea and when he helped them overthrow powerful king Og of Bashan (Deut. 3:1-5).

4. "That thou mayest crush them" in defeat (68:23).

5. "Dipping thy foot in blood." Not a literal act, but describes victorious soldiers walking over the battlefield, their sandals wet with the blood of their fallen enemies.

a. "That the tongue of thy dogs may have its portion from thine enemies." Camp dogs would eagerly lap up the spilled blood of the slaughtered enemy (Comp. I Kings 22:38).

C. The song of celebration the people will sing (8:24-27).

1. "They have seen thy going, O God...into the sanctuary" (68:24).

a. This speaks of them observing the procession carrying the ark of the covenant to its new resting place in the tabernacle at Jerusalem.

2. The celebrants of the procession (68:25).

a. Singers, minstrels and damsels with timbrels (tambourines).

3. The song they sing: "Bless ye God in the congregations.

4. The dignitaries representing the various tribes of Israel.

a. He mentions only Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun and Naphtali, but they stand for all the tribes.

b."Little Benjamin" may refer to the smallness of the tribe or to the fact that Benjamin was the youngest son of Jacob.

D. The prayer of those who are assembled for this glorious occasion (68:28-31).

1. "Strengthen, O God, that which thou has wrought for us" (68:28b).

2. "Kings shall bring presents unto thee...because of thy temple at Jerusalem" (68:29).

3. "Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds" (68:30). This likely is a figurative reference to Egypt; always a threat to the Hebrews.

4. "Rebuke... the multitude of the bulls with the calves of the people." This also is a poetic description of enemy kings and their people.

5. "Trampling under foot the pieces of silver" (68:30b), is better rendered "trample under foot those who lust after tribute" (RSV).

6. "He hath scattered the people that delight in war," i.e., routed them.

7. Princes of powerful nations will one day stretch out their hands unto God as suppliants (68:31).

a. Egypt and Ethiopia were often united under one king.

b. They represent all Gentile nations.

c. This passage is predictive of the Christian age.

E. A call to all nations of the earth to worship Jehovah the God of Israel (68:32-35).

1. "Him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens"

a. God is pictured as riding across the heavens in a chariot of clouds drawn by cherubim (Deut. 33:26; Ezek 1:4-28).

2. "O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places" (68:35).

a. "Terrible" here means awe-inspiring.

3. Not only is Jehovah strong, He giveth strength and power unto his people.

4. For all of this we praise God (68:35c).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Forget not the lessons of history for in them is the key to understanding today's events.

B. A sinner who stands before Jehovah is as defenseless as smoke before the wind or wax before fire.

C. Never forget that the God of compassion is also the God of justice and judgement.

D. To the Hebrews, the tabernacle was the Palace of Justice and the ark, was the seat of the great King.

E. Let us learn to think of our successes as did the sacred writers, and give all the glory to God.

F. God's innumerable angelic hosts are available to minster to the needs of his saints (Heb. 1:13-14).

G. Praise God who "daily beareth our burden." We could not survive without His help (68:19).

H. Remember that only Jehovah can help us escape from death (68:20).

I. It is always appropriate to sing the praises of our God.

J. From the beginning, God was planning for the Christian age when all nations would come worship and serve him (68:31).

Psalm 69

A Lamentation of Distress and An Imprecation Upon His Enemies

Intro: The ancient rabbis attributed this psalm to David but the context seems to point to Jeremiah as author. (Compare Jer. 38:1ff and Lam. 3:40-66). The prophet was caste into a miry cistern by his enemies and left to die. Psalm 40 also mentions the author being in a horrible pit of mire. This has led some to think the same person authored both psalms. "The zeal which he had shown for the service and honor of God had provoked the hostility of bad men against him and made him the object of their unholy mockery" (Perowne). Remember the scribal notes at the head of each psalm are not part of the inspired text. They reflect the traditions and thinking of ancient Jewish rabbis. It was set to ***Shoshannim*** which means "Lilies" and is likely the name of the melody by which it was sung. Several verses of this psalm are used by New Testament writers to describe episodes and events in the life of our Lord (Compare 69:4,9,21,25, 28, 30). Only Psalm 22 is more frequently cited by New Testament writers than this psalm. "Perhaps in no psalm in the whole psalter is the sense of sorrow profounder or more intense than in this" (G. C. Morgan). It contains a bitter, sevenfold imprecation upon his enemies. It is a prayer of great urgency set to music.

I. His Cry of Despair (69:1-12).

A. His desperate situation (69:1-2).

1. Note that Jeremiah was literally cast by his enemies into a cistern filled with mire and left to die (Jer.38:6).
2. Our hymn "**Love Lifted Me**" is based on this passage.

B. His enemies and their behavior towards him (69:3-4).

1. His enemies were numerous
2.They hated him without cause
3. They wanted his life.
4. He was forced to make restitution for what he had not taken.

C. His loyalty to God was the real cause of his persecution (69:5-12).

1. He made no claim to perfection, but he did love and serve God (69:5-6).
2. They hated and humiliated him because he faithfully delivered God's message of judgment (69:7).
3. Even his kinsmen and siblings had turned against him (69:8).
4. "Zeal for thy house hath eaten me up" is applied to Christ (John 2:17).
5. "The reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me" is applied to Christ (Rom. 15:3).
6. Fasting was often described as "chastening the soul," or disciplining the body.
7. Sack cloth, similar to our burlap, was worn in times of mourning to chasten the body.
8. He was the song of drunkards, i.e., the butt of their ribald songs.

III. His Urgent Prayer For Deliverance (69:13-21).

A. To save him from drowning in the mire (69:13-15).

B. He pleads for God's speedy help lest he perish (69:16-18).

C. He pours out his heart to God (69:19-21).

1. They gave me also gall for my food; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." This described also Christ's treatment by his enemies (Matt. 27:34).

III. His Imprecation Upon His Enemies (69:22-28).

A. Whereas to sit around one's table to eat is normally the most peaceful and blessed of times, he asked that it be like a baited trap to ensnare his enemies.

B. Let them be blinded. Judicial blinding was practice among the ancients. Remember Sampson (69:23a).

C. Make their loins continually to shake as with fever (69:23b).

D. Let desolation befall their homes and families (69:25).

E. Tally up their iniquities and hold them accountable. (69:27).

F. Let them be blotted out of the book of life, i.e., God's record of the saved (69:28).

1. Comp. Rev. 20:11-12.

G. Note: In his imprecation, Jeremiah only asked that they receive what they had caused him to suffer.

IV. His Promise To God To Praise Him For His Deliverance (69:29-36).

A. Not just with animal sacrifices; even his enemies did that. He will magnify and praise God publically with his songs (69:30-31).

B. His confidence that God would save Zion and all who love him, including the prophet himself (69:35).

Lessons to Remember:

A. It is one thing to pray, "Save me, O God;" it is quite another to joyfully do what He tells you to do in order to be saved (Compare the case of Saul in Acts 22:10 and 22:16).

B When drowning in sin or sorrow, don't waste time with others in your same plight. Look to the only One who can save you.

C. Although God knows our foolishness and every sin, He wants us to acknowledge and confess it all to him. D. Confession forces us to face our failures.

E. Shame for the Master, pays the highest dividends. "Great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. 5:12).

F. The failure of family and friends is one of life's heaviest burdens.

G. When no earthly comforter can be found, remember there is one who will never fail nor forsake us (Heb. 13-5).

H. The greatest loss a Christian could ever experience is to have his name "blotted out of the book of life" (69:28).

Psalm 70

An Urgent Plea For Help

Intro: This little psalm is attributed to David. It is dedicated to the Chief or leader of the tabernacle's sacred singers. The Mesoretic notes have "to bring to remembrance," which seems to indicate that it was used as a memorial for some crises that had been faced. Alexander takes this to mean that it was a reminder to God of his plight. The Jewish Targum (Aramaic translation and paraphrase of the Old Testament) connects the word, ***memorial***, with the offering of the show bread in the tabernacle (Lev. 24:7) and other memorial celebrations (Num. 10:10) and the offering of incense in the tabernacle worship (Num. 16:40ff). The situation that prompted the composition is that of one besieged by an enemy engaged in cruel persecution and mockery. Feeling he is about the be overwhelmed, the author urgently pleads for God to intervene without delay. The writer does not doubt that God is with him, he only worries that help may arrive too late. This brief psalm, with only slight variation, is identical with Psalm 40:13-17. "This short psalm is a rushing sob of anxious solicitude" (G. C. Morgan). Charles Spurgeon penned a lovely poem based upon this psalm "Make haste, O God, my soul to bless!

"My help and my deliverer Thou;
Make haste, for I'm in deep distress.
My case is urgent; help me now.
"Make haste, O God! Make haste to save!
For time is short, and death is nigh;
Make haste ere yet I'm in my grave,
And with the lost forever lie."

I. His Prayer For Help Against His Enemies (70:1).

A "Make haste."

1. This reveals the desperate urgency of his situation.
2. In 40:13, the lines open with "Be pleased...to deliver me" which means "at a time when Thou pleaseth."

B. "Help me."

1"Jehovah is ready to save me..." (Is. 38:20).

2. There is no indication that he doubted God willingness and readiness to act on his behalf...but he feared that he might not be able to hold out until the help arrived.

II. Let them be put to shame and confounded" (70:2a).

A. Let their schemes to harm him be thwarted and their guilt be publicly exposed.

1. Confounded" means he blushed.

B "Let them be turned backward" i.e., driven back and forced to retreat.

C."Let them...be brought to dishonor" or publicly humiliated in their defeat.

D. Their crime: They delighted in his hurt.

1. They shamelessly mocked him with their "Aha, aha."

III. His Prayer For the Righteous (70:4).

A. "Let all that seek thee rejoice..." (70: 4a)

1. Joy and gladness are the very essence of true worship.

2. "Thy salvation" is a metonymy that stands for the One who provides salvation.

3.Only those who love God with all their hearts, souls, minds and strength can rejoice in his salvation (Matt. 22:37).

4."Let (them) say continually "Let God be magnified" (70:4c).

a. So long as breath is in our bodies we should be praising our God.

(1). "Magnified" means exalted or lifted up in praise.

B. The reason for his request (70:5). "I am poor and needy."

1. He had no resources to mount an adequate defense against his enemies.

2. With God our poverty is our wealth, our weakness our strength (II Cor. 12:9-10).

a. "Thou art my help and my deliverer."

IV. He had no one else, adequate to deliver him, to whom he could turn.

A. "O Jehovah, make no tarrying." This thought is the one compelling thought of his prayer.

Lessons to Remember:

A. "Let us draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

B. A valuable truth is well-worth repeating. "Blessed is the man who has Jehovah as is helper and deliverer.

C. Never be afraid to call upon Jehovah for the help you need.

D. God expects all who seek Him to rejoice and be glad.

E. May we never grow weary of magnifying our God.

F. If decent men respond to every SOS in our earthly realm, so will our Jehovah respond to our calls of distress.

Psalm 71

A Prayer Of An Aged Saint

Intro: The Hebrew Bible offers no superscription for this psalm but the Septuagint attributes it to David. It adds "Sung by the children of Jonadab and the first captives." The sons of Jonadab were known as the Rechabites (See Jer. 35: 1ff). Perowne speculates that the psalm was composed by Jeremiah. It is a mosaic of quotes from other psalms with every verse being borrowed from some other psalm. The author is described as a old man, full of trust and hope in Jehovah (vss. 9,17,18). He devotes his time and energy to praising God "all the day" (vss. 8, 15, 24). He strongly believes that God's has watched over him since birth and even before (vss. 5, 6, 17). He is sure he will continue to do so until the end (vss. 9,18). Here we see a "beautiful picture of one, now well advanced in years, who can look back upon his past life in the happy conviction that he has done his duty to God; and that, in spite of troubles, God has been with him and upheld him" (Oesterley). "There is a mellowness and serenity about it which is characteristic of a long life spent in reliance upon God" (M'Caw). "For its deep piety and religious spirit it stands among some of the most beautiful productions in the Psalter." (Oesterley). "It is the utterance of a faith which has proved the goodness of God in a life of many trials, and trusts to experience it to the end." (Kirkpatrick).

I. His Prayer for Deliverance (71:1-4).

A. His confession: "In thee, O Jehovah, do I take refuge" (71:1a).

A. "Whom have I on earth beside Thee,

1.Whom in heaven but Thee?"

B. His Petition (71: l b-4).

1.“Let me never be put to shame” (71:1b)

a. For my faith and trust in Thee.

2. “Deliver me..and rescue me” (71:2a).

3. “Bow down thine ear unto me and save me.”

4. “Thou has given commandment to save me” (71:3b).

a. In fact, He has given the word to save every man (I Tim. 2:4).

5. “Be thou to me a rock of habitation” (71:3a).

a. “Whereunto I may continually resort.”

b. A stone fortress for safety (See Ps. 31:2).

c. So long as we dwell in this vale of trials and tribulations we will need a fortress in which we may find safety.

6. “Rescue me out of the hand of the wicked...the unrighteous and cruel man” (71:4).

a. The cruel man” literally means “the leavened man,” leavened with hatred of God’s truth and God’s people.

II. He Acknowledges God’s Provision and Protection of Him From His Youth (71:5-8).

A. “Thou art my hope..(and) my trust from my youth” (71:5).

1. God’s name is “Jehovah, the hope of Israel” (Jer. 17:13).

a. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

b. Nothing created will sustain us in death. We hope only for the eternal God.

2. No greater gift can be bestowed upon a child than to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

3. The child who grows up with no Christian instruction is as deprived as the child without adequate food and shelter.

B. “By thee have I been holden up from the womb” (71:6a). Thou art he that took me out of my mother’s bowels” (71:6a). The parallel lines show that by the word bowels, he speaks of his mother’s womb.

1. Webster lists the archaic meaning of bowels as “the interior parts...”

2. “Upon thee have I leaned from my birth;
Thou art he who took me from my mother’s womb” (RSV).

3. “Holden up” means supported or provided for.

C. “My praise shall be continually of thee” (71:6b).

1. He will never grow tired to praising God in worship and to those about him.

D. “I am as a wonder unto many” (71:7).

1. “A sign, portent of the faithfulness of God” (Purkiser).

2. An amazement because of the hardships he had suffered.

E. “My mouth shall be filled with thy praise...and thy honor all the day” (71:8).

1. An example of David’s lavish praise of God is seen in I Chronicles 29:11.

III. He prays That God’s Mercy Will Stay With Him in His Declining Years (71:9-13),

A. “Cast me not off in the time of old age: forsake me not when my strength faileth.”

1. Many ancient pagans cast out servants who became old or sick and left them to perish.

2. Our God will in no wise forsake us (Heb. 13:6).

3. Even though his physical strength was failing, he would go on in the strength of the Lord.

B. The cruelty of his enemies (71:10-11):

1. They conspired against him.

2. They ridiculed his faith in God, saying, “God hath forsaken him. ”

3.“Pursue and take him; for there in none to deliver” (71:1 lb).

C. “O my God, make haste to help me” (71:12b).

1. See similar wording in 70:1, “Make haste, O God, to deliver me” which suggests that the two psalms may have originally been one.

D. “Let them be put to shame and consumed that are adversaries to my soul” (71:13a).

1. Disgraced and destroyed.

2.“Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt” (71:13b).

IV. His Confidence That God Will Answer His Prayer (71:14-21).

A. His pledge: “I will hope continually, and ...praise thee yet more and more (71:14).

B. He will declare to others God’s righteous deeds in his behalf (71:15-16).

1.“And of (God’s) salvation all the day,” i.e., without ceasing.

2 God’s righteousness is the causal factor; his salvation of his people, the effect thereof. Since God has pledged himself to save those who placed their faith and trust in him, and because of his righteousness, he cannot break his promises (Heb. 6:18).

3. Salvation is the visible outcome of the righteousness of God.

4. “For I know not the numbers thereof’ (71:15b).

a. God’s gifts are innumerable.

5. God’s doings are mighty and righteous. (71:16).

a. “I will come with the mighty acts of the Lord” into the solemn assembly.

C. His prayer that God will not forsake him in his old age (71:17-18).

1. He had been God’s disciple from his youth (71:17a).

a. In old age, he still clings to the faith learned in his youth.

2. “Hitherto” he has declared God’s wondrous works.

a. Habitually and constantly, from youth until this point in his life.

3. Forsake not this old man until I have declared they strength unto the next generation (71:18).

a. Even in old age he had a mission and purpose in life.

b. “To every one that is to come” he will speak of his God.

D. His confidence that the righteous God who had blessed them in days past will continue his merciful protection (71:19-20).

1. “Thou has showed us many and sore troubles”

a. God’s paths are not always over smooth and easy terrain.

2. “Wilt thou quicken us again” (71:20b).

3. “And bring us again from the depths of the earth, i.e., the pit of destruction.

a. As we would say, they had been standing with one foot in the grave.

b. This is similar to Ezekiel’s imagery of the nation of Israel in the valley of dry bones, yet resurrected (Ezek. 37:2-4).

c. This hints at a future day when Messiah would literally, raise the dead.

E. Two requests (71:21).

1. “Increase thou my greatness.”

a. If David wrote this we can see the greatness he speaks of.

b. The RSV renders this “Increase my honor.”

2.“Turn again and comfort me.”

V. He Promises to Praise God for Every Blessing Received (71:22-24).

A. His pledge:

1.“I will praise thee with the psaltery.”

2.The psaltery resembled our guitar or mandolin.

3.The harp, resembled modern, smaller hand-held Irish harps.

4. The use of these and other instruments was authorized for Hebrew worship by God (II Chron. 29:25).

5. “There was a typical signification in them (musical instruments in Old Testament worship): and upon this account they are not only rejected and condemned by the whole army of Protestant divines, as for instance, by Zwingle, Calvin, Peter Martyr, Zepperus, Paroeus, Willet, Ainsworth, Ames, Calderwood and Cotton; who do, with one mouth testify against them, most of them expressly affirming that they are apart of the abrogated legal pedagogy; so that we as might well recall the incense, tapers, sacrifices, new moons, circumcision, and all the other shadows of the law into use again. But Aquinas himself also, though a Popish schoolman, pleads against them upon the same account, and saith, the Church in his times did not use them, lest they should seem to judaize” (Samuel Mather, on The Types).

B. “O thou Holy One of Israel” (71:22b).

1. This is one of the many names of our God.

2. It was a favorite of Isaiah (See Isaiah 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:17, 20).

a. This is the first use of this name in the Psalms.

C. My lips shall shout for joy...and my soul...” (71:23).

1. A rank hypocrite can praise God with his lips, but only a true saint with both his lips and his soul.
2. "My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long." (Ps. 71:23-24).

D. For they are put to shame, ...they are confounded, that seek my hurt (71:24b).
1. "Daunted and disgraced" (Moffatt).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Blessed is the man who in his declining years still has an interest in life and is eager to share his story of faith with those willing to hear.
B. "Despondency need not go with decrepitude" (Scroggie).
C. One of Satan's strong temptations is to lead us to feel that God has forsaken us in old age.
D. The spirit can still be young, even when the bones are old (Scroggie).
E. God knows our faith, love and appreciation, yet he loves to hear us declare it.
F. Blessed is the person who can use the personal pronoun when he prays to God.
G. What comfort it is to saints to know and believe that God is on our side in the battles of life.
H. Blessed is the soul who is taught of God from his youth.
I. "Youth well-spent is the greatest comfort of old age" (Seneca).
J. The God who smites is also the God who saves (vs. 20).
K. As there is no end to the Lord's mercies, there should be no end to our gratitude and thanksgiving.
L. Apostasy in old age is a fearful thing. He who climbs to near the top of the tower and falls back has the greater fall and disaster (Thomas Adams).

Psalm 72

A Prayer for Israel's Righteous King

Intro: This song along with Psalms 2, 20, 21, & 45 are classed as Royal Psalms. The ancient scribes attributed this psalm along with Psalm 127 to Solomon. Many older commentators thought that David wrote it for Solomon, based on a faulty understanding of vs. 20. It seems to have been written by Solomon to be used by his subjects as a prayer on his behalf (Kirkpatrick). It is one of the great Messianic psalms. "These promises were realized in Solomon, but only typically. They expect therefore, after Solomon, their final realization and that in the Son of David..." the Messiah (Delitzsch). They reach far beyond Solomon and his reign to the coming Messiah. Thus Solomon was the type of God's righteous king and Christ the anti-type. Virtually all commentators have judged it to be "a glowing description of the reign of the Messiah." The ancient rabbis viewed this Psalm as Messianic. As each successive king of David's line failed to realize the ideal set forth, it became clear that the words pointed to One who was yet to come, the greater Son of David, the Messiah.

The Targum paraphrased vs. 1 as follows, "O God, give Thy judgments to the King Messiah, and thy justice to the Son of King David." G. C. Morgan wrote, "This is the Kingdom for which the world still waits...The great King came and men would not have him to reign over them..." David subdued Israel's enemies by war (I Chron. 28:3) God appointed Solomon, the man of peace, to build his temple (I Chron. 22:9-10). "This psalm depicts the blessings which will flow from the righteousness of His earthly representative, the theocratic king" (Kirkpatrick). The thoughts of this psalm end with vs. 17. Verses 18-19 are a closing doxology for the second collection of hymns. Each of the five books has a similar doxology. Edward, the martyred king of East Anglia, spent a year in retirement in order to memorize the entire Psalter. He wanted to be able to repeat any song in it at his pleasure. This psalm was his favorite.

I. For the Righteousness of His Reign (72:1-4).

A. "Give thy righteousness unto the king's son" (72: lb).
1. He is asking God to bless him with a wise and just heart that he might judge his people righteously.
a. In his inaugural prayer, Solomon prayed, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge for who can judge this thy people, that is so great" (II Chron. 1:10).
b. The mark of all great and good rulers is how they dealt with the poor of their domains.
2. Solomon ruled with righteousness, as well as any mortal king could, but mistakes he made.

Christ rules with an unblemished record on his great white throne. White is symbolic of its purity, unspotted by a single deed of injustice or even an honest mistake (Rev. 20:11-12).

3. God has now given all judgment to the Son (John 5:22).

B. With God as his strength and guide, the nation shall be blessed (72:2-4).

1. His administration will be one of justice for all people (72:2b).

2.Peace will abound (72:3).

a. "The mountains shall bring peace to the people."

. (1) This may refer to the northern frontier which he would fortify with troops.

(2) Much of the land of Palestine is mountains and hills thus it may refer to peace throughout the land.

. (3) Mountains and hills may refer to those holding governmental office. They would rule in a way that would guarantee peace to the nation. (Compare Isaiah 2:2). This seems to me the most likely meaning.

3. The poor will be protected and provided for (72:4a).

a. The special interest of any righteous ruler is that the oppressed and defenseless of his kingdom will be protected from oppressors and provisions be made for their survival.

(1). A truly great ruler will devote himself to "redeeming human wrong."

4. e will punish those who oppress their neighbors (72:4b).

II. For the Perpetuity of His Reign (72:5-7).

A. They shall fear thee, i.e. reverence and honor him.

1. Regarding Christ, we reverence, honor and worship him (Matt. 2:11; Luke 24:52).

B. That they will do so forever, "while the sun endureth, and so long as the moon..."

1. The gentleness and prosperity of his reign (72:6).

2. As refreshing and beneficial as rain upon the mown grass.

C. Renewing, reviving and regenerating it.

1. Like refreshing showers; not a lashing storm.

2. That there will be an abundance of peace (72:7).

a. And that the righteous may flourish for ever.

III. That His Reign Will Be Universal (72:8-11).

A. His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the River unto the ends of the earth.

1.This a poetic expansion of the promise God made to the Hebrews at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 23:31).

2. For Solomon this meant that his role would extend to the full extent that God had promised their fathers.

a. God promised Abraham the land from river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates (Gen. 15:18).

3. For Messiah, it speaks of his world-wide reign (Mark 16:15; Phil. 2:10-11).

B. Men of all stations of life will recognize his rule (72:9-11).

1. "They that dwell in the wilderness," the uncivilized tribes of the Arab beduins.

a. No other king had been able to subdue them.

2. His enemies shall lick the dust.

a. Persian kings insisted that suppliants must first prostrate themselves and kiss their footsteps (Xenophon).

3. "Kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall render tribute" (72:10).

a. Tarshish was the far western border of civilization.

b. It is thought to be ancient Tartessus, a Phoenician colony near the Gates of Gibraltar in southern Spain; a rich trading colony.

c. "Isles." The Hebrew word denotes all habitable lands as opposed to water

d. It was commonly used for coastal lands and islands.

e. Tribute was taxes paid to a superior king or nation.

4. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts" (72:10b).

a. Sheba was a province of Arabia Felix, which is modem Yemen. It was renowned for its wealth and commerce..

(1). The queen of Sheba paid homage to Solomon (I Kings 10:1-10).

b. Seba is modem Meroe, a province of Ethiopia. It too was known for its wealth and commerce

c. The Abyssinian people of Ethiopia are an Arab or Sabean race. They are thought to have originated in Yemen and migrated to Eastern Africa as traders. They became the dominate tribe in Ethiopia.

C "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him" (72:11a).

I. This was never literally true of Solomon, but it will certainly be true of the Messianic King as every knee will bow and tongue will confess him (Phil. 2:10-11). He has been appointed King of kings and Lord of lords" (I Tim.6:15).

D. "'All nations shall serve him" (72:11b).This is clearly Messianic in scope.

III. That His Will Be a Beneficent Reign (72:12-15).

A. He will have pity on the poor and needy (72:12-13a).

B "The souls of the needy he will save" (72: 13-14).

1. By "souls" he means he will save their lives as this is the Hebrew usage of soul.

2. He will redeem them from oppression and violence, whether domestic or foreign.

3. Their blood will be precious to him. Since the life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11), this means that their lives would be precious to him and he would not stand to see their blood shed.

4. So despised were slaves among the ancient people that they were traded as barter. One record notes that an Angolani traded 22 slaves for a choice hunting dog. A wealthy Roman had his slave thrown into a pond of man-eating eels because he accidently broke a goblet.

5.While Solomon could only protect their lives from physical danger, the coming Messianic King could and would save them from death and judgment (Matt. 1:21).

C. Because of His protection they shall live and prosper and in appreciation, bring to him their richest gifts (72:15).

1. His subjects shall pray for him, entreating God's favor for him.

a. Subject people were expected to pray for their king each day.

2. They shall bless or praise God for him all the day long.

a. This was true for Solomon but far more so for Messiah.

V. For the Prosperity of His Reign (72:16-17).

A. That "there shall be an abundance of grain in the earth" (72:16), i.e., a bounty of food.

1. "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth" (KJV). All later translations render this "abundance."'

B. "Upon the top of the mountains"

1. "The fruit shall shake like Lebanon," i.e., like the trees on Mt. Lebanon shake in the wind.

2. There are four ranges of the Lebanese Mountains. The lower range is fully tillable and is farmed throughout by use of terraces. The second range is barren and produces nothing. The third is forested and there orchards flourish. The fourth is snow covered year round. The poet refers to the first range.

The fruit of the standing grain shall shake like Lebanon's trees in the breeze.

C. His name will endure for ever...as long as the sun shall last (72:17a).

D. And men shall be blessed in him" (72:17b).

1. "May men be prospered in Him" (Berkeley).

2. "And they shall call him blessed" (New International Version).

VI. Doxology (72:18-19).

A. This doxology of praise brings to a close the second collection of Psalms.

1. Each of the five collected books that compose the Psalter ends with a doxology of praise.

B. "Blessed be Jehovah Elohim." The second book of the Psalms was arranged with a collection of hymns that generally use the sacred name Elohim when referring to God.

C. "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory" (72:19). This clearly is cast in a Messianic mold. It looks beyond the narrow view of many of the Hebrews who thought of themselves as the only people favored of God.

VII. Editorial Note (72:20). "The prayers of David...are ended."

A. This indicates only an end of this collection for many other songs of David are scattered throughout the

three other volumes.

B. Not understanding this final verse as a editorial note led many older commentators to argue that David had written every psalm in this collection. The Mesoretic notes attribute them to various authors.

Lessons to Remember:

A. May our prayers go up daily for the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, his church (Matt. 16:18-19).

B. How blessed we are to be subjects of his heavenly kingdom, the church.

C. It is true that Christ is our judge and that the wicked should tremble before him, but for his disciples he is as gentle as the showers on the fields.

D. The day will come when all men of all nations will bow in submission to King Jesus (Phil. 2:9-11).

E. Our Lord's enemies shall lick the dust.

F. Our King is King of all kings and Lord of all lords (I Tim. 6:15).

G. Since the blood of his people is precious to our King, that of our fellow man should be precious to us.

H. When the heavens and earth are consumed with fire, our King will still be praised throughout eternity.

I. "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory" (72:19).

BOOK III

Psalm 73

Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People And Good Things To The Evil?

Intro: With this chapter begins the third book of the Psalms. It is attributed to Asaph, as are the next ten songs. Asaph was a "seer" or inspired prophet who served Israel in the days of King David. He was also a capable hymnist (II Chron. 29:30). In this song, the author wrestles with the age old problem of why God allows the wicked to prosper and the righteous to suffer. If God is all powerful and all good, how or why does he allow evil to flourish and good people to suffer? This is also the subject of the Book of Job and some have described this psalm as an "epitome" of that book. This mental or spiritual struggle is familiar to most of God's children. The trial and triumph of faith is seen in this psalm. The theme of this song being philosophical, it is classified as wisdom literature. In the world, some folks deal with this quandary by denying that evil exists, and others deny that God exists. Such denials do not solve the problem, they only compound it. "A man who gives up his Christianity, only surrenders a life of faith troubled by doubt, for a life of doubt troubled by faith" (John Hutton).

I. His Problem Stated (73:1-3).

A. He reminded himself of God's perennial goodness to his saints (73:1).

B. Yet he was troubled by the prosperity of the wicked (73:2-3).

1. This verse provides the key to understanding this psalm.

II. The Apparent Prosperity Of The Wicked (73:4-9).

A. They have easy deaths (73:4).

B. They have few troubles (73:5).

C. They are proud and insolent (73:6).

1.Their pride is boldly displayed like a golden chain.

2. Their violence is worn openly like a garment.

D. They are sated with good things (73:7).

E. They are unashamed scoffers and braggarts (73:8-9).

III. The Arrogance of The Wicked (73:10-12).

A. Their disciples are many (73:10a).

B. Their cup of blessings is full and they drain the last drop from it (73:10b).

C. They scoff at the very idea of a God to whom they must answer (73:11).

D. They are always prosperous and comfortable (73:12).

IV. His Contemplation (73:13-17).

A. He wondered if being righteous was worth the cost (73:13-14)?
B. He hesitated to discuss his doubts with others (73:15).
1. This is a good lesson for us to remember.
C. His mental struggles were intensely powerful (73:16).
D. He took the problem to God and found the answers he sought (73:17).
1. The answer was not seen in the short or immediate view but in the longer view
a. God has the whole of this life and eternity to work his plan.

V. His Confidence In God's Judgements (73:18-20).
A. It is the wicked who stand on the slippery slope.
B. He imagines God as awakening from sleep to deal with them.
1. This is an anthropomorphic expression as the omnipotent God does not sleep nor slumber (Ps. 121:3).
C. God despises the wicked.

VI. His Shame (73:21-22).
A. His conscience smote him for having doubted God's justice.
B. He felt his behavior had been brutish.

VII. His Resolution To Trust And Serve God Always (73:23-27).
A. His confidence was restored (73:23-24).
1. He had forgotten that God has all eternity to reward folks for their works.
B. The man who has Jehovah as his master has everything (73:25).
1. The hymn, **Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior**, is based on this verse.
C. He realized that God was faithful even when his faith had wavered (73:25-26).

Conclusion (73:28): Good has come from his struggles. The storm had driven him closer to God. He now knew, all the more, how dependable and just God was. He would share with others his renewed faith and the truths he had discovered. Remember, "The things that money can buy are valuable only if you have the things that money can't buy"...i.e., a trusting, saving relationship with God (Warren Wiersbe).

Lessons to Remember:
A. Never doubt the goodness of God (73:1).
B. We should never be envious of the prosperity of the wicked.
C. No righteous deed, based on faithfulness to God, is ever in vain.
D. Chastening and discipline have their useful purposes in preparing us for heaven.
E. How many unsolved problems could have been solved if folks had gone "to the sanctuary of God" (73:17).
F. Compared to God and Jesus his son, how pathetic are our sin-stained lives (73:22).
G. God still guides us by his counsel, his inspired book (73:24).
H. Years and illness may weaken our bodies, but God will always be our strength (73:;26).
I. After drawing near to God in worship, remember upon leaving our task is to tell others of his mercies (73:28).

Psalm 74

A Lamentation When Heathen Armies Destroyed God's Temple

Intro: This song is attributed to Asaph. It is termed a "maschil," which means a song of instruction. The style is that of a dirge, i.e., a song of mourning as is sung when death or calamity comes. Several statements within the psalm have led many expositors to conclude it was written during the Maccabean period when the little state of Israel was overrun, sacked and occupied by the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria (170-165 BC). Compare 74:4-9. "Athenaeus proceeded to Jerusalem, where, with the assistance of the garrison, he prohibited and suppressed every observance of the Jewish religion, forced the people to profane the Sabbath, to eat swine's flesh and other unclean food, and expressly forbade the national rite of circumcision. The Temple was dedicated to Jupiter Olympus; the

statue of that deity was erected on part of the altar of burnt offerings, and sacrifice duly performed... As a last insult, the feast of the Bacchanalia, the license of which , as they were celebrated in the later ages of Greece, shocked the severe virtue of the older Romans, was substituted for the national festival of Tabernacles. The reluctant Jews were forced to join in these riotous orgies, and to carry the ivy, the insignia of the god. So near was the Jewish nation, and the worship of Jehovah, to total extermination." (H. H. Milman, **A History of the Jews**).

Other psalms attributed by some to this same period are the 44th, 60th, 79th and 83rd. This sad psalm teaches us that even in the face of overwhelming disaster, the child of God should pray in confidence for God's deliverance. To hope against hope is the highest measure of faith. It is to the credit of the author that he was more concerned for the insult done to God than for the hurt of himself and his people.

I. His Pitiful Petition Unto God (74:1-3).

A. He could not understand God's inaction in the face of the oppression (74:1).
B. He reminds God of His ancient covenant with Abraham's seed (74:2).
C. He pleads for God to "come and see" the evil the enemy had done. (74:3).

II. The Destructive Deeds of the Enemy Described (74:4-8).

A. They had desecrated God's temple (74:4).
B. They had demolished and burned the sanctuary (74:5-7a).
C. They had profaned the house of God (74:7b).
D. They had burned the synagogues of God throughout the land (74:8).
    1.This mention of synagogues assures us this psalm was written after the Babylonian captivity. It was during that period of captivity that synagogues came into being.

III. His Appeal For Help (74:9-11).

A. No sign of help from God had been seen (74:9).
    1. No signs or portent had been given.
    2. No prophetic message had been received.
B. How long must this evil continue (74:10a)?
C. Why did not God act in their defense, or for his own honor (74:10b)?

IV. He Remembered God's Past Actions For His People (74:12-17).

A. He had divided the Red Sea (74:13a).
B. He had broken the armies of Egypt (74:13b-14).
C. He had opened the Jordan River so Israel could cross (74:15).
D. He was the creator and ruler of all (74:16-17).

V. His Urgent Prayer For Their Deliverance (74:18-23).

A. The enemy had insulted Him as well as the nation (74:18).
B. His people were poor and helpless and desperately needed His mercy (74:19).
C. He again reminded God of the covenant He had made with Abraham (74:20-21).
D. He reminded Jehovah that the Cause was His, the reproaches were against Him (74:22-23).
    1. He should act quickly to defend His divine honor.
    2. In so doing Israel would be saved.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Doubt in times of oppression and suffering is normal, but faith will help us overcome it (74:1).
B. When we are under attack and our life is in ruins, we should take it to God in prayer (74:3-4).
C. No adversary is too powerful or too evil for God to defeat and neutralize.
D. Wicked men can destroy a house of worship, but they cannot destroy faith in the devout believer's heart (74:4-8).
E. When men persecute God's people they make war on Him and will answer for it (74:10, 18).
F. Christian soldiers never fight alone. God is always on their side (I Tim. 6:12).

Psalm 75

A Song Celebrating The Righteous Judgements Of God

Intro: This consoling psalm was write by Asaph. He also is credited with Psalms 73-83. He was the Chief Musician of the tabernacle under David's administration (I Chron. 15:17-19; 16:4-5). It is set to **Al-tashheth** which means "destroy not." These words are thought to indicate the melody to which it was sung. Psalms 58, 59 and "5 have the same notation. Most scholars identify this psalm with God's destruction of the Assyrian army that had besieged Jerusalem in King Hezekiah's day, thus delivering his people (See Isaiah 37:36-38). As Isaiah contemplated the invasion of the Assyrian army he predicted that God would deliver his people and they would "have a song, as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart...." (Is. 30:29). This may well be one of those songs of which he spoke. The LXX (Septuagint) adds this superscription, "with reference to the Assyrians. The message of this song is God's sovereign rule in this world which He created. Its special value is that it explains the principle of God's rule and judgement in our world. It is a song of praise and a hymn of instruction. The form or style of this composition is dramatic. Two distinct voices are heard speaking in it. The psalmist in vs. 1, God's response is heard in vss. 2-5. The psalmist again speaks in 6-9 and God's final response is in vs. 10. Scholars have observed a strong similarity between this psalm and Hannah's song in I Samuel 2. The author of this psalm may have read her song and been stirred to write a similar message regarding the events of his day.

I. He Praises God for His Nearness to Help His People (75:1).

A. "For thy name is near."

1. God's name stands for his nature; his person as revealed to man.

a. "Behold, the name of Jehovah cometh from far, burning with anger...as a devouring fire...to sift the nations..." (Is. 30:27-28).

2. "Is near." "What great nation is there, that hath a god so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is whensoever we call upon him?" (Deut. 4:7).

B. "Men tell of thy wondrous works." This likely refers to his work of destroying Assyria's army.

II. God's Response From Heaven (75:2-5).

A. "When I shall find the set time, I will judge uprightly" (75:2).

1. "At the time which I have appointed I will render fair judgments" (Berkeley).

2. "Set time." The same Hebrew term, ***mo'ed*** is rendered assembly in 74:4,8. The allusion is to stated times at which justice is rendered (Alexander).

a. God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world by Christ (Acts 17:31).

3. "I will judge." The pronoun is emphatic and means, "I and I alone will judge" (Alexander).

4. To "judge uprightly" means to judge with equity or total fairness.

B. "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved." 75:3).

1. "When the earth totters and all the inhabitants of it, it is I who will poise and keep steady its pillars" (**Amplified Bible**).

2. "The earth dissolved" literally describes a situation of chaos and anarchy. Everything is disjointed, destruction threatens everything dear, but God comes to the rescue.

3. "The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall sway to and fro like a hammock; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall..." (Is. 24:19-20).

4. Visualize the great Creator reaching down to steady and preserve his world.

C. "To the arrogant," God says, "Deal not arrogantly" (75:4).

1. Don't act arrogantly and insolently towards Me!

2. "To the wicked" he says, "lift not up the horn..."

a. "Horn" stands for ones power. The imagery is borrowed from horned animals whose horns give them power over their peers.

b. "Don't flaunt your power" (Moffatt).

3. "Speak not with a stiff neck."

a. This describes a horse or an ox refusing to bow in submission to his master's bridle.

4. Such arrogance is seen in the words and actions of Rabshakeh, captain of the Assyrian army (Is. 36:4-10).

D. "For neither from the east, nor from the west. Nor yet from the south, cometh lifting up" (75:6).

1. It is thought that these words were spoken to the terrified Hebrews. There was no help to be found anywhere that could deliver them from the mighty Assyrian army. Only Jehovah could do so.

2. Note that he does not mention the north, as that was the direction from which the Assyrians were invading their land.

a. The Hebrews had hoped the Egyptians would rescue them (Is. 36:6).

E. Their only hope for "lifting up" was from Jehovah. In the Hebrew "lifting up" means deliverance from trouble; safety, victory" (Perowne).

III. The Psalmist Proclaimed That God Alone is the Judge of the Nations (75:7-9).

A. Judgement comes not from any source but from Jehovah. Kings and nations are but instruments in his hand. (Compare Isaiah 10:5-7. 12-17).

B. God puts down one and lifts up another, king or nation.

1. God's sovereignty is demonstrated in his power to put down and to raise up both good and evil leaders over his people (Jer. 30:9).

C. "For in the hand of Jehovah there is a cup..." (75:8).

1. The cup of judgement is a common figure in Scripture.

a. A cup of poisoned wine was sometime used to put people to death.

b. A cup of wine, mingled with narcotics, was given to the person to be executed in order to dull his senses (Matt. 27:34).

c. A cup filled with sinful deeds demands judgment (Rev. 17:4-6).

d. The cup of wrath is symbolic of God's judgment on the wicked (Rev. 14:10).

2. The wine foameth" because it is potent and will rendered the drinker senseless.

3. "The dregs there of., all the wicked of the earth shall drain..., i.e., they will drink the last drop of the judgement God has prepared for them.

a. There will be no escaping His judgement.

4. "We gave Hudhelites the cup of death to drink, whose dregs are confusion, disgrace and shame" (Arab poem).

IV. Author's Resolution to Forever Praise the God of Jacob Who Would Save Them (75:9).

V. God's Response (75:10).

A. "All the horns of the wicked...I will cut off," i.e., shear them of their power.

B. "But the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up" i.e., be preserved and made to prosper.

Lessons to Remember:

A. "When God's set time arrives he will act. He cannot be rushed to act beforehand or blocked from by any opponent.

B. God has his own time schedule. It is not always coordinated with ours.

C. Wickedness never escapes its due punishment nor righteousness its due reward (Num. 32:23).

D. The nation that challenges God, as did Assyria, will meet Assyria's fate.

E. Never forget that there is an appointed time for both man and nations to face God's righteous judgment (Acts 17:31).

F. Where God reigns disorder cannot!

G. The terror of the wicked man is that God is his final judge.

H. Men forget that the Governor of all earthly things is in heaven. They see only the human forces at work, but the unseen God is at work behind the clouds (Spurgeon) (Dan. 4:25).

I. Empires rise and fall at God's bidding.

J. God is the true Atlas that holds the world and all things in place (Heb. 1:3).

Psalm 76

A Celebration Of A Remarkable Deliverance

Intro: This psalm is closely related to 46, 47, 48 and 75. All seem to relate to that historic occasion when God

intervened to save Jerusalem from the invasion of King Sennacherib's Assyrian army. The story is recorded in Isaiah chapters 36-37. All of these psalms seem to have a common author. Psalm 75 anticipates a great deliverance while this psalm celebrates that deliverance. Not since the days of the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan had such a signal intervention by God been seen among them. It is attributed to Asaph. He was a prominent Levite who was the chief musician in David's day (I Chron. 15:17-19; 16:4-5). This psalm being of a much later date in composition, was likely composed by a descendent of or a member of the school of Asaph. It was set to ***neginoth***, which means "on stringed instruments" and thus indicates the kind of accompaniment that would be used when this hymn was sung. ***Neginoth*** is also mentioned in Psalms 4, 6, 54, and 67. It is a song of praise. In 1588 when news came that the mighty Spanish Armada had been destroyed by the storm and England's navy, this psalm was sung by the great crowed assembled in Market Cross (square) in Edinburgh, Scotland.

I. The Revelation of God's Power in Zion (76:1-3).

A. The God of Judah had come to her rescue (76:1-2).

1. "In Judah is God known."

a. Only in Judah, among his chosen people, was Jehovah fully known. They had his law, his temple, his priesthood, his prophets, his protection and provision.

b. "Maketh Himself known" (Perowne). Other nations knew only idol gods.

2. "In Salem...is his tabernacle"

a. Salem is the ancient name of Jerusalem (Gen. 14:18).

b. It means city of peace (Heb. 7:1-2).

c. Having destroyed the Assyrian army, their peace was restored and assured.

B. "His tabernacle and his dwelling-place in Zion" (76:2).

1. The word rendered "tabernacle" is not the term used for the tabernacle of the Exodus, although it does speak of a temporary abode.

2. Note that the footnote renders tabernacle "covert" and dwelling-place, "lair." These terms paint a picture of God coming forth like a lion, to seize his prey. Isaiah uses this very imagery in 31:4,

a. Thus the fierce lion of Assyria had met his superior (Nah. 2:11; 3:1).

C. "There he brake the arrows of the bow..." (76:3).

1. "There" indicates the place where the great destruction occurred. Imagine the speaker pointing out the very spot as he relates his story.

2. The word rendered "arrows" is literally "lightning bolts," but metaphorically it speaks of arrows of Assyria's warriors.

3. The mighty Jehovah snaps their arrows before they can launch them.

II. The Destruction of the Enemy Described (76:4-6).

A."Glorious art thou and excellent" (76:4a).

1. "You are resplendent with light" (76:4a New International Version).

2. His victory over the enemy was a splendid and glorious one.

B. "From the mountains of prey" (76:4b).

a. This obscure passage is capable of many possible explanations.

b. "Thou didst strike terror from the hills eternal" (Moffatt).

c. "Mountains" may refer to the nation of Assyria who preyed on her neighbors. (Compare Is. 2:2).

d. It may literally refer to the hills and mountains about Jerusalem where the Assyrians had been encamped.

"Assyria had pillaged the nations till it had become rich with mountains of spoil...but Jehovah was more glorious than all their spoil" (Spurgeon).

C. "The stouthearted are made a spoil" (76:5a).

1. "Stouthearted" can mean brave and courageous or hard-hearted and rebellious.

2. The spoiler had been spoiled by a greater power.

D. "They have slept their sleep" (76:5b).

1. The sleep of death overtook them.

2. "The valiant fell a prey to Thee and slept their last" (Moffatt).

3. "They have sunk into their sleep" expresses languor and lassitude which overpowers a person. They could not resist falling asleep" (Perowne).

4. The warriors of Assyria were not defeated in battle, beaten by stronger troops; they sank into

unending sleep at the hand of Almighty God!

E. "None of the men of might have found their hands" (76:5 :c).

1. "None of the men of might could raise their hands" (Amplified Bible).

F. "Both chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep" (76:6).

1. This is a metonymy where the chariots and horses stand for the horsemen and charioteers who mounted them in battle.

2. Now they are silent in death.

G. God had earlier promised "I will break the Assyrian in my land and upon my mountains tread him under foot..." (Is. 14:25).

III. The Awe of the People at the Display of God's Righteous Anger (76:7-9).

A. "Thou art to be feared" by all, both righteous and wicked.

B. "Who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?" (76:7b).

1. No one can stand before Jehovah.

2. The anger of God should not be compared to the rage of frustrated, sinful humans. It is the necessary reaction of the righteous Judge of humanity against evil enemies who would harm his faithful subjects.

C. "Thou didst cause sentence to be heard from heaven" (76:8a).

1. The omnipresent God did not have to leave his throne above to destroy the mighty Assyrians and save his people.

2. When the inhabitants of earth heard of God's judgments, they stood in awe.

IV. Lessons to be Learned From this Momentous Event (76:10-12).

A. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee" (76:10a).

1. God's sovereign power and rule is so great that even man's evil wrath is made to work to God's glory. Compare God's words to Pharaoh in Exodus 9:16.

a. "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him..." (Rom. 8:28 RSV).

2. The wrath of man shall praise, i.e., acknowledge You.

3. "Wrath is anger accentuated unto the highest pitch, or blown up into a flame (E. Erskine).

4. "Wrath" is plural in the Hebrew which means that every exhibition of man's sinful wrath will be turned to his discomfiture and to God's glory.

B. "The residue of wrath shalt thou gird upon thee" (76:10b).

1. God will take man's last impotent efforts to assert his own power, and gird Himself with it, as a victor takes his beaten enemy's sword and straps it about his waist. Compare Psalm 45:3 for a similar usage.

C. "Vow, and pay unto Jehovah your God" (76:11).

1. Many of the Hebrews had promised to give gifts unto God if He would hear their prayers and deliver them. It was time now to honor those vows.

2. A vow without payment is a mockery (Compare Ecclesiastes 5:4-5).

3. "Many brought gifts unto Jehovah to Jerusalem..." in appreciation for their deliverance (II Chron. 32:23).

D. "He will cut off the spirit of princes" (76:12a).

1. The Hebrew word for "cut off" describes the vine dresser who prunes the vines. He does so as he will, when he wills, and the vine is helpless to resist him.

"The spirit of princes" literally means, He takes their breath away, i.e., their lives.

E. "He is terrible to the kings of the earth" (76:12b).

1. "He terrifies the tyrant" (Moffatt).

2. History is replete with illustrations of this truth.

a. King Henry IV of Germany (1050-1106) fought and won 52 great military victories, yet in old age he was so poor that he had to petition the church in Spier to provide him a stipend for his maintenance.

b. King Gillimer, powerful ruler of the Vandals, ended up so poor he begged his friends to send him a sponge, a loaf of bread and a harp: the sponge to dry his tears, bread that he might not starve and the harp to console himself in his misery.

c. The Duke of Exeter, brother-in-law to King Edward IV, became so poor he walked

barefoot, begging for bread.

d. Belisarius (505-565), a powerful general under Justinian I, was punished by being blinded. He was led through the streets by a string, crying "give a halfpenny to Belisarius" (Jeremiah Burroughs, cited by Spurgeon).

Lessons to Remember:

A. In his providential oversight, God sees that all who spoil others are spoiled themselves (Gal. 6:7).

B. He needs only speak the word and his enemies are overthrow (76:8).

C. Then it was in Judah in which God was known, today it is in Christ (John 1:18; Eph. 3:10; 21).

D. Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler and Stalin all fell under Jehovah's judgments as the branches of a vine before the vine dresser's pruning hook.

E. Under Moses' system, God's tabernacle was situated in Jerusalem, today Christians are his habitation in the Spirit (I Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:22).

F. When good King Hezekiah prayed for deliverance from Assyria's hordes, God heard and answered him (I Kings 29:15). Let this be your example whenever any danger appears.

G. The wrath of wicked men will be made to bring glory to the God who judges and destroys them**.**

Psalm 77

From Sorrow To Song

Intro: This is a song of Asaph, dedicated to Jeduthun, the chief musician. He along with Heman and Asaph were directors of the music of the temple in David's day (I Chron. 16:41; 25:1). It is a personal lament. No historical background is indicated. The **key verse** of this psalm is 10. It describes an experience of sadness and sorrow which turns to victory, and happiness and praise. The **message** of this song is, "to brood on sorrow is to be broken and disheartened, while to see God is to sing on the darkest day" (W. S. McCulllough). Rather than brooding on his sorrow's, the author looks beyond them to God, enthroned in heaven, and finds hope. The great value of the psalm is that it provides a remedy for dealing with depression and discouragement. Kirkpatrick and some others think this psalm reflects the sorrows of the Hebrews who were suffering in exile. They found hope in the nation's past history. "The God who led his people out of the bondage of Egypt can bring them back from their Exile in Babylon." Perowne says, "it clearly is individual, not national." It seems to the present author to be a personal lament. The first nine verses are highly personal. The personal pronoun is used 22 times with 11 references to God. In the last half there are only three personal references but 24 mentions of God. Careful students of the Old Testament have notice a strong similarity between this psalm and Habakkuk's prayer (Hab. 3:10-15).

I. The Author's Sorrow (77:1-3).

A. The problem he faced.

1. "In the day of my trouble"

2. Although we are not told the nature of his trouble, it was obviously overwhelming and unremitting (77:3).

B. His prayers did not bring him the comfort he sought (77:2b).

1. Still he prayed on...praying aloud (77:1).

2. His "hand was stretched out in the night"

a. His hands were lifted up to God as he prayed (I Tim. 2:8).

b. "My sore ran in the night" KJV is not a good rendering of the original.

3. His "soul refused to be comforted" (77:2c).

a. As was Jacob when he was told that Joseph had been killed (Gen. 37:35).

4. "I remember God, and am disquieted' (77:3a).

a. "When I was moaning, I thought of God, When my spirit was faint, I pondered" (Berkley).

II. His Search for Answers to His Problem (77:4-9).

A. His despair:

1. "I am so troubled that I cannot speak" (77:4b).

a. In such times of sorrow, the Spirit helps our prayers (Rom. 8:26-28).

b. In his extremity he was searching for divine guidance and answers to this questions.

B. In his solitude he reflected on how God had dealt with his nation in days past (77:5).

C. He remembered past seasons of spiritual joy and happiness (77:6a).

1. Among the ancients, "'songs in the night" was an idiom for a sense of safety and protection (Is. 30:29).

2. Paul and Silas had their songs in the night to comfort them (Acts 16:25).

D. He communed "with his own heart" (77:6b)

1. His spirit made "diligent search," i.e., he questioned and searched for answers and direction.

E. Six questions that he wrestled with (77:7-9). Note that all of these are rhetorical questions, requiring no discussions for the answer is obviously no.

1. "Will the Lord cast off for ever?" No!
2. "Will he be favorable no more?" No!
3. "Is his loving-kindness clean gone for ever?" No!
4. "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" No!
5. "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" No!
6. "Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" No!

a. The picture is of a spring, the mouth of which has been closed.

b. Each of these questions was like an arrow driven into the heart of his despair and doubt.

III. His Surrender to His Lord's Will (77:10-15).

A. Note his repeated promise to submit to God's will in this and all other matters.

B. "This is my infirmity," i.e., this is my trial, my burden.

1. The Hebrew literally means "my disease." The meaning seems to be this is my burden and I must bear it.

C. God's answers to his questions are found in His revelation of himself in the history of Israel (77:10b-12).

1. How God had led, protected and provided for him in years past (77:10).
2. How God had delivered Israel in days past with wondrous interventions (77:11).
3. All of God actions, from creation onward told the author of His love for his people.

D. God's way "is in the sanctuary." This is elliptical and means "Thy way, O God, is (discovered) in the sanctuary" i.e., in the worship and the teaching received there.

E. In meditation and worship, in reflecting on God's past dealing he found the answers to the burdens of his heart (77:12-13).

1. No god is as great as Jehovah (77:14).
2. Jehovah is a God that does wonders, i.e., wondrous works on behalf of his people.
   a. The history of Israel was full of such divine interventions.
   b. God had proven his strength by demonstration as well as declaration (Purkiser).
3. He had redeemed his people on numerous occasions in days past (77:15).
   a. Redeemed here means delivered them from oppression and danger.
   b. He had saved the sons of Jacob and Joseph.
      (1) Jacob was the father of the twelve tribes.
      (2) Joseph had saved, protected and provided for the tribe in Egypt. For that Jacob bestowed upon him the honor of his first-born son. Thus he received a double portion and his two sons each were made to stand as a tribal head along with his other brothers.

IV. His Praise of God's Sovereignty (77:16-20).

A. The deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea was all the evidence of God's mercy and power that was needed (77:16-20).

1. At God's presence "the waters saw thee...and were afraid" (77:16).
   a. Note that he personifies the waters of the sea.
2. A great storm accompanied the parting of the Red Sea:
   a. "The clouds poured out water"
   b. "The skies sent out a sound," i.e., it thundered.
   c. "Thine arrows also went abroad," i.e., there was lightening.

d. There was a "whirlwind," i.e., power winds.
e. "The earth trembled and shook," i.e., there was an earthquake.
f. God made a path in the great waters.

3. Note that here we find information about the Red Sea crossing that is supplemental to that of Exodus 14:24.

4. To appreciate this event, imagine yourself in there on that dark stormy night, with tornado like winds, lighting flashing and thunder crashing, the earth violently convulsing beneath your feet. The army of Pharaoh was eagerly awaiting the first light that they could attack and then hearing the call to march forth into that gaping canyon in the roaring sea. There were between two and three million people with all their live stock and possessions in that procession.

B. God's "footsteps were not known" (77:19b).

1. "We know not; they knew not, by what precise means the deliverance was wrought...and we need not know" (Perowne).

C. God led his people like a flock (77:20).

1. But he did it through the leadership of Moses and Aaron.
2. This reminds us of Psalm 23:1.

D. The reader is left to draw the inference that God's guidance will continue, and that as He redeemed Israel from the bondage of Egypt so He will deliver him fro his sorrows, dangers and oppressions.

Lessons to Remember:

A. When we are troubled we can find comfort "by looking behind and before, to history and to heaven" (Scroggie).

B. He may rest in God who cannot rest upon his bed" (Scroggie).

C. If your life is in God's right hand, you will find light on every hand and your heart will be filled with songs.

D. "In the memory of God's past faithfulness he finds faith for future fulfilment.

E. When one has reached the bottom of misery, the only way left is up.

F. "Tears have a tongue, and grammar, and language that our Father knoweth" (Samuel Rutherford).

G. Remember the value of memory in keeping faith (vs. 10).

H. "Some providences, like Hebrew letters, must be read backwards" (John Flavel).

I. The mighty waters of the Sea saw their Creator and Ruler and yielded to his will; but many, who in His image are made, refuse to submit to Him.

Psalm 78

A Parable Of The Prodigal Nation

Intro: Written by Asaph, this song recounts God's dealings with an ungrateful nation. Along with 77, 105, 106, 108 and 135, this psalm recites historic events of Israel's past. It has well been said that history, properly understood, is "His story." This psalm is labeled, a **"maschil"** which means "a song of instruction." It has been described as "a didactic ballad." The **purpose** is expressed in vss. 4-7, to teach the author's readers two great lessons from the nation's past: (1). The wondrous works and mercy of Jehovah on behalf of Israel, and (2). That they repeat not the terrible sins of past generations. The sketch of Israel's history presented in this psalm is not chronological but logical. The author used historical facts, familiar to all, to teach lessons easily overlooked or forgotten. This inspired use of history reminds us that, "Truths are none the worse for being old." "Old wood is best to bum; old books are best to read; and old friends are best to trust" (Lord Byron). From his mention of the rift between Ephraim (the northern Kingdom of Israel), and Judah (78:67-68), it is thought that this psalm was penned following the schism in the days of Rehoboam (c.a. 931-915 B.C.).

I. His Exhortation to Listen and Learn From the Past (78:1-8).

A. The past holds great lessons for the present (78:1-4).

1. "Parables" are the instructions of wise men; the extracts and spirits of wisdom.
2. "Dark sayings," are riddles, the meaning of which may not at first be grasped.

B. God wills that these lessons be taught to each generation forever (78:5-8).

1. God's "testimony" is his law (78:5a).

C. God has always expected each generation to pass the faith to the next one (78:5b-7).

1. Compare Deuteronomy 4:9.

II. Lessons Gleaned From Israel's History (78:9-66).

A. The children of Ephraim are an example of unfaithfulness (78:9-11).

B. God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage is an example of his grace and mercy (78:12-14).

C. "The field of Zoan" was a city and a district of Egypt.

D. God's gracious provision for Israel's needs in the wilderness wanderings need to be remembered (78:17-22).

1.They repeatedly sinned and rebelled against him.

2. Behind their sins was their ingratitude.

3. They sinned, they rebelled, they tempted him, they spake against him (78:17-19).

4. God gave them "angel's food" (KJV), i.e., manna (Ex. 16:14ff).

a. From the place of angels, i.e., heaven.

b. Or by the hands of his angels.

c. Or worthy of angels.

5. He rained flesh upon them, i.e., quail (Num. 11:31).

E. Lessons derived from Israel's sins during the Exodus and the mercy of God displayed toward them (78:32-55).

1. Still they sinned and believed not God, they tried to flatter him, they lied unto him, their hearts were not right, they rebelled against him. They grieved him, they tempted him, they remembered not his power nor his past deliverances.

2. They forgot the judgments God poured upon the Egyptians (78:42-51)

a. The caterpillars mentioned are the pupa stage of locusts (78:46).

b. Frost refers to the plague of hail (78:47).

c. The "band of angels of evil" refers to the messengers of God who poured out the plague upon the Egyptians, resulting in the death of their firstborn (Ex. 12:12-13).

d. "His sanctuary" was Canaan (78:54).

F. Israel's sins and punishment after they were settled in Canaan (78:56-66).

1. They tempted and rebelled against him, they kept not his testimonies, turned back and dealt treacherously. They turned aside, provoked him to anger andr worshiped graven images (78:57-59).

2. They were no more dependable than a warped bow (78:57).

3. He allowed Philistines to take his tabernacle and ark at Shiloh (I Sam. 4:1-11).

III. The Ascendancy of Judah and the House of David as the Chosen Leaders of the Nation (78:67-72).

A. Judah, not Ephraim, was God's choice to lead the nation (78:67-68).

B. David and his descendants were the chosen shepherds of Israel (78:70-72).

Lessons to Remember:

A. It is the duty of every Christian to teach his children the great lessons of God's Sacred Book and his dealings with humanity (Eph. 6:4).

B. For our children as for ourselves, faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom.10:17).

C. Awareness of the price the Hebrews paid for their stubbornness should make us willing to obey God without question or protest.

D. The Hebrews had the tabernacle of God, but they lacked submissive faith in God (78:58-60).

E. Leadership of the Hebrew nation was not based on wealth or military strength or numbers. Judah was chosen by God because He is sovereign (78:67-68).

Psalm 79

A Song of Sorrow for the Ruined City of Jerusalem

Intro: This is a song of Asaph, one of 12 attributed to him. "Asaph was a patriotic poet" and loved to rehearse the

history of his nation (Spurgeon). It is both a lamentation and an imprecation. This psalm is related to and similar to Psalm 74. In 74, it is the destruction of the temple that is central, while in this one, it is the destruction of the city and accompanying carnage that is emphasized. Almost certainly this psalm reflects the Babylonian defeat of Judah and their destruction of the holy city (587 B. C.). For the historical background, see II Kings 25 and the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Everything dear and precious to the Hebrews had been swept away by the invading enemy, leaving wreck and ruin on every side. Jews used this psalm, along with 137, to commemorate the destruction of both the first and second temples.

I. The Awful Situation He Faced

A. The Author's Complaint:

1. "The nations are come into thine inheritance"

a. "O God, the heathen are come into..." (KJV). A cry of amazement at the sacrilegious incursions of the profane heathen into Israel, God's sacred and holy land.

(1). In the Old Testament the word "nations" refers to Gentiles.

2. "Thy holy temple have they defiled." Three times their temple was destroyed: by Nebchadnezzar and his Babylonians (587 B.C.), by Antiochus Epiphanes and his Syrians (175 B. C.) and by the Romans under Titus (70 A. D.).

a. "By the overthrow of the temple, the true worship of God, which had been instituted at that temple alone, appeared to be extinguished and the knowledge of God to vanish among mankind" (Spurgeon).

3. "They have laid Jerusalem in heaps" i.e., made it a heap of ruins.

a. Jerusalem's overthrow had been predicted by Jeremiah in 26:18 of his book and Micah in 3:12 of his.

4. Thus, "the holy land, the holy temple and the holy city, were all polluted by the uncircumcised" (Spurgeon).

B. The terrible suffering his people had incurred at the hands of the invaders (79:2-4).

1. Their blood had been shed like water.

a. To their enemies their life blood was nothing more than water to be poured upon the ground.

2. Their dead bodies had been desecrated.

a. Left unburied, a prey for scavenger creatures.

b. To be denied a proper burial was considered the greatest disaster for the Hebrews.

c. Jeremiah predicted that "the carcases of the people shall be meat for the fowls of heaven and for the beasts of the earth" (Jer. 7:33).

d. Beasts on which they were forbidden to feed, now fed on them (Spurgeon).

e. "Withhold not kindness from the dead" (Ancient Maxim).

3. The reproaches they had to endure (79:4**).**

II. He Pleads for Help for Israel and for Wrath to be Poured Out Upon Their Oppressors (79:5-12).

A. "Jehovah, wilt thou be angry forever?" (79:5).

1. He ponders, is this the end of the Hebrew people and nation?

B. "Shall thy (God's) jealousy burn like fire?"

1. "For Jehovah thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God" (Deut. 4:24).

2. Would the fire of His jealousy devour them?

3. God had warned against a divided loyalty and promised that He would punish those of his people who tried to serve him thusly (Deut. 29:18-20).

C. "Pour out thy wrath upon the nations that know thee not" (79:6).

1. The unwitting heathen Babylonians were God's chosen instrument of judgement for the rebellious Hebrews (Is. 10:5-7).

a. Habakkuk's problem was how could God use such evil sinners to punish his people, albeit they were sinful children? (Hab. 1:12-17).

2. When their purpose was served, God would destroy the heathen (Is. 10:12,16-18).

3. Verses 6-7 are found in almost identical form in Jer. 10:25.

D. The crime of the heathen that called for punishment (79:7).

1. "They have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation."

E. His plea for divine mercy (79:8-9).

1. "Remember not against us the iniquities of our forefathers."
    a. He acknowledged their long history of sin as a people.
        (1). Sin accumulates against nations. Generations lay up stores of transgressions to be visited upon their successors" (Spurgeon).
            (a). God likens national wickedness as "filling a cup of iniquity that demands punishment (Gen.15:16; Num. 14:18)
        (2). Evil is like a stream flowing down from generation to generation, each adding its own measure of corruption until at last, God must intervene with judgement. To the Jews, Jesus said, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers...how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" (Matt. 23:32).
    b. "The Jews have a saying that there is no punishment happens to Israel, but there is an ounce in it for the sin of the calf," i.e., that the golden calf. The ancient sins of the fathers are remembered and visited (Ex. 32:34) (John Gill).
2. "Let thy tender mercies speedily meet us" (79:8b).
    a. "Speedily prevent us" (KJV). The Old English word "prevent" meant to "anticipate or come." Hence, "come to meet our necessity."
3. "For we are brought very low" (79:8c). Literally, greatly thinned, and few remain (Adam Clarke).
4. "Help us...deliver us...forgive our sins."
    a. Do it "for thy name's sake."
    b. If you, God, are not moved by our suffering and humiliation, be jealous for your own honor, lest the heathen think you to be powerless."
    c. The title "God of our salvation,''reflects a covenant relationship that made them hope that God would feel obligated to protect and save his covenant people.
    d. "Forgive our sins" means purge away or make atonement for them.

F. Avenge the blood of your people on these scoffing heathen (79:10-12).
1. Stop their scornful mouths.
    a. The heathen said, "Where is their God?" i.e., "Where is the proof of that Almighty Power, and that love for his own people of which they have ...boasted?" (Alexander).
2. Avenge us now, in our day, that we can see your judgment upon them (79:10b).

G. "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee" (79:11).
1. Notice that the nation is described as one lone prisoner.
2. "Preserve those that are appointed to death," i.e., sentenced to die, or so reduced that they will soon perish."

H. Render unto our neighbors sevenfold...their reproach..." (79:12).
1. See Genesis 4:15. Sevenfold literally means full and complete punishment.
2. "They denied thine existence, mocked thy power, insulted thy worship, and destroyed thy house...therefore O Lord...make them feel to the full that thou art not to be mocked with impunity" (Spurgeon).
3. Such imprecations on ones enemy was the way of Moses' Law, but Christ teaches us to forgive those who sin against us seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22).
4. "Into their bosom" alludes to the practice of the people carrying articles in the folds of their robes.

IV. His Pledge and Promise (79:13).

A. "So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks forever: We will show forth thy praise to all generations."
1. We not only will be grateful and thankful, we will tell our children and all about us of your mercy.
2. This was the mission of the Hebrew nation (Is. 43:21).

Lessons to Remember:

A. It is an awful thing when heathen are found in the sacred precincts of God's church.

B. "To find mirth in other's miseries, and to exult over the ills of others is worthy only of the devil, and of those who father he is" (Spurgeon).

C. It is a great consolation to Christians to know that the Lord can preserve and save even those who have

the sentence of death upon them.

D. The gods of the nations, though they (cannot) afflict even in temporal things, are gods not of salvation of their worshipers, but of their perdition. But our God, even when he is most severely angry, and smites, is not the God of destruction, but of salvation " (Musculus).

E. "For man's sake, God cursed the earth (Gen. 8:21), but it is for His name's sake that he blesses it" (William Greenhill).

F. "Although we do not speak, still we can tell a long tale of sorrow with a sigh" (P. B. Power).

Psalm 80

A Plea For Restoration Of The Northern Captives

Intro: This is a psalm of Asaph, and is dedicated to the leader of the temple singers. Along with Psalms 45, 60 and 69, it is "set to ***Shoshannim Eduth"*** **Shoshannim** literally means lilies, i.e., loveliness or delightfulness. **Eduth** means "a testimony" and often refers to the divine law of God as a testimony against sin. Kirkpatrick renders this heading, "(like) lilies is the testimony, pure and beautiful" and adds that it likely refers to the melody by which it was to be sung. It appears to have been written following the defeat and deportation of the northern tribes by the Assyrians. The LXX (Septuagint) has an editor's note suggesting that it is a prayer for the Northern Kingdom. It reads, "A Psalm Concerning the Assyrians." It is a lamentation for the great disaster which had befallen the nation when foreign armies had invaded and crushed the people. He cannot believe in the final desertion of the people by God and pleads that He will reveal his power and restore his scattered people. "The poet looks to 'the Shepherd of Israel' with his faith unshaken, and (is) sure that in the end all will be well" (Oesterly). He appeals to God to come forth and lead the armies of Israel as in the days of the Exodus when the pillar of fire went before them. Note the three sections of the psalm, each closing with a similar refrain (vss. 3, 7, & 19).

I. His Appeal to the Shepherd of Israel (80:1-3).

A. His request: "Give ear."

1. This means, hear our prayer.

B. His description of his God (80:1 b.).

1. "Shepherd of Israel."

a. This is a favorite metaphor of Hebrew poets (See Ps. 23:1; Is. 40:11).

b.. Through the years, as their Shepherd, he had both guided and protected them; two blessings they desperately need at this time.

c."Thou leadest Joseph" tells us that his focus was upon the northern tribes. As Joseph was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh.

2. "Thou that sittest above the cherubim."

a. This alludes to the **shekinah,** the glory of the Lord, that was seen by the high priest in the holy of holies, shining above the angelic cherubim atop the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant (See I Chron. 13:6).

b. This was symbolic of God's throne in heaven where living cherubim serve him (See Is. 6:1-2; Rev. 4:1-8).

c. Imagine God seated as a king on his throne and before him stand his ministers (cherubim) waiting to serve him at his command.

d . "Shine forth" means let thy presence and glory be seen working to deliver your people who are oppressed.

(1). "We seek not gold and riches, or the dignities of the world, but we long for thy light, we desire most ardently to know Thee, therefore 'shine forth. (Savonarola, martyr).

C. Deliver us as you did in the Exodus (80:2-3).

1. "Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh"

a. These tribes were descended from the favorite sons of Jacob by Rachel.

(1). Jeremiah spoke of Rachel as the mother of the Northern Kingdom (31:15).

b. They were grouped together behind the ark of the covenant in the Wilderness march (See Num. 2:17-24).

c. Mention of these three tribes is further evidence that his concern was the plight of the

northern tribes.

d. Contrary to popular belief, Scripture indicates that Benjamin was numbered with the Northern Kingdom following the schism in the days of Rehoboam.

(1). I Kings, 11:13, 32, 36 , 12:20 all declare, "I will give one tribe to thy son, for David's...sake" (vs. 13) "there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah" (12:20).

2. "Stir up thy might and come to save us" (80:2b).

a. As you came and saved us in Egypt.

3."Turn us again, O God."

a. This is the first of three refrains (vss. 3, 7, & 19).

b. Notice the expanding name applied to God in each verse.

c. Whatever it may take to convict us and make us return to You, O God, do it.

4. "Cause thy face to shine, " i.e., smile upon us with favor and hear our prayer.

a. When God smiles on them, they will be saved from their enemies and the distress that was upon them.

b His prayer was answered when a remnant of the Northern tribes returned from Babylonian Captivity along with those of Judah. Their individual tribes however were never reconstituted.

II. His Appeal to Jehovah the Judge of Israel (80:4-7).

A. "Jehovah God of hosts" (80:4a).

1. Literally, the God of the armies of heaven.

2. It also signifies God's sovereign power to direct and control even the armies of nations in giving them victory or defeat or to deliver his people.

3. Consider the various kinds of armies at God's disposal as he rules the nations. He sent bands of flies, frogs and lice to punish the Egyptians. He used armies of locusts in Joel's day. Many a wicked tyrant, that could not be beaten by an army, has fallen before so small a creature of God as a mosquito carrying malaria, a flea bearing plague, a small mammal with rabies or a small serpent.

B. "How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of they people?" (80:4b).

1. Literally, "hast thou been fuming?" (Kirkpatrick).

2. He felt God was angry because he was not responding favorably to his prayer.

3. God was angry against the sinful people, not their prayers.

C. "Thou hast fed them with the bread of tears" (80:5).

1. The bread of mourning or affliction. "Thou shalt eat...unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction" (Deut. 16:3).

a. "Put this fellow in the prison and feed him bread and "water of affliction" (I Kings 22:27).

2. A poetic way of saying their food was seasoned with the salt of their tears. Their meals which were once such a pleasant season of social intercourse, are now like funeral feasts (Spurgeon).

3. "Given them tears to drink in large measure." The Hebrew word is ***shalish,*** a measure containing a third part of their greatest measure, four times as large as the usual drinking cup (Ainsworth).

a. "Thou has furnished them tears to drink in triple measure" (Berkley).

b. The meaning of these two figures is that God had sent them great sorrow.

D. "Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbors" (80:6).

1. "You have made us a source of contention to our neighbors" (New International Version).

a. "Thou dost make us the scorn of our neighbors" (Revised Standard Version).

b. Their neighbors refers to the petty kingdoms of Edom, Moab, Syria, etc.

2. "Our enemies laugh among themselves" at our expense.

E. His refrain (80:7).

III. He Appeals to Jehovah, the Husbandman of Israel (80:8-19).

A. The allegory of God's grape vine.

1. The Hebrews were God's chosen vine.

2. He plucked them out of bondage in Egypt by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

3. He rooted out the Canaanites who had degenerated into an unworthy people.

4. He transplanted his nation in Canaan under the leadership of Joshua.

5. There they flourished and by the days of David and Solomon had spread throughout the land He had promised them.

6. But now disaster had struck them.

a. The protective walls of the vineyard had been broken down.

b. Strangers freely helped themselves to its fruit.

c. Wild hogs ravaged its roots and branches.

d. Other wild beasts browsed on its leaves and branches.

e. Enemies had slashed the vines.

f. Fire had swept over the vineyard, scorching the plants.

g. God no longer looked on them with favor and they were perishing.

B. "Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt"

1. "The vine was the emblem of the nation on the coins of the Maccabees and a great cluster of golden grapes adorned the second temple. Many Jewish grave stones are engraved with images of grapes (Kirkpatrick).

2. "Broughtest a vine out of..." The Hebrew word is used of rooting up a tree and transplanting it (Perowne).

C. "Thou didst drive out the nations, and plantedst it" (80:8b).

1. Ten Canaanite nations were driven out to make room for God's chosen vine.

"Kenites, Kenizites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaims, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites (Gen. 15: 19-21).

2. "Thou preparedest room before it" (80:9). Just as the husbandman clears and cultivates the soil before he plants his new vines so did God with Israel.

D. The prosperity Israel had known in Canaan (80:9b-11).

1. A hyperbolic description of the flourishing nature of the Hebrews in their new homeland.

a. "The boughs thereof were *like* cedars of God." Not to be taken literally but suggesting great and wonderful prosperity.

b. Under Solomon they occupied all the land that God had promised them

From the upper reaches of the Euphrates to the Mediterranean and from the borders of Lebanon to the Brook of Egypt.

E. His plaintiff question: (80:12)

1. "Why hast thou broken down its walls?"

a. God had been the wall of safety that protected them, now he had withdrawn his presence and enemies had ravaged their land.

F. Their destruction pictured (80:12b-16).

1. All that pass by freely pluck their fruit from them (80:12b).

2. Wild boars of the forest ravage the vineyard (80:13a).

3. Wild beasts of the field feed on the tender branches and leaves (80:13b).

4. The vineyard was burned with fire (80:16a).

5 It had been cut and slashed by their enemies (80:16b).

G. His plea for mercy (80:14).

1. We beseech thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine"

H. "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand" (80:17a).

1. Jacob called the son of his dying wife, Benjamin, i.e., "the son of my right hand" (Gen. 35:18). He was loved and cherished.

2. Jesus sits at the Father's right hand (Heb. 1:1, 3, 13).

3. In this passage the man referred to is Israel.

a. The Hebrew nation is "The son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself' (Ex.4:22).

I. His solemn pledge and promise: (80:18a).

1. "So shall we not go back from thee" i.e., no more backsliding.

a. "Quicken thou us, and we will call upon thy name" ((80:18b).

2. Quicken means to revive us, or renew us.

J. His concluding refrain: "Turn us again, O Jehovah God of hosts," Yahweh, Elohim Sabaoth.

Lessons to Remember:

A. God will come forward when we acknowledge that we have gone backwards (80:18).
B. "There is no forth-shining where there is backsliding" (80:1) (Scroggie).
C. "It is devilish to sport with another's grief' (Spurgeon).
D. May we always be found standing faithfully at God's right hand.
E. Only God can quicken us with that spiritual life that is essential to salvation.
F. Every day of sunshine should remind us to be grateful that God's face beams pleasantly on us.

Psalm 81

A Song Of What Might Have Been

Intro: This too is a song of Asaph. He has been described as "the poet of history and politics of his people (Israel), a truly national songster, at once pious and patriotic" ©. Spurgeon). From verses 3-5 it appears to have been written to sing at the celebration of the Passover festival. The purpose of the psalm was to explain to the Hebrews the meaning and practical lessons of this annual national ceremony. Worshipers are always in danger of forgetting the real meaning of the rituals they observe and thus their worship deteriorates into mere repetition and habits of formalism. It is "set to ***Gittith***" which literally means "winepress," but most likely refers to an "instrument of Gath upon which the melody was played. The author sees Israel's waywardness as the cause of their troubles.

I. His Summons to Remember and Celebrate the Passover (81:1-5).

A. Let the music of praise begin (81:1-2).
1. The timbrel is our tambourine.
2. A psaltery was a six stringed instrument.

B. Let the trumpets sound.
1. The shophar or ram's horn trumpet announced the beginning of the celebration (Num. 29:1).

C. They would celebrate the day that God had passed over their fathers while smiting the first born of Egypt (81:5).
1. Passover was also known as the feast of unleavened bread.
2. The festival was a divinely appointed ordinance (Num. 28:16-25).
3. It began on the 14th day of Abib (Nisan) which corresponds to our March/April.

D. The "language that (they) knew not" (81:5b).
1. Perhaps it was the language of the Egyptians which most Hebrews did not understand.
2. It may have been the language of God which they did not fully appreciate or understand.

II. God Reminds Them of the Past (81:6-12).

A. He had freed them from Egyptian Bondage (81:6).
1. He had lifted the burden of slavery from their backs (81:6).
a. Slaves carried heavy loads by using a yoke over the necks and shoulders with baskets attached on either end.
b. The "basket" was the hod basket for carrying mortar.

B. God had heard their prayers and sent them Moses to deliver them (Ex. 3:7-10).
l."The secret place of thunder" was Mt. Sinai (Horeb) where God spoke to Moses and later gave the law (Ex. 20:18).

C. He tested or proved them at the waters of Meribah (Ex. 17:1-7).
1. He provided them water from a rock at the hands of Moses.

D. He reminded them of the ten commandments he had given them (81:8-10).
1. Compare Exodus 20:1-5.
2. "Open thy mouth and I will fill it," like a mother bird provides for her nestlings.

E. With sadness, God remembers how they had refused to honor and obey him (81:11-12).
1. When they refused to honor God, he gave them up.
a. Compare Romans 1:24, 26, 28.
2. The most severe punishment in this life is when God gives up on folks and abandons them to their own doings and fate.

III. He Reminds Them That His Promises Were Always Conditional On Their Obedience (81:13-16).

A. To be blest, they must walk in God's way (81:13).

B. If they were obedient, He would subdue all their enemies (81:14).

C. Rewards will be accord to conduct (81:15).

1. Haters of Jehovah will be driven to their knees.
2. The righteous will be forever blest.
    a. With abundant crops,
    b. With unexpected blessings like wild honey found in a rocky ledge.

Conclusion: See God's sadness as he reminds his people of what might have been had their conduct been different.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Israel had her memorials such as Passover. We have ours, baptism, communion, the Lord's Day.

B. Such memorials are "a testimony" from God, teaching us His will and way.

C. God is still in the business of lifting the burdens of his children; chief among them is the burden of unforgiven sin (81:6).

D. God is always ready to feed us with his word and blessings, but we must open our mouths to receive the blessing (81:8-10).

E. The stubborn man who refuses to obey God will automatically half to deal with the misery his stubbornness has earned.

F. God wants us to submit to him that he might abundantly bless us (81:13).

G. When God blesses us, he give us the finest, not poorest of his treasures (81:16).

Psalm 82

God The Judge Of Unjust Judges

Intro. This is a psalm of Asaph, a divinely inspired poet and prophet (II Chron. 29:30). The name likely was applied to his school or decedents who carried on his office and tradition in Israel. The favorite theme of the psalms of Asaph is the political and judicial history of his nation. The format used in this psalm is that of an assembled court of justice. The judge is God. The defendants are corrupt and wicked judges of Israel who are being tried and convicted of malfeasance of office. Thus, it is a poetic protest against injustice in the courts of the nation. It is thought to reflect the time when King Jehoshaphat reformed the courts of Judah (II Chron. 19:4-7). "The poet of the temple here acts as preacher to the court and to the magistracy" (Spurgeon). This hymn proclaims the justice of God on earth as in heaven; in time as well as eternity. He stresses that God's sovereign rule includes those in the highest offices as well as the peasants of the fields.

I. The Assembled Court (82:1).

A. God, the supreme judge, presides.

1. He stands to announce his judgements as did ancient magistrates.

B. The congregation of God.

1. The courts are His congregation. The judges hold their offices as His agents. To him they must answer (Comp. Rom. 13:1-4).

C. "The gods" are the judges (vs. 6).

1. The meaning being, they are representative of Elohim and thus derive the dignity and respect of their office from Him.
    a. Compare Exodus 22:28, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people" (KJV).
    b. Exodus 21:6, "his (the bondsman's) master shall bring him to the judges (Heb. gods).
    c. John 10:34-48, Jesus applies this passage to the judges and rulers of Israel.

II. The Indictment (82:2-4).

A. They ruled unjustly.

B. The bill of particulars.

1. They respected the persons of the wicked.
2. They failed to protect the weak.
    a. The poor and fatherless, the afflicted and destitute.
    b. Those oppressed by the wicked.

III. The Consequences of Their Mal-Administration of Their Office (82:5).

A. They ruled like blind and ignorant men:

1. A good judge must himself be honorable in life and conduct. He must know the law he is to administer. He must be totally fair and just in dealing with those who come before him. He must have wisdom to discern how to apply the law equitably.
2. Those judges were wilfully ignorant. (Comp. Matt. 13:14-15).

B. Because of their failure, the foundations of society were shaken and in danger of collapse.

1. No society can be stable and secure if its courts are corrupted.

III. The Solemn Sentence Rendered (82:6-7).

A. Although the judges had high office, power and respect,

B. They would die as the meanest slave or criminal before Jehovah.

1. Their great opportunities imposed greater responsibility for their actions (Matt. 11:20-24).
2. Their office, rank and power would not save them nor lessen their punishment.
3. The great and powerful grow old like all others; they fall sick as do others; they die as all die; they are buried as are the rest; their bodies return to the dust as do all. They shall stand before God and be judged just as all other men, without benefit of their earthly office, rank and power. They will be condemned and destroyed like the vilest of sinners.

Conclusion: The psalmist calls on God to do as the words of the song have said and exercise judgment on those who had corrupted the courts of the land (82:8). The Judge of Israel he acknowledges to be judge of all mankind, even the Gentiles.

Lessons to Remember:

A. The God who judged Israel has appointed Jesus his Son to judge us (John 5:22).

B. Those who show respect of persons to the rich, the famous and powerful will have to explain their actions to the Supreme Judge (82:2).

C. God's people on earth serve as His hands to "do justice to the afflicted and destitute" (82:3).

D. Some athletes, movie stars and entertainers may be treated as "gods" but they will die like men (82:6-7).

Psalm 83

A Prayer For Deliverance

Intro: The historical background for this psalm is found in II Chronicles 20:1-30. Judah, in the days of King Jehoshaphat, was besieged by a confederacy of hostile tribes who threatened to overwhelm and destroy them. They said "let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (83:4). The good king called upon his people to assemble and pray to Jehovah for protection and deliverance. "Then upon Jahaziel, ...the Levite, of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of Jehovah in the midst of the assembly..." (II Chron. 20:14). It is call "A Song and a Psalm." The Hebrew terms ***Shir*** and ***Mizmer***, when used together, imply a lyric poem to be sung. This combination is usually found in psalms of praise or triumph. Psalms 47 and 48 were also written to commemorate this event and the victory God gave to Israel. Key verses are 5, "Against thee do they make a covenant," and 18 "That they may know that thou alone, whose name is Jehovah, art the most High over all the earth." Note his severe imprecation in vss. 9-18.

I. His Prayer That God Will Rescue His People From Their Many Evil Foes (83:1-5).

A. His plea for God's help (83:1).

1. The three parallel lines all convey the same basic thought:
    a. "Keep not thou silence,"
    b. "Hold not thy peace,"
    c. "Be not still, O God."

2. He reminds God that they are his enemies as well as theirs (83:2).

a. The enemies made "a tumult," i.e., they roared like the waves of the sea" (Perowne).

b. God's enemies are always noisy and clamorous.

B. The conspiracy they faced (83:3-5).

1. Leaders of ten heathen nations had made a covenant based on their common hatred of Jehovah and his people Israel.

a. Although they aimed their missiles at God's people, their great hatred was for Jehovah , the Hebrew's God.

2. Their goal was to "cut off the Hebrews from being a nation" (83:4).

a. Such is still the undeterred goal of the descendants of these wicked nations.

Even the corrupt Medieval Catholic Church sought to exterminate those whose conscience led them to serve God according to his Word. Albigenses, Anabaptists, Lollards, Huguenots and others suffered this fate.

b. "Thy hidden ones," i.e., "treasured ones" who are hidden in the hollow of Thy hand.

c. "Israel" here refers to the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

II. **The Enemy Nations They Were Facing (83:6-8).**

A. The hall of shame:

1. Edom, "the nearest of kin, yet first in enmity" (Spurgeon).

a. Esau, the sire of the nation, had despised his birthright and his posterity despised those who received it.

b. "The tents of Edom" speaks of their being beduin, or tent-dwelling people.

2. Ishmaelites, the descendants of Abraham by Hagar.

3. Moab, the son of Lot by his daughter. His descendants were called Moabites.

4. Hagarenes:

a. May refer to other offspring of Hagar, mother of Ishmael.

b. They dwelt in the land Gilead, east of Jordan but were driven out by the time of Saul (I Chron. 5:10, 18-20).

5. Gebal. They occupied land south and east of the Dead Sea.

a. The region is still called Dgebel.

6. Ammon, son of Lot by his other daughter; head of the Ammonite tribe.

7. Amalek. The Amalekites were bitter enemies of Israel.

a. The seven nations listed above dwelt south and east of Israel.

8. Philistia. The Philistines who occupied five city states on the coast of Palestine. They were a Mediterranean people.

9. Tyre: the ancient capital of the Phoenician people.

a. They had been friends of Israel in the days of David and Solomon but were now arrayed against them.

b. These two hostile nations were on Israel's western border.

10. Assyria. This reference helps us to date the composition of the psalm because at this point the Assyrians are only one of many petty states jointly at war with Israel. Later they dominated the Middle East.

a. By the time of Shalmaneser I (860-825), Assyria had begun to exert her influence throughout the region.

b. Assyria was situated north and east of Israel.

c. "They have helped the children of Lot"

(1)This is a contemptuous reference to the ignominious origins of the Moabites and Ammonites.

B. Note that Abraham's descendants through Hagar, Ishmael and Esau readily join with Philistines, Tyrians and Assyrians to attack Israel, their kinsmen.

1. "Hatred is a very potent cement, and the most discordant elements may be fused together in the fire of common animosity."

III. His Imprecation (83: 9-18).

A. May they share the fate of our past enemies.

1. Defeat and destroy them as You did the Canaanites by Deborah and Barak (Judges chapters 4-

5).

a. “Who perished at Endor.” This bit of information is supplemental to the record of Judges.

b. Jabin was king of the Canaanites and Sisera was his general.

2. “Who became as dung for the earth” (83:10).

a. The blood and bodies of Israel’s enemies became as dung which disappears when plowed into the earth but leaves it enriched.

b. Ancient people observed that land whereon great battle had been fought was more productive in ensuing years.

c. In 1830 more than a million bushels of bones, both human and animal, were gathered from battle fields in Europe (sites of the Napoleonic wars) and shipped to England where factories ground them into bone meal which was sold to farmers for fertilizer to manure their lands (K. Arvine, cited by Spurgeon).

3. Discomfit and destroy them as you did the Midianites by the hand of Gideon (Judges chapters 7-8).

a. “Oreb and Zeeb,” field generals of the Midianites, were captured and slain.

b. Zebah and Zalmunna were the kings who were captured and executed for their crimes.

c. The writer sees these four enemies of the past at the executioner’s block and prays that their present enemies will suffer a similar fate.

4. Those ancient enemies had the same goal as their present enemies.

a. They had said, “Let us take to ourselves in possession the habitations of God” (83:12).

B. Render them helpless and destroy them (83:13-14).

1. Make them like dust before a whirlwind (83:13a).

a. The KJV renders this “make them like a wheel,” missing the explanation found in the parallel statement of the next line.

2. Make them “as stubble before the wind” (83:13b).

3. Make them as a forest of trees before a wildfire (83:14).

4. Smash and terrify them with tempest and storm as in Barak’s battle (83:15).

5. “Fill their faces with confusion...and shame,” i.e., humiliation and defeat (83:16a).

6. Jesus taught us to love our enemies and to pray for those who despitefully use us (Matt. 5:43-48),

C. The object of his imprecation (83:16-18).

1. That they may seek the name of Jehovah and know that he is Most High over all the earth.

a. The author’s “fury is righteous; his anger is moral; his is not lust for revenge, but zeal for the honor of the Lord” (Scroggie).

2. He prayed for more than deliverance or victory, rather that the name of Jehovah might be magnified and that all may seek His name.

a. The Hebrew construction is emphatic, implying a comparison between the true God, Jehovah and the false gods of then neighbors. He is saying “Lord, make them feel that their idols are nothing” (Calvin).

b. “They shall know that thou...thou alone art Most High...” (Alexander).

c. Only here in the Psalms and in three other places is ***YHWH*** **t**ranslated Jehovah by the KJV authors. More than 6,000 times they rendered the word **“LORD.”**

d. Josephus reports that when Alexander the Great and his army approached Jerusalem, the High Priest came forth to meet him, arrayed in his gorgeous apparel. On his miter was the sacred name ***YHWH***. Alexander walked forward and adored that mystic name. He spared the city from assault and destruction.

3. The writer of the Chronicles adds the following note that reveals God’s answer to this righteous prayer. “And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of the countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel” (II Chron. 20:29).

Lessons to Remember:

A. “It is well when the past comes to help the present, whether in the way of warning or encouragement” (Scroggie).

B. “God’s omnipotence makes man’s power impotent” (Scroggie).

C. You cannot “go against the grain of the universe with getting... splinters” (Purkiser).

D. Although wicked men demand that when they are in power good people be tolerant of them, they are never tolerant of the good when they (the wicked) hold the power.
E. Wicked men see the Lord's church as a standing menace to their sinful lifestyle.
F. "Oh God of Barak and Gideon, please give the victory to your holy people and defeat our enemies."
G. He who robs God's house will find that he has property reeking a curse...it will plague him and his seed forever" (Spurgeon).
H. The Edomites represent "those whom the Church of Christ has ever found her bitterest foes; the sceptics who have refused to acknowledge that redemption through a personal redeemer, on which...the church is founded, whose intellectual pride is offended by the humbling doctrines of Christianity, and who hate those that have for their possession, blessings which they have wilfully neglected" (J. F. Thrupp).
I. "The man who loves and fears Jehovah desires to see others, even his enemies love and fear Him too. (Perowne)

Psalm 84

The Heart Song of a Temple Servant

Intro: This is a song of the Sons of Korah, whose assigned functions included keeping the gates of the tabernacle/temple (I Chron. 9 :19) and serving as temple singers (II Chron. 20:19). It is set to "**Gitteth**," which literally means "winepress." It may refer to a tune to which it is sung or an "instrument of Gath. This psalm is very similar in theme and tone to Psalms 42 and 43. Some scholars have concluded the same author penned all of them.
This psalm was designed for singing by Hebrew pilgrims as they made their way up to Jerusalem for holy celebrations. Hence it is described as a song of ascent. Since the internal thoughts and words presuppose that Solomon's temple was their destination, we conclude it was written after 965 B.C. Pilgrimages were an important part of Jewish life. Each year, all adult males who lived within reasonable traveling distance were expected to journey to Jerusalem for the great festivals of Passover, Tabernacles, Pentecost and Atonement. Families and friends journeyed together and often sang favorite hymns as they walked along the dusty roads. Modem Jews sing this psalm as they observe the Feast of Tabernacles. Students have called this "The Pearl of the Psalms" and "The Sweetest Psalm."

I. His Ardent Love and Desire For God's House (84:1-3).

A. It is amiable or lovely to his heart and mind (84:1).
    1. A tabernacle is a portable dwelling place.
    2. Jews used to the plural to express majesty and intensity.
B. He longed to worship with all his being: soul, heart and flesh (84:2).
    1. His soul fainted in the same way that lovers are heart sick when separated.
C. He envied the birds who built their nests in the eaves and cornices of the temple building (84:3).

II. The Happiness of Those Priests Privileged To Live and Serve God in the Temple (84:4).

A. Priests and Levites, being numerous, were placed on rotating schedules for temple service. While on duty, they lodged in quarters provided for those employed (II Kings11:5-9; I Chron. 24:1-19).
B. The author wishes he could be there, continually praising God.

III. The Happiness of the Pilgrims En route to Jerusalem (84:5-7).

A. The highways to Zion were the roads the pilgrims trod (84:5b).
B. Even dreary desert areas were made happy by their joyful songs (84:6).
C. Though the journey was long and hard, their strength was adequate for the trip.
D. All arrived safely at Jerusalem for the great festival (84:7).

IV. His Prayer For God's Anointed (84:8-9).

A. Three classes of Hebrews were anointed:
    1. Kings (II Sam. 3:39).
    2. Priests (Ex. 29:29).
    3. Prophets (I Kings 19:16)
B. God is both a sun and a shield to his people.

1. The sun is always a welcomed guest providing life, health and warmth.
2. A shield protects its possessors.

V. How He Valued His Time at God's House (84:10).

A. A day in God's courts was more precious than a thousand days spent elsewhere.
B. A position as a porter or janitor in God's house was more desirable than a life in a chieftain's tent.

VI. The Blessings of Trusting and Serving God (84:11-11).

A. Jehovah gives grace and glory.
B. No good thing will He withhold from the righteous.

VII. His Beatitude. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

Lessons to Remember:

A. Is the church and the worship of God the supreme love of your heart and soul?
B. The true disciple of Christ will never have to be goaded to attend classes and worship. He will be eager to enjoy every opportunity for communion and fellowship with God.
C. The chores of life are lightened by songs of faith in the heart.
D. Make God your "sun and shield" and you will never want for blessings and protection.
E. If your blessings seem to be in short supply, examine yourself. "No good thing will (God) withhold from them that walk uprightly" (84:11).

Psalm 85

A Song Of Praise, Prayer And Prospect

Intro: This hymn was written by the Sons of Korah for the Chief Musician of the temple service. Internal evidence leads us to conclude that this song was composed following the return of the Jews from Babylonian Captivity in 536 B.C. (See vs. lb). Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, God had brought the captives home. But they came to a land that was desolate. Jerusalem was a ruined and forsaken city whose walls were broken down and whose gates were burned. The land was occupied by hostile, jealous tribes who vexed and assailed them on every hand. The handful of returnees were grateful for their return but apprehensive of their future. To read the historical background of this period of Jewish history, consult the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah.

I. He Acknowledges God's Former Mercies (85:1-3).

A. He had restored them to their homeland after 70 years of captivity (85 :1).
B. He had forgiven the nation for their national sins.
C. He had lifted his judgments from them.

II. His Petition For Present Help (85:4-7).

A. "Turn us" towards peace and prosperity (85:4).
    1. They wondered if their present troubles were evidence that God was still angry with them.
B. "Revive us again" (85:6).
    1. Quicken means to renew, restore or reinvigorate.
    2. The church in every generation needs revival.
    3. The KJV rendering, "revive us again," was the basis for our famous hymn by that name.

III. God's Response Given Through the Priest (85:8-13).

A. He will give them peace, but:
    1.They must not turn to folly (85:8).
        a. Folly does not here mean foolishness, but sinful disobedience.
B. He will save them, but:
    1. They must fear him, i.e., reverence and obey him (85:9).
2. That "glory may dwell in our land:"

a. Refers to the **Shekinah** or glory of the Lord that filled the old temple.

b. This implies that the Shekinah was not there after the exile.

C. God will send forth his four great virtues (85:10-11).

1. Mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, like four heavenly messengers, meet, greeting each other with a holy kiss. They then go forth to bless His people.

D. The result is that God's Truth springeth up from the earth (85:11-13).

1. Truth here refers to God's truthfulness or fidelity to keep his promises.

2. See the picture of the righteous God looking down from his heavenly portals to observe the blessing of his people.

3. Prosperity will be restored to the suffering people (85:12b).

Lessons to Remember:

1. When we sin we can expect hardships to follow. God is just.

2. If we expect God to bless us, we must fear Him and turn away from sinful folly.

3. Revival begins in the hearts of devoted and dedicated Christians.

4. Every Christian should fervently pray for God to revive his Cause on earth...especially where he worships.

5. In olden times God's Shekinah dwelt in the temple in Jerusalem. Today God's Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of every Christian (I Cor. 6:19-12)

6. National peace and prosperity are gifts from Jehovah. May we always remember to thank him for those blessings (85:8b, 12).

7. To preach God's Truth in a way acceptable to Him, we must reflect His mercy toward sinners (85:10).

Psalm 86

A Supplication For Divine Help

Intro: This is a prayer of David. Four other psalms are also prayers songs: Psalms 17, 90, 102, 142. The Hebrews called them ***tephillahs***. Rather than a prayer for the congregation this appears to be a personal prayer. Thirty-five times he refers to himself. It is a composite of quotes from 20 other Psalms, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Jeremiah. The focal point of this prayer is the name of the Lord. Five times he speaks of *Elohim,* four of *Jehovah,* and seven of *Adonai.* God's name is mentioned in all but one verse. This psalm has a great Messianic prophecy in vss. 9-10 which predicts the ingathering of the Gentiles into God's kingdom. Many of the persecuted French Protestants, the Huguenots, sang this psalm as they were led away to execution.

I. On the Basis of God's Goodness He Prays (86:1-5).

A. His request is threefold: "answer me," "preserve me," "be merciful to me."

1. His petition for a hearing (86:1).

a. No commoner could approach ancient kings without first securing permission, hence they submitted petitions for that privilege.

b. "Bow down thine ear," "as the careful physician does to his feeble patient" (Basil).

2. His need for help is personal:

a. "For I am poor and needy," i.e., "weak and wretched" (Moffatt).

b. "Poor" from the Hebrew "***ani***" refers not to financial poverty but to oppressions and distress. We say of one who has been hurt, "Poor soul."

c. "It is the sense of need that drives men to God" (Purkiser).

B. He pleads his case on the basis of his relationship to God (86:2-3).

1. "Preserve my soul; for I am godly."

a. The Hebrew word "***chasid***" shows his appeal is not to any personal merit but to God's goodness.

b. This is not a self-righteous boast, only that as one of God's servants he has the right to call upon him for help.

c."True to Thee" (Moffatt); "dedicated" (Berkeley).

d."One whom Thou lovest" (Perowne).

2. "O Lord: for unto thee do I cry, all the day long," i.e., all the time.

a. One of the noticeable differences in the prayers of saints and sinners is that sinners pray, if at all, only when they are in trouble, while saints pray unto Him continually.

b."Lord" is the translation of "***Adonai***" which expresses "the consciousness of specially belonging to God, of standing under his immediate guidance and protection" (Kirkpatrick).

C. "Rejoice the soul of they servant" (86:4).

1. "Make me heartily rejoice because I am thy servant" (Alexander).

D. "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul" in prayer.

1. Symbolized by lifting up the hands while praying (I Tim. 2:8).

a. This thought is reflected in the hymn "**Unto Thee O Lord**."

E. For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in loving kindness" (86:5). On this basis he dares to make his request.

1. This is a quote from Exodus 34:6**,** uttered by Moses when he witnessed God's mighty works on Sinai.

II. He Petitions Jehovah on the Basis of His Greatness (86:6-10).

A. "In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee" for thou wilt answer me."

1. His faith in God was full of trust that God would not forsake him (See Heb. 13:5).

B. "There is none like unto thee among the gods, O Lord" (86:8).

1. This reference to gods is not a recognition of false gods of the heathen, rather he is contrasting Jehovah, the true and living God with the worthless idols of their neighbors.

2. Paul expressed it thusly: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father..." (I Cor. 8:5-6).

3. If every idol was suddenly endued with life, they still would be nothing compared to Jehovah.

a."What has any idol ever made or unmade?" (Spurgeon).

C. "All nations...shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and they shall glorify thy name" (86:9).

1.This grand prophecy looks forward to the Christian age when Gentiles shall stand equally before God with the Hebrews..

2. Other Psalms make similar predictions: See 22:28-29 & 47:9.

D. "For thou are great...Thou art God alone" (86:10).

1. On this great truth he bases his plea.

III. Trusting God's Grace, He Lifts Up His Prayer (86:11-13).

A. He asks for guidance and pledges to be obedient to God (86:1 la).

1.Christ is our way, truth and light (John 14:6).

2. "Teach me" means to point out or mark the way" (Alexander).

B. "Unite my heart to fear they name" (86:11b).

1. "Suffer it no more to scatter itself upon a multiplicity of objects, to be drawn hither and thither by a thousand different aims, but turn all its powers, all its affections in one direction, collect them in one focus, make them all one in Thee" (Perowne).

C. "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart" (86:12).

1. The greatest command is to "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37).

2. "For great is thy loving kindness toward me" (86:13a).

a. On this premises he lays his claim to God's blessings.

3. "Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest Shed" (86:13b).

a. The KJV confuses us by rendering the word ***Sheol***, hell.

b. Sheol, is the unseen world beneath the earth (Perowne). It is often rendered "grave."

c. Literally, he praises God who " saved (his) life from the grave."

d. "From the very depths of death" (Moffatt).

IV. The Gifts He Requests of God (86:14-17).

A. The peril he faced (86:14).

1."The proud are risen up against me."

2. "A company of violent men have sought after my soul," i.e., his life.

B. The reason he believed God would aid him (86:15).

1. He is merciful, gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness and truth.

a. "Truth" here means "truthfulness or fidelity (RSV).

C. He desperately needs mercy, strength and salvation (86:16).

1. "The son of thy handmaid" is the parallel of "thy servant" (86:16b).

D. "Show me a token for good" (86:17).

1. "The phrase, ' show me' strictly means, 'do with me' and is here used because the sign or token asked for is neither a verbal declaration nor a miracle, but a practical or providential vindication of God's favor, furnished by His dealings with him" (Alexander).
2. "Let me be assured of thy mercy by being delivered out of trouble" (Spurgeon).
3. Such a deliverance would confound and frustrate his enemies who witnessed it.
4. He dares to ask this because, "Thou, Jehovah, hast helped me, and comforted me" (86:17:c).

Lessons to Remember:

A. A valuable prayer need not be original in words and thoughts so long as it is the genuine expression of a godly and sincere heart.

B. A broad acquaintance with Scripture will improve the quality of our prayers.

C. The best prayers are those most full of Jehovah.

D. Have you allowed God to unite your conscience, will, intellect, emotions and reason in harmony with His will?

E. "Consecration makes us saints: concentration makes us strong" (Scroggie).

F. "There are two kinds of doubt which are wont, in the house of temptation, to assail the soul; the doubt as to God's willingness, and the doubt as to God's power, to succor" (Perowne).

G. It is interesting that those who were so fearful of their God that they would neither write nor speak his name, found it easy to reject and murder His Son.

H. The most despicable prayers are those whose authors used the language of spiritual poverty while they think themselves to be rich and in need of nothing.

I. Always remember that our God is good both to give and forgive.

Psalm 87

The Privileges Of The Coming Spiritual Zion

Intro: This is a song of the Sons of Korah. The use of both "psalm and song" in the heading suggests that it is a song of praise or triumph (Alexander). It is prophetic, praising the coming heavenly Zion, the church or kingdom of Christ. The love of the Hebrews for their holy city is the background from which the poet writes.

This theme of love for and delight in Jerusalem is also reflected in Psalm 48. The earthly Jerusalem is typical of the heavenly or spiritual Jerusalem the church that Messiah was to establish (Heb. 12:22-23). The only hints as to the time of composition are in vs. 4. The term Rahab as a poetic name for Egypt was also used by Isaiah 750-700 B.C. (See Is. 51:9. Also the fact that he mentions Babylon rather than Assyria suggests that it was likely written after the decline of Assyria and the rise of Babylon to power in 606 B.C. The obscurity of the Hebrew text of this psalm makes it somewhat difficult to translate and interpret.

The Hebrew nation "was pervaded by a jealous exclusivism which was remarkable even among the nations of antiquity..." (Perowne). "Both they and their country belonged to God in a sense in which no other people and country belonged to Him" (Ibid.). Out of this situation "the Jewish people, for the most part, regarded their neighbors as enemies. Judaism held out no hope for a brotherhood of nations" **(Ibid.)**. They were in no sense a missionary people. It was the common view among them that, "as the chosen race (they) should subdue their enemies far and wide, and ...that one sitting on David's throne should be king of the world" (**Ibid.**). God led his prophets in passages such as this to teach them a broader, more tolerant view of their neighbors and their future relationship to both Him and Israel. "The psalmist, with his sublime outlook, envisions a time in world-history when irrespective of nationality, men will come to themselves, and therefore to God...Then when it is not his concern; he is content with framing the beautiful ideal" (Oesterley). Foreign nations are here described, not as captives or tributaries, not even as doing voluntary homage to the greatness and glory of Zion, but as actually incorporated and

enrolled by a new birth among her sons" (Perowne). "Even the worst enemies of the Hebrew; Egyptians and Babylonians are not threatened with curses, but the privileges of citizenship are extended to them and they are welcomed as brothers" (**Ibid**.). "The particularism of the Jews is transcended and the universality of the divine purpose shows through" (Purkiser). It is "a prediction of the incorporating of all nations into the church of Christ and the establishment of the new and universal nationality of the kingdom of God" (Kirkpatrick). It prophesies of "the Jerusalem that is above, which is our mother (Gal. 4:26). It looks forward to the time when the Gentiles shall no longer be 'alienated from the common wealth of Israel' but 'fellow citizens with the saints and if the household of God' (Eph. 2:12, 19)" (Ibid.). This "Psalm stands alone amongst the writings of the Old Testament, in representing the union of nations as a new birth into the city of God" (Perowne). "It depicts Zion as the metropolis of the universal kingdom of God into which all nations are adopted as citizens" (Kirkpatrick). "It is a beautiful gem in praise of Zion, envisioned spiritually, not necessarily geographically" (Purkiser). "In its breadth of view and fulness of Messianic hope it vies with the grandest of prophetic utterances" (Kirkpatrick).

I. Zion: the Holy City, Founded and Beloved by God (87:1-3).

A. Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion" (87:1-2).

1. "Gates" by metonymy, stand for the city itself.
2. "The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob; her foundations are laid upon the holy hills, and he has made her his home" (NEB).
3. It was Jehovah who founded or established the holy city (Purkiser)
4. Gates signified much more than protection and safety:
    a. The gates of a walled city were the heart or center of its business and judicial activities.
    b. Jerusalem had priority with God even over other cities of Jacob.
        (1). Jacob is but another name for Israel.
        (2). He is likely saying that Samaria or no other city in the Northern Kingdom of Israel enjoys God's blessings and approval as does Jerusalem.

B. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God" (87:3).

1. While earthly Jerusalem was glorious to their eyes, the poet here speaks of a Jerusalem that was yet to come...a spiritual city with a spiritual temple...the church of Christ.
2. These prophecies of her future were indeed glorious to behold.

II. The Future Citizens of Zion (87:4-6).

A. The glorious future of Zion as God reconciles all nations in her.

1. "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon as among them that know me."
    a. Note that it is God who speaks in vs. 4.
    b. "God announces that Israel's ancient foes, and others shall one day enjoy the franchise of the Holy City (and) shall be incorporated into the Great Commonwealth of Nations..." (Perowne).
2. "Them that know me" speaks of "the knowledge of friendship...which springs from intimate acquaintance " (Perowne).
    a. He mentions "Rahab (i.e.,Egypt) and Babylon as included among those acquainted with me" (Harrison).
    b. Other ancient enemies such as Philistia, Tyre and Ethiopia will also know Him.
    c. All of those former enemies will contribute to the citizenry of spiritual Zion.
    d. They will be brought together as one holy city, not by a political scheme, nor by social reformers, or cultural evolution, but by a new birth, a rebirth of their souls.
3. Rahab is a poetical name for Egypt (Is. 30:7).
    a. The word literally means "the monster of the deep" and was used to described crocodiles. Its use in reference to Egypt has to do with her great river, the Nile and the destructive power she long exercised over other nations.

B. "Yea, of Zion it shall be said This one and that one was born in her" (87:5a).

1. Jehovah is depicted as recording the names of the people of many nations in his citizenship book.
2. "All of those Gentiles who know Him (will) be divinely registered as natives of the Kingdom of God" (Berkeley).
3. Visualize Him pointing to representatives of those and other Gentiles states, noting that they also are citizens of his kingdom.

4. “This one was born there” i.e. in Zion (87:4b).

a. “I will count them as mine, for here, this follower and that was born? (Moffatt).

b. “This one and that one was born in her” (87:5a).

(1) “One after another is born in her” (Perowne).

C. “Was born there” speaks not of their physical birth, but of their spiritual birth.

1. “It is remarkable that the figure of a new birth is used to express the admission of the different nations to the rights of citizenship in Zion” (Perowne).

2. “Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

3. The Septuagint (LXX) renders this, But Mother Zion shall say; The concept of Jerusalem being the mother of the nation is reflected in Isaiah 54:1

D. “And the Most High himself will establish her” (87:5b).

1. Although God certainly did establish both old Jerusalem and new Jerusalem, this speaks primarily of the fact that he will undergird, strengthen and sustain the New Jerusalem, his church.

2. “He the Highest, or the Highest Himself’ will protect his holy church (Kirkpatrick).

E. “Jehovah will count, when he writeth up the peoples” (87:6).

1. The imagery is of God taking a census of the human race to determine which are his.

2. The book in which the names of his citizens are recorded is called the book of life (See Phil.4:3; Rev. 20:15).

a. Rather than a literal book of the saved, we should understand this as saying the omniscient God knows exactly who is and who is not a citizen of his kingdom.

3. “Will count” describes literally, writing, as inscribing in a list or register (Alexander).

4. All ancient kingdoms had their register of citizens. It was of great value that ones name be inscribed therein. In Venice, the rulers kept a golden registry book.

5. “The most glorious thing that He can say of each of them; the crown of all their history, shall be this, not the record of their separate national existence or polity or dominion, but the fact that they have become members by adoption of the city of God” (Perowne).

III. The Joy of those Who Are Citizens of That Future Zion (87:7).

A. The imagery is that of the citizens celebrating their privileges as citizens of that blessed kingdom.

B. It depicts “a triumphal procession of rejoicing citizens, singers as well as dancers, who chant as they advance, a joyous chorus in praise of the city, in which they have found all fountains of joy and satisfaction welling up for their refreshment and delight” (Scroggie).

1. Miriam led the Hebrews in song and dance to celebrate their deliverance from the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:20-21).

2. David sang and danced before Jehovah when the ark of God was finally brought to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:16).

C. Another thought is that singers and musicians will welcome new citizens into the spiritual kingdom of Zion.

1. Jesus said there will be joy in heaven over one sinner that repents (Luke 15:10).

D. The celebrants will be singing, “All my fountains are in thee.”

1. The true source of all joy, happiness and blessing is in the Lord God and in his spiritual city of Zion.

2. Our hymn, **“O Thou Fount of Every Blessing”** is based on this passage.

Lessons to Remember:

A. God “has made men one, members of the same family, by teaching them to feel that they are all children of the same Father” (Perowne).

B. Remember, only those who have been born again have their names enrolled in the heavenly Jerusalem. That birth of water and Spirit is experienced in the sacred act of baptism (John 3:3-5).

C. It is the peculiar glory of the church that God is able to make her chiefest enemies to become her converts. See what He has done in the former Communist nation of Eastern Europe and Russia.

D. If you expect to spend eternity with God your citizenship must be in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

E. Is your name written in God’s book of life? If not, do you want it to be written therein?

Psalm 88

A Song Of A Dying Man

Intro: This is the saddest of all the psalms "It is a pathetic cry of hopeless despair in the midst of unrelieved suffering" (Kirkpatrick). It is unique in that the pouring out of his burdened soul before God failed to bring relief and consolation. It reminds us of the great suffering of Job. The writer seems to have suffered from some terrible, wasting disease, from his youth. Family and friends had abandoned him. He mistakenly felt he was the object of God's wrath. He was standing on the brink of death. His final word is "**darkness**." We call such songs "elegies," i.e., words expressing deep sadness. It is a psalm of the sons of Korah, i.e., from their school or guild of singers. It was set to ***Mahalath Leannoth***, which literally means, "sickness to afflict." It might be the melody to which it was sung. ***Leannoth*** alone translates, "to chant mournfully" (Berkley Version). It is a ***maschil,*** i.e., a song of instruction. One man's suffering is another man's instruction and warning. The author is Heman the Ezrahite. He, Asaph and Ethan were chief musicians in David's day (I Chron. 6:31-33; 15:17-19) Heman, along with Ethan, Calcol and Darda were also famous as wise men or sages only surpassed by Solomon (I Kings 4:31).

I. His Petition To Be Heard By God (88:1-2).

A. "Jehovah, the God of my salvation." These words are the only glimpse of hope to be found in this song.

B. His sadness is seen in the words, "I have cried day and night."

II. His Misery and Suffering Related (88:3-9).

A. He was "full of troubles" (88:3a).

1. "Soul" stands for his life.

B. He felt himself to be on the brink of death (88:3b-4a).

1. "Sheol" stands for death or the grave.

C. He was alone with no one to help him (88:4b-5).

D. He felt he might as well be dead (88:6).

E. He thought God had brought his suffering upon him (88:7).

F. Friends had abandoned him (88:8a).

1. They were repulsed by his condition.
2. From this, some scholars suppose the author may have been leprous.

G. He was "shut up" (88:8b).

1. He may have been too sick to leave his house.
2. He may have been quarantined and forbidden to leave.

H. He had wept unceasingly (88:9).

1. He spread forth his hands in prayer (Comp. 1 Tim. 2:8).
2. His condition is much like that of Job.

III. Without God's Immediate, Help He Would Surely Die (88:10-13).

A. If God delays, he would soon be dead.

1. Then it would be too late to send help.

B. He asks, can the dead arise and praise God?

1. This is a rhetorical question, not asked for information, but a statement of belief.
2. He did not know they would survive death and be raised, hence his despair.
3. We are blest to know that they can and will (II Tim. 1:10).
    a. Hebrews 2:14-15.
    b. John 5:28-29.
    c. Luke 16:19-31.

C. It is important to note the parallels that all refer to that state and condition of the dead as the Hebrews of that day understood things.

1. "The dead" = "They that are deceased."
2. "In the grave" = "In Destruction." (This describes what happens to the body in the grave).
3. "In the dark" (of the tomb) = "In the land of forgetfulness" (The corpse cannot remember and they are soon forgotten by the living).

IV. He Complains Of His Sad Condition (88:14-18).

A. He feels God has cast him off as unloved and unwanted (88:14).
B. He had been ill all of his life (88:15a).
C. He is afraid of what will become of him (88:15b).
D. He had terrible dreams that increased his suffering (88:15b-17).
E. Friends and lovers had abandoned him
F. Loneliness, like thick darkness enveloped (88:18).

Lessons to Remember:

A. No matter how dark and dreadful your case you can always call on God...and should do so.
B. Be grateful for the revelation of immortality we have in Christ.
C. Let us always be ready to reach out and serve those in sickness and sorrow.
D. No matter how dark the night, hold fast to God's hand. He will not fail thee or forsake thee.
E. To properly understand God message we must know the meaning of the words he used.

Psalm 89

Standing On The Promises Of God's Covenant

Intro: This song is a ***maschil***, a hymn of instruction. It was composed by Ethan the Ezrahite. Ethan seems to have related to Heman, author of the previous psalm (I Chron. 2:5-6). He too was listed among the famous sages of Israel (I Kings 4:31). Ethan and Heman are numbered among the leaders of the temple musicians (I Chron. 15:17-19). Some have thought that Psalms 88 and 89 were originally cast as one song, beginning with doleful sadness and ending in confident joy. Internal information suggests that Psalm 89 may have been written when the Hebrews were overrun by the Babylonians. The overthrow and imprisonment of King Jehoiachin may have been the specific occasion. Jeremiah wrote that no man of his seed would "prosper, sitting on the throne of David and ruling in Judah" (Jer. 22:30). Never forget that the notations at the top of each psalm are not part of the inspired text. The are the work of ancient Jewish scribes. While generally useful, they may in some cases be faulty and inaccurate. The theme of this psalm is the loving-kindness and faithfulness of God. Each word appears seven times in the song. He sings of his confidence in the covenant God had made with David (vs. 3). New Testament writers frequently apply the promises of this psalm to Jesus Christ, the descendent of David. This has been called "The Covenant Psalm." It is a majestic piece, of great value, setting forth the marvelous Davidic promises which were later fulfilled in Christ. It is considered to be the greatest specimen of Hebrew poetry. With this psalm, the Third Book of the Psalms closes. Verse 52 is not a part of this psalm. Rather it is a closing doxology for the Third Volume of Songs.

I. His Declaration (89:1-2).

A. To forever sing of Jehovah's loving-kindness and faithfulness (89:1).
B. He expresses his confidence in God (89:2).
    1. He had concluded that God's mercy and faithfulness would always be manifested even unto heaven itself.

II. He Cites God's Covenant With David (89:3-4).

A. God, upon his oath, promised David the throne of Israel (II Sam. 7:8-16).
B. It would be secured to his seed (his descendants) forever (89:4).
    1. This was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, the Son of David, as Messiah, reigning over the kingdom of heaven, the church.

III. He Praises God For His Manifold Greatness (89:5-14).

A. The heavens praise Him (Compare Ps. 19:1).
B. The angels in heaven praise him (89: 5b).
    1. Compare Rev. 5:11-12.
C. No other being in the universe is God's equal (89:6).
D. God is feared by all (89:7).
E. His strength and faithfulness are unmatched (89:8).
F. His judgements in the Exodus praise him (89:9-10).

1. He opened the Red Sea so Israel could escape the army of Pharaoh.
2. He broke Rahab, i.e., Egypt, in pieces.
    a. With the ten plagues.
    b. By drowning her troops in the Red Sea.

G. He created, possesses and rules both heaven and earth (89:11-13).
H. His administration is based on righteousness and justice (89:14).
1. Loving-kindness (mercy) and truth are his ready servants

IV. The Blessings Which God's Covenant Children Enjoy (89:15-18).

A. They know the joyful sound of His Word (89:15).
B. They walk in the light of his countenance.
C. They constantly rejoice in His name (89:16).
D. They are exalted in His righteousness.
E. Their strength is Jehovah (89:17).
F. Their king is God's chosen and anointed ruler (89:18).
1. Their shield is their king. Note the parallel lines.

V. He Rehearses the Great Davidic Promises (89:19-27).

A. The message given through Samuel the priest when he anointed David to be king of Israel (89:19-20).
1. I Sam. 16: 13.
2. The covenant promise was given through Nathan the prophet (II Sam. 7:8-16).

B. God strengthened David and defeated his adversaries (89:21-24).
1. No enemy nation would "exact" tribute from David and his nation.
2. His horn (i.e., strength) would be exalted.

C. He would rule from the sea to the river (89:25).
1. From the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River.

D. David was a faithful son and servant of God (89:26).
E. God exalted David as his first born son and heir (89:27).

VI. The Rule by Which David's Heirs Would be Judged (89:28-37).

A. The covenant with David was everlasting (89:28).
1. David's hope was based on that everlasting covenant (II Sam. 23:5).
2. His dynasty would rule forever.
3. These verses are applied to Christ as David's heir (Acts 13:34).
4. "His throne" refers to David's dynasty. (89:29b).

B. If David's heirs were to forsake God's law they would be punished (89:30-32).
C. But God's loving-kindness would not be utterly taken from them norwould his faithfulness fail (89:33).
D. God would honor his covenant with David (89:34-37).
1. Christ now reigns on David's throne, at God's right hand in heaven.
    a. Compare Acts 2:25-36 and 15:16-18.
2. He rules as king over Spiritual Israel, God's church.
    b. Compare Luke 1:32-33; I Timothy; 6:15 and Colossians 1:13.
3. The promise is as sure and abiding as the moon, God's faithful witness (89:37).

VII. He is Puzzled by the Present Ruined Condition of the Nation and David's Dynasty (89:38-45).

A. Their king, David's heir, was in captivity (89:38-39).
1. Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon in chains. There he lived until his death (II Kings 24:8-16; 25:27-30).

B. The nation was overrun by invading armies (89:40-44)

VIII. He Pleaded For Divine Mercy And Help For His People (89:46-51).

A. He asks, "How long will it be before you act, 0 God?" (89:46).
B. Without His intervention, they would soon perish (89:47).
1. They could not save themselves (89:48).

C. He pleads for God to bless them as in days of yore.
1. To remember His promises to David (89:49).

D. He begs God to consider the reproaches heaped upon them by their heathen adversaries (89:50-51).

Conclusion: "Blessed by Jehovah for evermore. Amen, and amen." (89:52). This blessing closes the Third Volume of the sacred songs of Israel.

Lessons to Remember:

1. As you worship God, always sing of His loving kindness.(89:1).
2. In his covenant with us God made both promises and commitments. He has been faithful to his, have you honored your commitments to Him?
3. "Righteous and justice are the foundation of (His) throne. They must also be foundational in our lives.
4. Christ, David's heir, now reigns as king over spiritual Israel, which is the church, the kingdom of heaven.
5. God saved and used David in spite of his many flaws and failures. Although we are likewise imperfect, He can cleanse and use us as well.
6. No matter what happens in life you can always depend on the loving-kindness and mercy of Jehovah.
7. It is our wonderful privilege to be the covenant children of Jehovah.
8. The covenant God made with David was honored and upheld through countless ages. The covenant of salvation He made with us stands firm and true today and will be honored in eternity.
9. In all things and in all circumstances let us "Bless Jehovah."

BOOK IV

Psalm 90

On The Frailty And Brevity Of Human Life

Intro: With Psalm 90 begins the Fourth Book of Psalms, most of which are anonymous. The major theme of this section is the history of the nation. This psalm was written by Moses as were the songs of Exodus 15:1-21 and Deuteronomy 32. Rabbinic tradition ascribes the ten anonymous psalms that follow, also to Moses. Psalms 90-99 are know as the "Sabbath Psalms" because by the Jews they were sung regularly on the Sabbath Day. This being a psalm of Moses makes it one of the oldest of them. This song is cast in the form of a prayer. It is classified as a "didactic psalm" because it is designed to instruct the readers and hearers in great truths of God. It has always been a favorite of aged saints. It has been called, "the most sublime of human compositions, the deepest in feeling, the loftiest in theological conception, the most magnificent in its imagery" (Isaac Taylor).

I. The Eternality of God (90:1-2).

A. He is our dwelling place.
   1. Their home was with God.
   2. In God alone they found safety, comfort, provision and love.

B. He is our creator.
   1. Isn't it tragic that so many modem folks would rather attribute their origin to mere chance or the raw forces of nature. Rather than Jehovah, their creator is a god called evolution.

C. He is eternal.
   1. He is always there to hear and help us.
   2. He never grows old nor dies.

II. The Frailty and Mortality of Man (90:3-12).

A. Man's frailty is contrasted with God's eternality.
B. God chastens men to call them back to him in repentance (90:3).
C. Time means nothing to the eternal God (90:4).
   1. Compare II Peter 3:8.
   2. He will never grow old or run out of time as we shall.
D. Man's brevity and frailty is compared to:

1. A chip of wood on a stream of water.
2. As a night's sleep, soon passed.
3. As grass of the field (90:5-6).

E. Man is powerless before God's wrath (90:7).

F. Nothing can be hidden from the omniscient God (90:8-9).

1. Think how foolish the religious pretender or the liar appears to God.

G. At best, man's life is but 80 or so years.

1. This is not spoken as a divine promise or limitation of man's longevity, it is a statement of fact.
2. Good hygiene, healthy living and modem medicine may allow us to live a bit longer than 80 years.

H. we must number, i.e., cherish and wisely use every day we have (90:12).

III. A Prayer for God's Blessings Upon His People (90:13-17).

A. He asks how long Jehovah will wait before extending mercy and forgiveness to his people (90:13)?

B. He longs for God's mercy and blessings (90:14-17).

1. "Favor" in vs. 17 can be translated "beauty of the Lord" (See footnote).

Lessons to Remember:

A. We worship and serve the eternal God (90:2). By the very nature of that fact, our faith and religion must be ancient in origin. Any religious teaching newer than the Bible must be rejected.

B. No man can stand before the wrath of Jehovah (90:3).

C. We must never we have a long lease on our life. Death can come in an instant. We must always be prepared to meet God.

D. Let your prayer be, "Lord, teach me to number my days."

E. No sin can be hidden from our God (90:8).

F. May God teach us to number our days (90:12).

Psalm 91

The Security Of The Man Who Trusts In God

Intro: The lovely song was composed by an unknown author. Ancient rabbis attributed it to Moses. The background that prompted it is also unknown. It is a liturgical psalm, i.e., one designed especially for use in the temple liturgy. Notice the change of speakers in the verses. Two single voices and a chorus are discernable, singing in response to each other. This we call antiphonal singing. The **theme** of this song is "Jehovah, a secure defense for those who take refuge in him. Bishop Herder asked, "Can the Providence of God be taught in a more truthful or more tender spirit?" Simon de Muis wrote, "We have no poem either in Greek or Latin, comparable to this Hebrew ode."

I. The Safety of a Good Man (First Speaker)**(91:l-2).**

A. To be safe with God is like the high priest in the holy of holies of the temple.

B. It is like a nestling safe under the wings of the mother bird.

C. It is like a warrior safe in his fortress.

II. How God Delivers the Righteous (The Chorus Responds) **(91:3-8).**

A. God will deliver thee from every snare of the evil one (91:3a).

B. He will deliver thee from deadly pestilence (91:3b).

C. He will shelter thee like a mother bird does her little ones

D. His truth will be your shield and buckler

E. A buckler is the small shield carried on the left arm.

F. He will keep you safe through the dangerous night (91:5a).

G. He will protect you from the arrows that enemies shoot at you ((91:5b).

H. He will protect you from the pestilence that silently spreads among people (91:6a).

I. He will protect you from the devastation of the battlefield (91:6b).

I. Thousands may perish about you, but you will be protected and saved.

J. You will live to see your enemies overthrown (91:8).

III. Faith and Its Rewards Expressed (Second Speaker Replies) (91:9-13).

A. Why he will enjoy God's divine protection (91:9).

1. Because he had said, "O Jehovah, (thou) art my refuge.''
2. Because he had made the Most High his habitation.

B. Therefore no evil would befall him.

1. No plague would come nigh his house (91:10).

C. God's angels would watch over him.

1. They have been "charged to do so" (91:11-12).
2. Not just one, but multitudes of heavenly angels watch over us (Heb. 1:14).
3. Note that Satan twisted this verse in his attempt to tempt Jesus (Matt. 4:6).

D. Even lions and adders will not harm God's man (91:13).

1.These words are not to be taken as a guarantee that if you foolishly provoke a wild beast or serpent God will not allow it to hurt you. Remember Jesus said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord" (Matt. 4:7).

2. He will protect us from those mishaps wherein we might stumble into the path of the deadly beast... or people who are as dangerous as the beasts.

IV. God's Promise of Protection (The Chorus Responds) **(91:14-16).**

A. Why God will bless and keep the righteous man (91:14a).

1. He sets his love upon God.

B. What he will do for him:

1. He will deliver him from trouble (91:14b).
2. He will set him on high over his enemies (91:14c).
3. He will answer his prayers (91:15a).
4. He will be with him in every trial (91:15b.
5. He will honor him (91:15c).
6. He will give him a long life (91:16a).
7. He will show him salvation (91:16b).

Lessons to Remember:

1. There is no comfort and safety that compares with "abiding under the shadow of the Almighty (91:1).
2. When Satan and his agents assail you take courage for "Jehovah...is my refuge and my fortress" (91:2).
3. We are blessed, favored and protected "because He hath set his love upon (us)" (91:14).
4. What we give up to serve God is nothing compared to the rich rewards it brings us.
5. The wonderful promises of God to hear our prayers, care for us and protect us give us the peace that passeth understanding (Phil. 4:7).
6. To preach the privileges of Scripture without specifying to whom they belong is like putting a letter in the mail without an address. God's promised blessings are for his children.

Psalm 92

A Sabbath Day Hymn

Intro: The **author** of this lovely psalm is unknown. It celebrates and gives thanks for God's goodness. The **occasion** seems to have been a time of national deliverance: perhaps in the days of Hezekiah when God saved the nation from the Assyrians, or in the days of Zerubbabel when they were delivered from Babylonian captivity. It is a **"wisdom"** psalm, addressing the question of how God rewards righteousness and iniquity. The author has no doubts about God's justice.

It is a **"liturgical"** psalm, designed to be used in the public worship of the temple. The Jewish Talmud notes that it was sung with the offering of the wine which accompanied the first lamb of the Sabbath burnt-offering (See Num. 28:9-10). The **key verse** of this psalm is vs. 8. "But Thou O Jehovah, art on high for evermore." It also declares the great supporting pillar of the universe, the kingdom of God and our faith. "This psalm sets forth very beautifully, the truth that temporal benefits are the gifts of God and that gratitude for these must be expressed in praise to the

Almighty..." (Oesterley). The majestic and mysterious name of YHWH (Jehovah) is mentioned seven times in the psalm. No other psalm has been sung so often by Christians as this. The version composed by Isaac Watts has been loved and sung by millions of believers.

I. Let All People Praise Jehovah For His Goodness (92:1-5).

A. It is good to praise God (92:1).

1. "Good" here means delightful.
2. Praise of God is good in several ways. It is:
    a. Ethically good because it is the right thing to do.
    b. Emotionally good, because it blesses those who so worship the Lord
    c. Practically good, because it leads others to do the same.

B. Praise Him with instruments (92:3).

1. The instrument with ten strings was probably the lute.
2. The psaltery likely refers to a harp or lyre.
3. Some folks are happy to substitute lovely instrumental performances for vocal praise in worship. Charles Spurgeon said, "Fine music without devotion is but a splendid garment upon a corpse."
4. The Hebrews were authorized to use instruments in their temple worship (II Chron. 29:25).
5. Christians have no such authority. We are only told to sing and make melody with our hearts (Eph. 5:19).

C. What others have said on the subject

1. "...One thing is pretty evident from it, that instrumental music was not in use in the church of Christ in the time of Eusebius, which was near the middle of the fourth century..." (Adam Clarke. Methodist).
2. "Papists (i.e. Catholics) employing instrumental music, cannot be said so much to imitate the practice of God's ancient people, as to ape it in a senseless and absurd manner, exhibiting a silly delight in that worship of the Old Testament which was figurative, and terminated with the gospel" (John Calvin, Presbyterian and Reformed).
3. "The use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the Christian churches as it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain songs" (Justin Martyr, 100-165 AD).
4. "Instrumental music, the more I think of it, appears with increasing evidence to be utterly unsuited to the genius of the gospel dispensation" (Andrew Fuller, Baptist, 1754-1815). (All of these quotes are from Spurgeon's Treasury of David).

D. Why they sang God's praise (92:4):

1. He had made them happy.
    a. That which gladdens saints, baffles brutish sinners (92:4,6).
2. He had made them triumphant.
2. He had seen God's triumph over evil in behalf of his nation.

E. They praised both the works and thoughts of God (92:5).

II. The Wicked Will Be Overthrown (92:6-9).

A. The brutish cannot understand God's justice (92:6).

1. Brutish people are those incapable of perceiving and discerning spiritual matters. Paul calls them "carnal minded"(Rom. 8:7 KJV) or "natural" men in contrast to spiritual (I Cor. 2:14-15).
2. The brutish see the temporary prosperity of the wicked and do not perceive the outcome of such a life. The wicked will be destroyed forever, but God and the righteous will live forever.

B. Although thick or numerous as the grass, the wicked will soon perish (92:7).

C. God on his throne is the great pillar that sustains the material, moral and spiritual universe (92:8).

III. The Happiness and Prosperity of the Righteous (92:10-15).

A. God will exalt them (92:10).

1."Horn" stands for power or strength.

B. Unicorn is not a good translation.

1. The term almost certainly refers to the wild oxen, a creature of great strength and unbreakable spirit.

C. They will be anointed with "'fresh oil" (92:10b).

1. Fresh oil is often called "green oil" and is derived, uncooked, from the seed of the olive. It was the choicest, most precious oil, used for religious purposes, medicine and for refreshing the skin.

D. They will see their enemies defeated (92:11).

1. The writer felt intensely that Israel's cause was the cause of Jehovah against idolatry, the cause of truth against falsehood; the cause of righteousness struggling for existence against dominant tyranny and violence" (A. F. Kirkpatrick).

E. They will flourish like the palm tree and the cedars in Lebanon (92:12).

1. Both of these trees are evergreen, live several hundred years and are very valuable to the people of that region.

2. The date palm, of which he speaks thrives even in the most unfavorable circumstances.

a. It is very fruitful, bearing from 300 to 600 lbs. of fruit each year.

b. They live up to 200 years and reach 90 ft. in height.

c. Linnaeus called the date palm, "the prince of the vegetable world."

3. Both of these trees were before the eyes of the temple worshipers.

a. The great beams of the temple were made from the cedars of Lebanon.

b. It seems that palms were planted about the court yards of the temple for their decorative beauty and shade.

F. Even in old age, the righteous will flourish and bring forth fruit for God.

1. In doing so they will demonstrate his righteousness and provision.

Lessons To Remember:

1. Never forget what a good thing it is to praise and worship God.
2. The wicked prosper only to perish.
3. The ultimate folly is ungodliness. The consummate wisdom is righteousness.
4. The true religion of God, revealed in his sacred book, is the only sound basis for making moral distinctions.
5. God enthroned on high is the foundation of all things right and good. We must never let our faith in him be shaken.
6. The closer the body gets to eternity, the more eternity fills the heart.
7. God will bless us, but we must be willing to bear fruit even in old age.
8. The fruitful Christian is a living demonstration of the uprightness of Jehovah.

Psalm 93

A Hymn Praising Jehovah's Majesty

Intro. The author of this psalm is unknown. In that it is praising Jehovah as King, it is classed as a **theocratic** psalm. It is the first of seven of this category. Others are Psalms 95-100. In the days of the Second Temple, each day of the week had a psalm dedicated to it for regular use. On the First Day it was Psalm 24, Monday, 48, Tuesday, 82, Wednesday, 94, Thursday, 81, Friday, 93 and on the Sabbath, 92. The Talmud says this psalm was chosen for Friday because on the sixth day God finished his work and began his reign over his creation. This hymn celebrates Jehovah as the ruler of the universe. The **key thought** is that despite all opposition, God has again proclaimed himself king. The proof of which is seen in his judgement of Babylon and the restoration of his people to their land. A congregation of Scottish Covenanters (1640-89) were gathered by the River Clyde to worship. They chanted this lovely psalm with such heavenly sweetness that all who heard them stood silently, enthralled by the sound.

I. The Lord's Eternal Reign (93:1-2).

A. The thought is that God has resumed his sovereign rule over men and nations (93: 1a).

1. To the Hebrews and their enemies it appeared that God had abdicated his rule through those long dreary years of the captivity (606-536 B.C.).

a. Of course he had not really abandoned his rule, as verse 2 plainly declares.

2. The perfect tenses of the verbs tells us that this points to actions God has taken, not just the fact that he reigns.

3. He has proclaimed his intent, donned his royal robe and girded himself for action.

4. God has done this of his own volition and power. He himself has done so. No events in human affairs made it possible or necessary for him to do so.

5. This celebrates Jehovah as ruler of the universe. He is creator, sustainer, provider, king and judge of it.

B. The picture is that of a king putting on his royal garments and girding himself for battle (93: l b).

C. The result of God reasserting his reign is that their world, which appeared ready to collapse, was steadied and established again (93:1c).

1. When God hides his presence among men, “all things are out of order; blasphemers rave, persecutors rage, the profane grow bold, and the licentious increase in wantonness; but when the divine power and glory are again manifested order is restored, and the poor distracted world is at peace again” (Spurgeon).

2. All things are upheld by the word of his power (Heb. 1:3).

D. God’s throne is establish of old (93:2a).

1. His “throne” stands by metonymy for his reign.

a. He has always reigned and always will.

b.“Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever” (Ex. 15:18).

c. In reality he had never abdicated his reign but was working things out concerning the Hebrews, according to His divine will.

II. God’s Rule Over the Wicked (93: 3-4).

A. The floods have lifted up their waves and voices against Jehovah (93:3).

1. The repeated use of the word "floods’’ is called “**anadiplosis**” and is often used by Hebrew poets (Compare Psalms 90:17; 94:1. 3, 23; and 96:13).

2. The imagery of a powerful, destructive flood is used to represent the great world powers that had arrayed themselves against God and his people

a. Isaiah uses the illustration of the River Euphrates to describe invading Assyria (8:7-8) and Jeremiah uses that of the Nile to describe Egypt (Jer. 46:7-8)

3. As flooding rivers threaten to inundate and destroy all things in their paths so did the wicked nations.

B. “The mighty breakers of the sea” (93:4).

1. To understand this imagery we must imagine the crashing, roaring of the waters smashing against the rocks of the coast.

C. God in his exalted majesty towers above all the crashing, noisy movements of men and nations, unmoved.

1. “The shriek of the storm, the dash of the breakers, will be hushed when he says, “Peace."’ and the highest toss of their spray does not wet, much less shake, His stable throne’’ (Maclaren).

2. Whether it be literal waters or figurative, Christ the living Word has power over them and can bring them into submission by his spoken word (Mark 4:39).

II. His Word and His House Will Stand Forever (93:5).

A. This is a closing word of praise.

B. “Thy testimonies” refers to his written Word (Ps. 19:7).

1. It is altogether true and ever to be trusted.

C. His house is his temple, since his presence was there in the Holy of Holies.

1. It is to forever be sanctified and kept holy.

2. There would be no more desecration by either Hebrews or heathen.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Holiness becometh God’s house and so it should it be reflected in the lives and character of his worshipers, both then and now. The worship we offer in his house should also be that of sacred holiness.

B. Those who gather to worship in God’s house should not expect to find foolishness, jesting and entertainment. It should be a time reserved for sacred activities alone.

C. Because God is superior to all opposing powers, whether human or demonic, His people will be safe in his hands.

D. God’s will will be done in heaven and on earth (Matt. 6:10).

E. Our God is clothed with majesty. It behooves us to honor and respect that majesty in all we say and

do.

F. “Belief in God is the foundation and cornerstone of a well-ordered state” (Spurgeon).

G. Evil is not allow in the presence of God and he will not tolerate it in his house nor in the lives of those who seek to serve him.

Psalm 94

A Prayer For Divine Vengeance Upon Wicked Rulers

Intro: The author of this Psalm is unknown. The specific background is uncertain but **the situation** can be clearly identified. Evil men were in power. They ground the weak and helpless under foot. Righteous souls, under duress, asked, “Where is God?” “When will the Judge of all come and execute justice on our behalf?” This is a **wisdom psalm** that probes the oft asked question, **“Why does God allow the wicked to prosper while the righteous suffer?”** He finds consolation by remembering that God is king and judge of all and will ultimately right all of those wrongs. Psalms 37, 49 and 73 deal with the same question. There are two views as to whom the wicked oppressors were: (a). foreign invaders, or (b). corrupt Hebrew rulers. Two verses are **keys** that provide insight into the meaning of this psalm:

Vs. 1,“0 Jehovah, thou God to whom vengeance belongeth...Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth...”

Vs. 14, “For Jehovah will not cast off his people, Neither will he forsake his inheritance.”

I. An Appeal For Divine Vengeance Upon the Wicked Rulers (94:1-2).

A. Vengeance is God’s prerogative (Compare Rom. 12:19).

1. We do not make sufficient distinction between revenge and vengeance. “Revenge is an act of passion, vengeance (is an act) of justice. Injuries are revenged, crimes are avenged” (Dr. Johnson). While revenge is forbidden, vengeance is decreed to be carefully and appropriately administered (Gen. 9:6).

B. “Lift up thyself’ means rise up to administer their punishment.

C. They are fully deserving of penalties.

II. Their Wickedness Described (94:3-7).

A. They are arrogant and boastful (94:4).

B. They grind God’s people into dust (94:5).

C. They prey upon the weak (94:6).

1. Widows, orphans and sojourners were given special protection under divine law (Ex. 22:21-23).

2. “From earliest times of Semitic life, the lawlessness of the desert has been tempered by the principle that the guest is inviolate...To harm a guest, or to refuse him hospitality, is an offense against honor which covers the perpetrators with indelible shame” (Robertson Smith).

D. They deny and defy Jehovah (94:7).

III. He Refutes The Assumptions Of The Oppressors (94:8-11).

A. The following points answer the assumptions expressed in vs. 7.

1. Those who think God is unaware of their sins are brutish and fools (94:8).

B. God gave man ears, surely He can hear their words of rebellion.

1. He created the eye, surely He can see their defiance (94:9).

C. He has instructed nations with his moral and spiritual laws.

1. Shall he not chastise those who defy him?

IV. His Consolation and Confidence in God’s Righteousness (94:12-19).

A. His beatitude: “Blessed in the man whom Thou chastenest, O Jehovah, and teachest out of thy law” (94:12).

B. We should view our hardships as educational.

1. Life is God’s university. He is the Head Master; his word of truth is the text; his rod of discipline maintains order. The students include both good and bad. The results of his education are beneficial to those who will listen and learn.

C. Be assured God is planning the judgement of the wicked. God will not forsake His people (94:14-15).

V. Past Experience Provides Present Comfort and Hope (94:16-19).

A. He ponders, who will stand up for him against evil doers? (94: 16).

B. He reflects how God had sustained him in days past and finds comfort (94:17-19).

VI. The Wicked Will Be Destroyed And The Righteous Delivered (94:20-23).

A. The wicked can have no fellowship with Jehovah (94:20).

1. The throne of wickedness identifies the offenders, not as common criminals but as corrupt rulers.

2. They framed mischief by statute, i.e. used law to accomplish evil schemes.

a. The Dread Scott decision, Roe v. Wade, Civil rights for Gays, Children's rights to deny parental discipline.

B. Their schemes against God's people will fail.

C. God will deliver the righteous.

Lessons to Remember:

1. We must remember that God is the great Judge of humanity who will amply reward the righteous and punish the wicked.

2. The righteousness of God guarantees that a moral law which pervades the universe will prevail in righting every wrong, in judging every man and nation.

3. God is not automatically the ally of all those in high office; only those who are righteous.

4. But he is the rock of refuge of His righteous saints.

5. Underlying all history is the principle of righteousness that says the wicked will never permanently succeed nor the righteous ultimately lose.

Psalm 95

A Hymn Praising The Great King Of Israel

Intro: This lovely song is from an anonymous but inspired lyricist. The writer of Hebrews introduces and quotes from it, "saying in David" (Heb. 4:7), by which he most likely means, "in David's book." The **occasion** for its composition is thought by many to be the dedication of the second temple (516 B.C.), after Israel's return from Babylonian Captivity. The Septuagint preserves this tradition. Psalms 95-100 have many similarities and are thought to form a collection to be used for special temple services. The content of this psalm is similar to that of Isaiah 40-46. The Hebrews traditionally use this psalm for morning prayer on the Sabbath Day. Athanasius (296-373 A.D.), wrote that early Christians in Constantinople, "before the beginning of their prayers... (would) invite and exhort one another in the words of this psalm." The writer of Hebrews quotes extensively from this psalm while warning against the danger of stubbornness and apostasy (See Hebrews 3:7-11, 15; 4:7). The **key verse** is 6, "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker." The psalm consists of two contrasting parts.

Part I (vss. l-7b)	**Part II (vss.7c-ll).**
An invitation	A warning
Sets forth a privilege	Sets forth a peril
Looks upon God for present deliverance	Looks to God's past judgements
Is joyous	Is plaintive
Calls for exaltation	Calls for examination
Is a call for worship	Speaks a warning
Declares God's greatness	Reminds us of our weakness
Calls for obeisance	Calls for obedience.

I. An Invitation to Worship Jehovah (95:l-7c).

A. Hear God's word of warning (95:7c).

B. Don't harden you heart:

1. "Be not wilfully and obstinately insensible."

2. In some places God is said to harden man's heart (Ex. 7:13), but here we see that we do so ourselves.

C. Don't do as the Hebrew fathers did at Meribah (Num. 20:1-13).
1. And at Massah (Ex. 17:1-7).
2. Those were days of provocation.

D. They proved or challenged God and saw his work of judgement visited upon them.
1. For 40 years they continually saw God's merciful provision and protection for them and still they failed to believe and obey him.

E. God was grieved with that generation.
1. Literally, "sickened or disgusted with them."

F. Erring ways have their roots in unbelieving hearts (95:10b).
1. Unbelief is rooted in ignorance of God's will (95:10c).
2. Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

G. The price they paid for unbelief and stubborn disobedience (95:11).
1. They forfeited their privilege to enter the promised land.
2. The perished in the wilderness.

Lessons to Remember:

1. The soul that finds no joy in worship will find no joy in heaven.
2. Before all else in worship and prayer, be thankful.
3. A wise man will learn from the mistakes of others and avoid them.
4. The wandering heart will always miss the way that leads to the promised land.
5. When God places responsibility upon us, it is prima-facie proof that we are able to respond.
6. "You cannot repent too soon because you do not know how soon it may be too late" (Thomas. Fuller).
7. "If we put off repentance another day, we have a day more to repent of and a day less to repent in" (W. Mason).
8. God has promised pardon upon our repentance but he has not promised to preserve us until we have repented (Francis Quarles).
9. Some choices once made cannot be undone. The Hebrews of the Exodus wished to reverse their decision but God would not allow them to enter his land.

Psalm 96

A New Song Celebrating The Reign Of Jehovah

Intro: The authorship of this psalm is not indicated but it is found almost verbatim in I Chronicles 16:23-33. David ordained that the Levites sing it to celebrate the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem. This leads many to attribute it to the master Psalm writer. The Septuagint (LXX) has a note saying, "when the house was being built after the captivity." Because it celebrates Jehovah's reign, it is classified as a "theocratic psalm." Kirkpatrick calls it a "coronation anthem." It is one of the great Messianic psalms. The author, by inspiration, sees beyond his own day to that golden age when Messiah would extend the blessings of salvation to all mankind. Seven times he refers to the Gentiles. Alexander thinks this psalm was designed as a compliment to 95; the first addressed to Israel, this to the Gentiles. The song was likely sung antiphonally by the Levitical singers and the worshipers. The **key verse** is 3, "Declare his glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the people." Note that the writer uses the divine name "Jehovah" to identify the coming Messiah. Being truly God in his nature and being (John 1:1-3, 14), the name Jehovah is aptly applied to Jesus. An ancient Latin manuscript renders vs. 10 "The Lord hath reigned from the tree." Careful comparison with other and older manuscripts shows this to be a gloss added by some Christian copiest. It is believed to have originated with Justin Martyr. Based on this, hymns have been written about "God reigning from the tree." This addition was so influential among Roman Catholics that prior to the eleventh century crucifixes nearly always depicted Christ on the cross, robed and crowned. Perowne says, "This grand prophetic Psalm looks forward with joyful certainty to the setting up of a Divine Kingdom upon the earth." Alexander calls it "A joyous celebration of the universal spread of the true religion and conversion of the Gentiles." Spurgeon calls it, "A grand missionary hymn."

I. Let Jehovah's Glory and Praise be Sung and Proclaimed by All Nations (96:1-3).

A. The duties of those who are blessed.

1. Sing unto Jehovah (96:l-2a).

a. Note that three times he calls on his readers to "sing unto Jehovah." This is a literary device called **anadiplosis** which means rhetorical repetition.

(1). The words "ascribe" and "let" are similarly used later in the psalm.

b. Sing "a new song." A new song was needed for the fresh mercies they had received.

(1). The call for a "new song" is also found in Psalms 33:3; 98:1 and 149:1.

2. "Show forth his salvation" (96:2b).

a. "Proclaim His salvation" (Berkeley).

b. "From day to day" means not once or occasionally, but continuously.

3. "Declare his glory." "Publish His glory among the nations" (Berkeley).

a. "Among the nations." This anticipates the Great Commission of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20).

II. We are to Do So Because He Alone is Supreme in Glory and Greatness (96:4-6).

A. Jehovah is great (96:4).

1. He is greatly to be praised.

a. Acceptable praise demands all our hearts, souls, minds and strength (Matt. 22:37).

B. He is to be feared above all gods (96:4b).

1. "For all the gods of the peoples are idols."

a. The word "idols" literally means "nothings."

b. The Hebrew word rendered gods means "godlings," an expression of contempt (Alexander).

2. Jehovah is contrasted with the idols of the heathen:

a. He is real, they are nothing.

b. He is creator of all, they are the creations of men.

C. Jehovah's heavenly attendants (96:6).

1. Honor and majesty, strength and beauty.

a. These attributes of God are here personified.

b. All of them find their perfection in Him.

c. Jehovah's majesty, unlike earthly kings, does not consist of costly robes, dazzling jewelry and pompous rituals. His consists of holiness, justice, wisdom, power, love and grace.

2. His sanctuary is heaven as well as his sanctuary on earth, i.e., the temple.

III. Let the Gentiles Acknowledge Jehovah and Come Before Him (96:7-9).

A. "Ascribe unto Jehovah... the glory due unto his name" (96:7-8a).

1. Again we see his use of anadiplosis, "ascribe, ascribe, ascribe."

2. As suppliants we must give Jehovah all the glory that is due to Him.

B. "Ye kindreds of the peoples." "O families of the nations" (Berkeley).

1. As in ancient Israel, they were divided into tribes and families and houses when judgement was to be conducted (Josh. 7:14).

2. Here they are called by their families to appear before Jehovah and offer their adoration.

a. Through Abraham God promised to bless all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3).

C. "Bring an offering, and come into his courts" (96:8b).

1. "Offering" refers to the gift or present which subjects were expected to bring when approaching their king. The gift symbolized their submission to him (II Sam. 8:2).

2. The Hebrew word rendered "offering" is ***minchah*** and means a meal-offering, which was considered a thank-offering

a. This is appropriate since Christ made, and was, our atoning sacrifice, once for all times (Heb. 9:24-26).

3. The Hebrew word rendered "bring an offering" includes the idea of taking up and carrying (Alexander).

4. God instructed the Hebrews that when they went up to worship Him, "none shall appear before me empty," i.e., empty-handed (Ex. 23:15).

D.“Worship Jehovah in holy array” (96:9).

1.The KJV renders this “in the beauty of holiness.”

2. As priests were to come before God only in holy attire (Ex. 28:40-43)

a. So must the nations clothe themselves in holiness if they would approach Jehovah.

b. This denotes all that lends solemnity to the worship of God.

c. “Worship the Lord with a sanctified spirit” (Harrison).

3. “Tremble before him” literally means to prostrate oneself as the Arabs still do.

a. “Before him” means “tremble before his face, or “from his face.”

(1). Before his holy countenance we melt with reverent fear and awe. a. “All the earth” is a metonymy for the inhabitants of the earth.

IV. Proclaim Jehovah’s Reign to All the World and Let All of Creation Rejoice Therein (96:10-13).

A. The message we must proclaim is, “Jehovah reigneth” (96:10).

B. We must maketh this good news known to nations of the world... all of them.

1. Jehovah reigneth not just over Israel, but over the whole human race.

C. An old Latin Manuscript renders vs. 10, “The Lord hath reigned from the tree” but no other available texts support this reading. It was a gloss added by some scribe.

D. The consequences of Jehovah’s reign (96:10b).

1. The world is established “that it cannot be moved.”

a. Thus he brings order and stability to society and personal lives.

2. “He will judge the peoples with equity”

a. That is, with utter fairness and impartiality (I Pet. 1:17).

E. Let all of creation rejoice before Jehovah and praise his reign (96:11-12).

1. The whole of creation is depicted as rejoicing at Messiah’s coming and reign.

2. The poet personifies the elements of creation, giving them minds and voices.

3. Paul says the whole creation is looking forward to the day when God makes all things new (Rom. 8:21).

F. “Before Jehovah; for he cometh”

1. Note how he attributes the name Jehovah to Messiah

2. This is entirely appropriate. Jesus claimed to be Jehovah, the I AM that appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Compare John 8:58 with Ex. 3:14-15)

G. Jehovah is coming “to judge the earth” (96:13b).

1. Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied this coming judgement (Jude 14).

2. The Father has appointed Jesus his Son to judge humanity (John 5:22; Acts 17:30-31).

2. The predominant aspect of his judgement will not be to punish or destroy but to govern, bless and save (John 12:47).

H. The nature of his judgement (96:13c).

1. He will judge “with righteousness.”

a. In a righteous manner and with pure justice.

b. He thus contrasts the faithfulness of Jehovah’s judgements with those of human judges.

2. He will judge “the peoples with his truth” i.e., in faithfulness (Kirkpatrick).

Lessons to Remember:

1. Every day’s blessing should bring forth a new song of praise from our hearts.

2. To worship God acceptably, we should come before Him to give rather than to get.

3. Anytime we approach our Holy God, we should be in holy array, i.e. with a holy life and heart.

4. No apology is to be made when we teach people to bring their offerings for God when they assemble (vs. 8).

4. It is the mission of every Christian to teach to his neighbor that “Jehovah reigneth.”

5. All of us who are Gentiles should especially love and cherish such Scriptures as this psalm which foretold of Jehovah’s plan for our salvation and acceptance before him.

Psalm 97

A Hymn Celebrating Jehovah’s Righteous Reign

Intro: This anonymous song is part of a collection of hymns (95-100), written to celebrate the return of the Jews from Babylonian Captivity and the dedication of the rebuilt temple (516 BC). The Septuagint attaches the notation, "When the house was being built after the Captivity." "Jehovah reigneth is the watch word of the Psalms." The writer of this hymn borrows many of his phrases from earlier Scripture.

I. Jehovah's Reign Declared and Described (97:1-3).

A. It is a cause for celebration (97:1).

1. "Earth" is a metonymy for the people who inhabit it.
2. "Isles" refers to the islands and coastal lands of the Mediterranean world.

B. A glimpse of God upon his throne (97:2).

1. Clouds and darkness speak of the awesome majesty of the scene.
2. This imagery is borrowed from Deut. 5:2.

C. "A fire goeth before him," as an advanced guard cleansing the way of enemies (97:3).

1. Heb. 12:29.

II. The Effect of His Reign on the Earth (97:4-6).

A. His lightenings are seen in every place (97:4a).

B. The earth trembles as when an earthquake strikes (97:4b).

C. Mountains melt like wax, as molten lava from a volcano (97:5).

1. Mountains might refer to great kingdoms (See Isaiah 2:2).
2. He is "Lord of the whole earth." This reminded the Hebrews that then God is more than and better than the local tribal gods then neighbors served.

D. All of the above remind us of God's appearance at Sinai (Ex. 19:16,18; Deut. 4:11).

E. His grandeur and glory was manifested when he overthrew Babylon and returned Israel to their homeland.

III. The Impact Of God's Reign Upon Saints and Sinners (97:7-9).

A. Idolaters will be put to shame (97:7a).

1. They will be confounded, disappointed and defeated.

B. The "gods" will be forced to worship Jehovah (97:7b).

1. The word "gods" is used to refer to angels (Ps. 138:1). The Septuagint so renders it in this place. 2. It is ap
3. Here it seems to be spoken sarcastically of heathen deities.

C. Zion will hear of God's judgments and rejoice (97:8)

1. Zion, i.e., Jerusalem, stands for her citizens.
2. "Daughters of Zion" refers to surrounding villages and smaller cities with their inhabitants.

D. Jehovah is supreme above all of his creation (97:9a).

IV. An exhortation to the righteous (97:10-12)

A. To the righteous he says, we must love Jehovah and hate evil (97:10a).

1. Notice that love of God and hatred of evil go hand-in-hand.
2. To be like God means to hate, despise evil (Ps. 45:7)
3. "The righteous look for him in holy abhorrence and faithfulness of heart" (Perowne).

B. Never forget, always believe, that God will preserve and deliver his saints.

C. Light is sown for the righteous (97:11a).

1. His gifts include happy, sunlit days, and the light of His Word.

D. "Be glad in Jehovah" (97:12a).

1. The Christian who finds no occasion of joy in life has a serious flaw in the faith.
2. Rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4).

E. "Give thanks to his memorial name" (97:12b).

1. Literally, "the memorial of his holiness."
2. His name brings to remembrance all He is and has ever done.
3. "Jehovah...this is my memorial unto all generations" (Ex. 3:15).

Lessons to Remember

1. Never forget that Jehovah reigneth and what that means for us.

2. The reign of Jehovah is an occasion of terror to the wicked. But one of joy and consolation to the righteous.
3. The effect of God's righteousness depends upon the heart and attitude of those before him.
4. Godliness and gladness go together as do love of the Lord and hatred of evil.
5. Lucian, thee Roman Philosopher, wrote, "My business is to hate the bad and to love and commend the good.
6. Hate evil: evil working, evil writing, evil speaking, evil thinking, evil teaching. Renounce evil.
7. Always honor and reverence the holy name of Jehovah.

Psalm 98

A Call For Joyful Praise To Jehovah

Intro: The author of this psalm is not identified. It is a theocratic psalm in that it praises Jehovah for his righteous acts in behalf of his people. Its principle subject is the praise of Jehovah. It is called a ***mizmor*** which is translated a psalm. The root from which the word derives means "to make music." It is the only psalm where this term stands alone. The Talmud calls it "The Orphan Mizmor." This psalm is very similar to 96 and much of its content is similar to the words of Isaiah chapters 40-66. Psalm 97 emphasizes the Lord's righteous judgments while Psalm 98 emphasizes his mercy and salvation. This psalm stresses the universal aspects of Jehovah's reign. It is a revelation of the final victory of God when his salvation and righteousness would be revealed; first as promised to Israel, and then to all the nations of the earth. The author first speaks to the Hebrews, but in his extended view he speaks of the redemption of the world by Jesus and the promulgation of the gospel to all nations. "In the mouth of Christians (this is) a hymn of praise for the Redemption of the world" (Kirkpatrick). Richard Moulton calls it, "A Festal Anthem, celebrating the Kingship of the Lord" Thomas Chalmers describes it as, "A noble, spirit-stirring Psalm." After the long night of Catholic domination and its stultifying ritualism, the Protestant Reformation gave birth to Psalm singing by the lay-people. D'lsraeli observed that John Calvin of Geneva, was the first of the Protestant leaders to embrace this practice. "This infectious frenzy of Psalm-singing, rapidly propagated itself through Germany as well as France, and passed over to England." At the time of the Commonwealth (1653-58), "Psalms were now sung at Lord-Mayor's dinners and city feasts; soldiers sang them on their march and at parade; and few houses which had windows fronting the streets, but had their evening Psalms" (**D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature**).

Praise Jehovah for the Salvation of Israel (98:1-3).

A. A call to praise God in song (98: 1a).
1. He calls for a "new song," i.e., one that is not ordinary or common place.
a. Calls for a new song are also seen in Psalm 33:3; 96:1; 144:9 and 149:1.
b. New blessings call for new songs of thanksgiving and praise.

B. Reasons why Jehovah is to be so praised (98: lb-3b).
1. "He... hath wrought salvation to Israel"
a. "His right hand and his holy arm are expressions of God's power" (Purkiser).
b. God needed no help in saving his people. His own power was sufficient to deliver them from their enemies.
c. The salvation here mentioned is the salvation of the nation from her enemies who would have destroyed her.
2. "Jehovah hath made known his salvation."
a. The Hebrew denotes not only a publication and promulgation, but a clear and certain demonstration..." (Venema).
3. His deliverance of Israel was "openly showed in the sight of the nations," i.e., the Gentile neighbors, some of whom were enemies (98:2b).
a. There was no disputing that it was an act of Jehovah.

C. "He hath remembered his loving-kindness and his faithfulness toward ... Israel" (98:3 a).
1. Loving-kindness is another term for his mercy.
2. His faithfulness reminds us of his fidelity to his promises such as he made to Abraham regarding his offspring (Gen. 12:1-3).

D. “All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God” (98:3c).

1.Their Gentile neighbors were witnesses of God’s mercies and blessings on Israel.

2. His immediate topic is the deliverance of the Hebrew people from their afflictions. His further view is of the coming Messiah and the spiritual salvation He would provide for all nations.

3. He uses what scholars call the **“prophetic perfect tense.”** “So sure was the predicted event in the mind of the writer that it could be spoken of as having already happened.

4. Interestingly, most nations of the earth are filled with joy that salvation has been extended to them, but as a whole, the Jews are locked in unbelief, rejecting Jesus and the salvation offered through him.

II. The Manner in Which His Praise Should Be Expressed (98:4-6).

A. With joyful songs (98:4).

1.“Break forth and sing” The Hebrew verb means “to burst forth” into praise and song (Alexander). B. “With the harp and the voice of melody” (98:5).

1. The harp was the favorite instrument of the Hebrews for songs of worship.

2. The “voice of melody.” “With melodious song” (Berkeley).

C. With trumpets and cornets (98:6).

1. Trumpets used by the ancients were long straight horns.

a. Such instruments can be seen on the famous Arch of Titus erected in Rome to celebrate that general’s victory over the Jewish state.

2. Cornet refers to the shophar, or ram’s horn instrument used by the Hebrews.

3. The meaning of this section is, salute the Lord with joyful shouts, music, trumpet blasts and applause, such as would befit a victorious king.

D. Remember the Hebrews were authorized to use musical instruments in their worship .

1. Of Hezekiah it is said, “he set the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David...for the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets” (II Chron. 29:25).

2. We Christians are under the authority of Christ (Matt. 28:20). His New Testament no where authorizes such use of man-made instruments. He instructs us to sing and make the melody in our hearts (Eph. 5:19).

a. “Sing...spiritual songs, your voices making music in your hearts...” (Phillips).

b. “Making melody to the Lord with all your heart” (RSV).

3. The early church did not use instruments in worship.

“There can be no doubt that originally the music of the divine service was everywhere entirely of a vocal nature” (Emil Nauman, **The History of Music,** Vol. p. 177).

4. “But when they frequent their sacred assemblies, musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things from the Jews. Many who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the Apostle is far more pleasing to him” (John Calvin, founder of Presbyterian Churches).

5. “I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD nor SEEN.” (John Wesley, Methodist, in **Clarke’s Commentary**, Vol. 4, p. 684).

6. ’’...The church has accepted only singing on account of its ethical value: instruments were rejected...Therefore their use is unwise and consequently the Church refrains from music instruments...” (Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Roman Catholic).

7. Charles Spurgeon (the greatest Baptist preacher of the 19th century), refused to allow instruments to be used in the Metropolitan Tabernacle where he preached.

8. “So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up then souls to even animal devotion. But I presume to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cowbell in a concert” (Alexander Campbell, **Millennial Harbinger,** Series 4, Vol. 1, p. 581).

III. The Extent of the Praise Due Unto Jehovah (98:7-9).

A. “Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof” (98:7a).

1. The sea and its creatures are personified and urged to greet their Creator.

B. "The world, and they that dwell therein." All of humanity must praise Him.

C. Floods and hills, the inanimate earth and the elements, should great Him as well (98:8).

1. Again these inanimate objects are given attributes of personhood for emphasis.

2. "Let the floods clap their hands." Then as now clapping of hands was a token of delight and approval of an act or a person (H. Hammond).

D. The occasion of this great celebration (98:9).

1. For Jehovah "cometh to judge the earth."

a. Not just the Hebrews, but all inhabitants of the earth.

E. The manner of His judgment (98:9b).

1. "He will judge the world with righteousness"

2. He will judge the peoples "with equity," i.e., with rectitude and fairness.

a. the Hebrew words are plural, denoting the fulness and perfection of His judgement.

Lessons to Be Remembered:

A. Christian, take time to review your personal history and you will see that God "hath done marvelous things."

B. When we come to recognize the sovereignty of Jehovah, it will produce songs in our hearts. Even as sin and sorrow go hand in hand, so do God's sovereignty and songs of praise.

C. "Old songs become new when the heart sings them with new joy, born of new experience" (Scroggie).

D. No matter what befalls us in life, we must sing God's praise.

E. "The old man sings old songs; only the new man sings a new song" (Spurgeon).

F. The joy of our salvation should be evident to all in our daily life and in worship.

Psalm 99

A Hymn To The God Of Holiness

Intro: This is **a psalm of praise and instruction**, written by an anonymous author. It is classified as a theocratic psalm because it honors the reigning Jehovah. Notice that three times God's holiness is proclaimed (vs. 3, 5 & 9). The same triune praise is seen in Isaiah 6:3. This hint of Jehovah's triune nature was fully revealed only with the revelation of the New Testament. At Christ's baptism (Matt. 3:16-17); in his Great commission (Matt. 28:19) and in Revelation 4:1-5:7.

The covenant expression, "Lord," is used seven times by the author. The psalm has three stanzas, each ending with mention of God's holiness: "Holy is he," (vss. 3 & 5) and "Our God is holy" (vs.9). The **key phrase** is "O Jehovah our God" (vs. 8).

I. Jehovah is Holy in Power (99:1-3).

A. He is the sovereign of the universe (99:1a).

B. He reigns "between the cherubim" (99:1b).

1. In heaven the four cherubim surround his divine throne (Rev. 4:6-8).

2. In the Jewish temple, which was an earthly type of heaven, cherubim were positioned at each end of the mercy seat, atop the ark of the covenant. Between them the ***Shekinah***, the symbol of God's presence, glowed (Ex. 25:18-22).

C. The seat of his earthly reign is in Zion... in his holy temple.

D. His name is great and terrible (99:3).

1. Terrible here means awesome, majestic.

E. Worship at his footstool, means to bow at his feet.

F. For "Holy is he."

II. Jehovah is Holy in Justice (99:4-5).

A. He loves justice.

1. His divine plan and expectation is that there be equity, justice and righteous in Jacob, i.e., the land of Jacob's people, the Israelites.

B. It is the duty of all people to "Exalt Jehovah" in their hearts and lives.

C. All must worship at his footstool in humble submission. (Subjects of ancient kings were expect to bow before their king who sat with his feet on his footstool).
D. Because He is holy.

III. Jehovah is Holy in Mercy (99:6-9).

A. Great saints of the past interceded in prayer for God's people and He responded to their prayers:
1. Moses. (See Ex. 17:11 & Num. 14:13-19).
2. Aaron (See Num. 12: 46-50).
3. Samuel (See I Sam 7:8-9, 12:16-19).
4. Before the Captivity, even the prayers of Moses and Samuel could not have saved the Hebrews (Jer. 15:1).

B. God answered Moses and Aaron from the pillar of cloud (99:7).
1. This was the cloud that led them through the wilderness and came down upon the tabernacle (Ex. 14:19-20, Num. 12:5).

C. There were conditions for receiving Divine Mercy (99:7):
1. They kept His testimonies and statutes.
2. Then he forgave them (99:8).

D. Although He forgave them, still He punished their transgressions (99:8).
1"Thou didst make them pay for their evil practices" (Beckley).
2. While God freely pardons, "He must still vindicate his holiness, lest man should imagine that He makes light of sin."
a. Compare Exodus 34:7 and Numbers 14:20ff.
3. "Pardon does not stay the consequences of the sins pardoned" (G. Scroggie).
a. Remember David's sin, pardon and punishment (II Sam. 12:12-15).

IV. Conclusion: The Call to Worship Jehovah (99:9).

A. Exalt Jehovah our God.
B. Worship him at his appointed place, i.e., Jerusalem.
C. Because He is holy.

Lessons to Remember:

1. God reigns supreme, yesterday, today and forever.
2. God is holy and he expects us to be holy as is he (I Pet. 1:15).
3. Remember the great power for good of intercessory prayer (James 5:16).
4. There are definite condition to effectual prayer. We must have unwavering faith that God can and will hear and answer us (Matt. 21:22), and we must be willing to obey his statutes found in his Word (99:7).
5. All sin carries its unescapable penalties. Whatever you sow that will you also reap (Gal. 6:7). Forgiveness and salvation cannot help us avoid the earthly consequences of our evil deeds.

Psalm 100

A Song Of Thanks For The Thank Offering

Intro: This psalm stands as a doxology to the previous five Psalms. Written by an anonymous author, it appears to have been sung by the worshipers as they approached the temple with their thank offerings. Although one of the shortest of the psalms, it has always captured the admiration of all who ponder its words or sing its lyrics. "This psalm is ablaze with graceful adoration, and has for this reason been a great favorite with the people of God ever since it was written" ©. H. Spurgeon). "Among the psalms of triumph and thanksgiving, this (psalm) stands prominent...(in) joy and grandeur" (F. Delitzsch). It is both prophetic and missionary in content: It looks forward to the day when all lands (nations) will worship Jehovah. It is the mandate to God's people to make the conversion of the world their goal. Compare Isaiah 56:6-7, "Moreover, strangers will I bring to my holy mount." Two great themes pervade this song; gladness and universality. In the old hymnals, this song was called, "Old Hundredth." It was published in the earliest hymnals printed in London and Geneva. In the Psalter, published in 1560-61, it was adapted to our language and style of music by William Kethe of Scotland, who was forced to flee persecution in Scotland

and resort to Geneva. Again, Spurgeon wrote, "Nothing can be more sublime this side of heaven than the singing of this noble psalm by a vast congregation." It has been called, "David's mirror for rulers, or a mirror for magistrates." "Ernest the Pious, Duke of Saxe-Gotho, would send unfaithful ministers a copy of this Psalm to remind them of their duty. It became a proverbial saying that when a minister was guilty of misconduct, 'He will soon get the prince's Psalm to read." (Delitzsch). This lovely psalm was recited in Jewish synagogues every day except Sabbaths and Festivals. Notice the seven imperatives in this song: 1). Make a joyful noise; 2). Serve the Lord, 3) Come before his presence; 4). Enter into his gates; 5). Enter into his courts; 6). Be thankful; 7). Bless his name. Also he notes seven aspects of worship.

I. The Works of Jehovah (100:1-3).

A. Acceptable worship consists of:

1. Singing praises to God.
2. Serving him gladly.
3. Knowing who He is and what He has done for us.
    a. Knowledge is the mother of true Christian worship. Worship without knowledge is only superstition.
    b. We must know God, not only as a Supreme Being, but as our Creator and Shepherd. He must be our personal God.

B. "All ye lands." Yet it was more than 500 years before this universal scope off the divine religion was fully grasped by God's people. Even then it took heavenly intervention to make the point clear and acceptable to the disciples.

II. The Worship of Jehovah (100:4-5).

A. Enter into the gates and courts of His temple (100:4)

1. It is a serious mistake to think that you can stand outside the church and receive the benefits of membership within its holy confines.

B. God's expectation of those who come before him for worship (100:4).

1. Come before God with thanksgiving
2. And praise.
3. Bless his holy name.

C. Reasons that demand our grateful worship of Jehovah (100:5).

1. He wants us to recognize not only his greatness and power as creator, but that He is good.
2. His loving-kindness or mercy is age lasting,
3. His faithfulness is available to all generations.

Lessons to Remember:

1. You may not be a well-trained and gifted singer, but you can make a joyful noise to the Lord.
2. Never forget that worship is to be a time and experience of joy and gladness.
3. Without thanksgiving, our worship and prayers are defective.
4. Think often about God's goodness, mercy and faithfulness. It will make you want to be good, merciful and faithful in your Christian profession.

Psalm 101

A Song Of Pious Resolutions

Intro: This lovely song was penned by King David. The occasion seems to have been when he was first installed as king of Israel. Some think it was when the ark of God was carried up to Jerusalem from its resting place at the house of Obed-Edom (II Sam. 6:12-19). The author promises God to remove all baseness from his own heart, and to expel all wrong-doers from his presence, that he may be worthy to receive Jehovah as his guest" (A. F. Kirkpatrick). This has been called a psalm of "wills and shalls" for nine times he mentions "will" and five times "shall" involving promises to God. It is interesting to note the progression of resolution in the psalm. He speaks of my self, my house, my government, my city, my land. Some have called this the "householders psalm." Others have called it "King David's mirror for magistrates." When Sir George Villiers became the Prime Minister of England, under King

James, he was advised to take this psalm for his rule in selecting his cabinet and advisors. The Hebrew recited this psalm daily in their ancient synagogues.

I. The King's Resolutions For Himself (101:1-4).

A. Since he had received mercy and justice from God, he will extend the same to those over whom he reigns (101:1).

B. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way (101:2).

1. Every soul should make this his daily goal.

2. "In a perfect way" is from the Hebrew, *tammin,* which means without blemish.

3. Note that he proposes to walk in his house with a perfect heart. This could refer to his private home or to his government.

4. "When wilt thou come unto me?" Most likely this refers to his longing to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem to reside again in the tabernacle (II Sam. 6:9).

C. I will tolerate no base thing in my presence (101:3a).

1. I will set no idol or evil thing before mine eyes.

E. I will reject those who "turn aside." This refers to apostates who turn aside from God's way (101:3b).

F. I will reject a perverse or froward heart (101:4a).

G. I will not acknowledge or accept evil things or men (101:4b).

II. The Kings Resolutions For His Court (101:5-8).

(Here he resolves that in choosing his courtiers he will be diligent to select only righteous servants, rejecting all who are wicked).

A. I will destroy the slanderers (101:5a).

B. The proud will I not tolerate (101:5b).

C. I will seek out faithful (blameless) men to serve me (101:6).

D. Deceivers shall have no part in my government (101:7).

E. The wicked I will root out of my land (101:8a).

F. Workers of iniquity will be driven from my capital of Jerusalem (101:8b).

Lessons to Remember:

1. We can never be true worshipers and servants of Jehovah unless we also practice mercy and justice.
2. My it ever be our resolve to live blamelessly before the Lord.
3. The mature Christian will always behave himself wisely according to God's directions.
4. Wickedness must be daily weeded out of our lives, our homes and our business lives.
5. Remember that evil companions corrupt good morals (I Cor. 15:33). We should disassociate ourselves from those who prefer the paths of sin.
6. May God hasten the day when our nation will have rulers who think like the author of this psalm.

Psalm 102

A Lament Of A Patriot For His Nation

Intro: The author of this psalm is unknown. Internal evidence suggests it was written by a heart-sick Hebrew captive in Babylon (606-536 BC). He speaks of Zion being a rubble of dust and stones (vs. 13-14). He pleads for God to have pity on her (vs. 13). The time of her rest is not yet come (vs. 3). He looks forward to a future day when the sighing prisoners shall be freed (vs20) and they shall once again praise God's name in Jerusalem (vs.21). The psalm is the prayer of an unhappy soul who is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the Eternal God, "not in a spirit of rebellion, but of strong confidence in the covenant Lord" (G. Scroggie). "The poet is one into whose heart the sorrows of the nation have entered so deeply that he feels them as his own" (Kirkpatrick). "In mournful strains he describes his bitter lot. Sorrow and pain had been very busy with him. His heart was smitten within him...He was alone, with no friend to comfort him...his life was drawing to a close under the heavy wrath of God. But when he has time to look away from his sorrow, a prospect so bright and so glorious opens before him that in the thought of it, all else is swallowed up and forgotten" (J. J. S. Perowne).

I. Prologue: His Petition For A Hearing (102:1-2).

A. “Hear my prayer and my cry...”

II. His Complaint (102:3-11).

A. His condition described (102:3-11).

1. His health is shattered (102:3-5).

a. He was burning with fever (102:3b).

b. He was emaciated (102:5).

2. He was alone (102:6-7).

a. Like a solitary bird in the wilderness.

3. He was constantly reproached by his enemies (102:8).

4. He was filled with mourning (102:9).

5. He felt his end was near (102:11).

III. The Consolation He Found In Contemplating God’s Mercy And Greatness (102:12-22).

A. His God was everlasting (102:12).

1. The author himself might perish but the eternal Jehovah would one day restore Zion.

B. God would have mercy on his people (102:13-14).

1. “The set time” likely refers to the end of the seventy years of desolation prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 29:10 & Dan. 9:2).

C. He pleads for God to have pity on the ruined city (Jerusalem) for the sake of his servants, the Hebrews (102:14).

1. If God will do so, the Gentiles will be forced to fear and honor his holy name (102:15).

D. In his mind, he foresees the day when God will restore his people and rebuild Zion (102:16-22).

1. He would appear in glory as He did when He delivered Israel from Egypt.

2. He will hear and answer the prayers for his captive children as he did in Egypt.

3. It will be a new birth of freedom for his people (102:18).

4. The captives will be freed and allowed to go home (102:20).

5. They will once more worship and praise him in Zion (102:21-22).

IV. The Epilogue (102:23-28).

A. He prays that God will spare his life that he might see the day of deliverance (102:23- 24).

B. He reminds himself of God’s etemality (102:25-27).

1. The creation may perish but God will live on to accomplish his will.

a. Verses 25-27 are quoted by the author of Hebrews and applied to Christ (Heb. 1:10-12).

C. With his faith renewed, he believes that his people will survive their ordeal and future generations shall stand before God in the Holy Land (102:28).

Lessons to Remember:

1. When we are flat on our backs, we are forced to look up to God as the only one who can help and save us.

2. With God as our Father, Jesus as our friend and the Spirit as guest in our hearts, we will never be totally alone.

3. Kingdoms rise and fall and great and powerful people all eventually die, but God abides forever.

4. We should find great consolation in the fact that God does hear the prayers of his children even when they are in the most difficult circumstances.

5. We must be concerned for the kingdom of God, not just today, but that it may survive and prosper in the days of our children and grandchildren (102:28).

Psalm 103

A Song Of Love And Adoration For God

Intro: This lovely song is attributed to David, king of Israel. It is "one of the noblest hymns in the Old Testament" (McCullough). "The Psalm is one of singular beauty. It's tenderness, its truthfulness, its hopefulness anticipate the spirit of the New Testament. It does not contain one jarring note..." (A. F. Kirkpatrick). "The psalmist touches every chord of his harp and his heart together and pours forth a spontaneous melody of sweetest sound and purest praise" (John Stevenson). It is one of those all-comprehending Scriptures which is a Bible in itself, and it might alone almost suffice for the hymn book of the church" (C. H. Spurgeon). It is totally composed of praise; no petition or request is found in its lines. He praises God for his mercy in forgiving sins (vss. 3,12), and his tender paternal care for his children (vs. 13). It both opens and closes with the expression,''Bless Jehovah, O my soul." In old Scotland, the saints often sang this hymn in preparation for the Lord's Supper. James Renwick, the last of many martyrs of the Scottish Covenanters church, sang verses from this hymn as he was led to execution in Edinburg's Grassmarket for rebuking the sins of King James II (He died Feb. 17, 1688). The **key** verse is 18 which tells us that God's blessings are bestowed on those that "keep his covenant" and remember to do his precepts.

I. He Exhorts Himself To Praise Jehovah (103:1-2).

A. Bless Jehovah O my soul (101:1a).

1. "Soul music is the very soul of music," but not what is commonly called "soul music."

B. Bless Jehovah with all that is within me (103:1).

1. Literally, "my insides, or my inward parts."

II. He Recites Reasons Why We Should Praise Jehovah (103:3-18).

A. He forgives all of our iniquities (103:3a).

B. He heals all our diseases (103:3b).

1. Compare Exodus 15:26, "I am Jehovah that healeth thee."

C. He redeems us from destruction (103:4a).

D. He crowns us with loving-kindness and tender mercy (103:4b).

E. He satisfies us with good things, i.e., food and provisions (103:5a).

F. He renews our lives and spirits like the eagle (103:5b).

1. The eagle is one of the strongest, fastest, highest flying and longest lived birds.

G. He executes righteousness and judgements for the oppressed (103:6a).

H. He has given us the Holy Scriptures through Moses and others (103:7).

I. He is merciful and gracious (103:8a)

J. He is slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness (103:8b).

K. He does not stay angry forever (103:9).

L. He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve (103:10-11).

M. He has forgiven our transgressions (103:12).

N. He has loved and pitied us like a kind father (103:13).

O. He is aware and considerate of our human weaknesses (103:-16).

P. His mercy is inexhaustible and unending (103: 17).

Q. His blessings are showered upon those who keep his covenant and his precepts (103:18).

III. A Concluding Charge to Bless Jehovah (103:19-22).

A. From his throne in heaven, Jehovah reigns over all (103:19).

B. Angels must bless and obey him (103:20).

C. All of his (hosts) ministers must bless and obey him (103:21).

1. Some take "his hosts" to mean the heavenly bodies (Ps. 19:1).

2.I think it refers to those priests and prophets who taught and led his people in worship.

D. All of his works, i.e., the creation, must bless him (103:22a).

E. Each of us must do the same (103: 22b).

Lessons to Remember:

1. While there is a time to make our requests to God, there is a time for pure praise.

2. Never forget all that God has done for you. Make a list and write them down.

3. Remember that God does not operate by our clocks and calendars, nor does he work according to our scale.

4. Be grateful that God who is the judge and executioner of the wicked is the executor and benefactor of the righteous.
5. Remember to thank God for what he does not do as well as for what he does do.

Psalm 104

Praise God For His Marvelous Creation

Intro: The Hebrew text assigns no author to this psalm, but the Septuagint attributes it to David. Many consider it a companion to Psalm 103 which praises God for delivering Israel while this praises him for His creative power. It was obviously written by an observant lover of nature. The writer of this song lived in "a universe aglow with God." Students have been impressed with the beauty of this hymn. Graham Scroggie called it, "The most beautiful ode to creation... ever written." Weiser called it "one of the most beautiful psalms in the Psalter." It is a poetical commentary on the creation story of Genesis chapter one (McCaw). We have here "one of the loftiest and longest sustained flights of the inspired muse" (C. H. Spurgeon). We must understand the writer's descriptions as poetic. To try to force unimaginative literalness on them is to ruin and misunderstand them.

Prologue: "Bless Jehovah, O my soul" (104:1a).

I. The Power and Majesty of God Revealed in Nature (104:1b-4).

(Note: This parallels Moses' description of creation of the earth Genesis 1:3-8).
A. The sheer greatness of God fills him with awe and adoration (104:1b).
B. God clothes himself with blinding light (104:2a).
1. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5).
2. God dwelleth in light unapproachable and no man hath seen him (I Tim. 6:16).
3. Light both reveals and conceals things about God.
C. He stretched out the heavens like a tent (104:2b).
1. As simply and easily as we would pitch a tent, God created the heavens.
D. He made his dwelling place above the upper waters, i.e., those above the earth (104:3).
1. He laid his beams, i.e., the foundations of his palace.
2. "Chambers" literally means, "upper room."
a. Compare Amos 9:6, "who builds his upper chamber in the heavens."
3. Middle eastern homes had an upper room for devotion and rest.
E. He is a God who is living and active, not like idols of wood or stone.
1. His chariot is the stormy clouds.
2.The winds are his winged horses.
3. Psalm 18:10, "He soared upon the wings of the wind."
4. Isaiah 19:1 "Behold the Lord is riding upon a swift cloud."
F. Wind and lightening are his messengers to carry out his will (104:4),

II. God's Power is Seen in the Creation of Land and Sea (104:5-9).

(This reflects the events of Genesis 1:9-12).
A. The earth was without form, a void covered with water and darkness (Gen. 1:2).
B. Then God caused the dry land to appear by the power of his spoken word (Gen. 1:6-9).
C. He put boundaries to contain the sea (104:9).
1. God had to tame and control the great waters before the earth could be suitable for habitation.
2. Compare Job 38:8-11 and Jeremiah 5:22.
3. For that we should praise him.

III. God's Power is Seen in the Provision Made for Men, Beasts and Birds (104:10-18).

(This is relates to Gen. 1:11-13).
A. He provides springs so that man and beast can have fresh water to drink (104:10).
B. He provides rain for vegetation (104:13-14).
1. "Herbs for the service of man" is rendered "fodder for the animals that serve man."

C. He provides grain, wine and oil for man (104:14b-15).
1. These were the primary crops of Palestine.
2. Grain for bread was an essential food for survival.
3. Oil and wine were luxuries God provided.
4. Oil was used to anoint the head and refresh the skin from the hot burning sun; hence it made the face to shine.

D. He provides trees in which the birds can make their homes (104:17).

E. The high mountains are home to wild goats and conies (104:18).
1. Conies are rock badgers.
2. Note that every aspect of God's creation is useful for something. Nothing is wasted or useless.
3. We see God's providential concern for the lower creatures.

IV. The Creation and Design of the Moon and Sun Praise Him (104:19-24).

(This corresponds to Gen. 1:14-31).

A. The moon helps us know and predict the annual seasons.
1. Man's earliest clock was the sun, the moon his earliest calender.

B. Even the night has its usefulness (104:20).
1. In it we rest.
2. In it the predator beasts hunt their food.
3. Note that even the dreaded predators look to God as their provider.

C. "O Jehovah, how manifold are thy works; In wisdom hast Thou made them all; The earth is full of thy riches" (104:24). This verse provides the key to this psalm!

V. Consider the Great Seas (104:25-26).

A. The sea was awesome and terrifying to the Hebrews (104:25).

B. God filled the seas with living creatures and made them a highway for man's ships.

C. Leviathan, the monster of the deep, is God's play thing (104:26) (Jerusalem Bible).

VI. All Things Depend on God's Providential Care and Provision (104:27-30).

A. He gives them food for life.

B. He takes their life away when it pleases Him.

C. By His Spirit he creates and renews all things.

VII. We Should Glorify God in Prayer and in Praise (104: 31-35).

A. Let the righteous praise God as long as they live.

B. Let the wicked, who do not honor God, be destroyed from off the earth.

Conclusion: "Hallelujah, Praise ye Jehovah." This is the first use of hallelujah in the Psalms.

Lessons to Remember:

1. Whenever you look at the creation you should always see God's everlasting power and divinity (Rom. 1:20).
2. If God so cares for the beasts and birds, will he not care all the more for you (Matt.6:30).
3. Never forget the absolute dependance of the creation (including you) upon the Creator.
4. Remember that God's creative work is ongoing. God is ever working, even today, supervising and providing for his creation.
5. Remember how God turned the forces of destruction into instruments of mercy.
6. The world and its provisions are not only for man, but for the other creatures as well.
7. Our thoughts of God's mercy must not blur our awareness of his might.
8. Always remember the proper relationship of the Creator and his world: He is transcendent yet always involved.

Psalm 105

In Praise of God' Wonderful Works on Behalf of Israel

Intro: No name is affixed to this psalm but the first 15 verses are recorded in I Chronicles 16:8-22 where they are attributed to David. There the occasion was the bringing the ark of God to Jerusalem. Psalm 106 compliments 105. Psalm 105 praises God's faithfulness to Israel, while 106 stresses Israel's failure to be faithful to God. The first of these reminded the Hebrews how God had treated them, the second how they had treated God. The first reminded them of God's grace, the second of their disgrace. We classify this as an historical psalm since it recounts the history of God's care and provision for Israel. The author traces the nation's history from Abraham to their settlement in Canaan, a period of some 500 years. With these two historical psalms the fourth book of the Psalter closes. This is a song of thanksgiving. The **key** word is "He," used some 21 times, which refers to Jehovah. The **key** thought is God's perpetual activity on behalf of his chosen people. This is the first of several psalms (105, 106,107, 108, 136) that begin with the common expression "O give thanks unto the Lord." Some believe that 105 and 106 were composed while the Hebrews were in captivity to give them hope of God's deliverance.

I. An Exhortation to Praise God for His Covenant (105:1-7).

A. A call to worship Jehovah (105:1-4).

1. Note the ingredients of true worship: give thanks; call upon his name; tell others of his doings; sing unto Him; glory in his holy name; rejoice from the heart.
2. Seek Jehovah and his strength: i.e., make Him and his strength your own.

B. Remember and reflect on God's marvelous works in the past (105:5-7).

1. We (Hebrews) are His chosen ones.
    a. Today Christians are His chosen ones, in Christ (Eph. 1:3-4).
2. He is Jehovah our God.
3. He rules over and judges all the earth.

II. Praise Is Due To God for His Mercies to Israel (105:8-45).

A. For His goodness to the patriarchal fathers of Israel (105:8-15).

1. This looks back to the events of Genesis 12-36.
2. He made a covenant with Abraham (105:9a).
3. He extended, that agreement unto Isaac (105:9b).
4. He confirmed the same unto Jacob (105:10).
5. He promised them the land of Canaan for an inheritance (105:11).
    a. The land promise was fulfilled, "Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein" (Josh. 21:43).
    b. The covenant with Abraham was fulfilled in Christ and today all Christians, whether Jew or Greek by race, are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:27-29).
6. He shielded and protected them from their enemies (105:15-15).

B. For His Providential Care of Joseph (105:16-22).

1. Compare Gen. 37:39-47.
2. God sent the famine on Canaan (105:16).
3. He sent Joseph ahead to Egypt to be their protector and provider (105:17).
    4. Although he was mistreated, God arranged for Joseph to be exalted in Egypt.

C. For His Care For His People Israel During Their Stay In Egypt (105 :23-25).

1. There He multiplied them and made them a mighty nation.

D. For Sending Moses and Aaron to Deliver Israel From Egyptian Bondage (103:26-36).

1. By Moses He wrought signs and wonders in Egypt, declaring His power (103:27-28).
2. He sent plagues of judgement upon the Egyptians (105:29-36).
    a. He does not list the plagues in chronological order.
    b. The plagues proved the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of the Egyptians.

E. He Safely Led Them Through the Long Years in the Wilderness (105:37-43).

1. The Hebrews were given the treasures of the Egyptians, thus rewarded for all their years of unpaid labor (105:37).
2. They marched out like a victorious army, not a feeble one among them (105:37).
3. God sheltered them from the burning desert sun with his cloud (105:39).

F. He Gave Them the Land of Promise (105:44-45).

Conclusion: "Hallelujah" which means, "Praise ye Jehovah" (105:45b). **Jah** is one of the names ascribed to our God.

Lessons to Remember:

1. Their God and ours is Jehovah-jireh, the God who provides.
2. With our God, nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37).
3. If God did all of those mighty deeds for Israel, think what He can do for you today.
4. Those who receive God's gifts are beholden to give proper thanks unto Him.
5. Take time to reflect on the way God has worked in your life, as He did in Joseph's.
6. Every day of our lives, in all that we say and do, let us give praise to Jehovah.

Psalm 106

A Hymn Confessing National Shame

Intro: This anonymous song brings to a close the fourth book of the Psalms. It too is an historical psalm. Psalms 105 and 106 are thought to be companion songs. The previous psalm (105), was one of thanksgiving, this is one of penitence and confession. Psalm 105 told how God had treated Israel, this one tells how Israel had treated God. It tells us the history of Israel was one long record of failure to trust and obey God. It is noteworthy that in this and other historical psalms, there is a complete absence of words or thoughts that would encourage national vanity. All the glory in Israel's history is given to God, not to their religious, military or political leaders. The **key thought** of the psalm is the enduring mercy of God even in the face of Israel's continual apostasy into sin and unbelief. The **key verses** are"Give thanks unto Jehovah for he is good. For his loving-kindness endureth forever" (vs. 1) and "We have sinned with our fathers. .." (vs. 6). Verse 47 implies that this hymn was composed during the Babylonian Captivity (606-536 B.C.). This is the first of the Hallelujah Psalms wherein the opening phrase is "Hallelujah" which is translated, "Praise ye the Jehovah." Compare 106-1 13, 117, 135, 146-150. This psalm is a confession of the faithlessness and ingratitude which had marked every step of Israel's past. The confession precedes a prayer for the restoration of the nation to her homeland. The greater part of the song is devoted to recounting the nation's sins during the years of their Wilderness wandering

I. His Exhortation and Prayer (106:1-5).

A. His call to praise Jehovah (106: 1 a).
B. Reasons why men should praise God (106: 1 b)
   1. For He is good and his loving-kindness endureth forever (106:1b).
   2. His mighty deeds are greater than we know or can recite (106:2).
   3. He rewards those who practice justice and righteousness (106:3).
C. His prayer for God's favor (106:4-5).
   1. He pleads for the deliverance of the nation from their captors (106:4b-5).

II. He Confesses the Nation's Sins, Beginning With Those of the Exodus (106:6-33).

A. They were rebellious against God at the Red Sea (106:7-12).
   1. Read of this, in Exodus 14:10-12.
   2. Yet he opened the sea and saved them from their enemy
B. Even so they were unbelieving and impatient, tempting God (106:13-15).
   1. This is recorded in Exodus 32 and Deuteronomy 9: 8-29.
C. They were jealous of the authority God vested in Moses and Aaron (106: 16- I8).
   1. This is found in Numbers 16.
   2. For this the rebels were punished with fire.
D. They made the golden calf and turned to idolatry (106:19-23).
   1. This is told in Exodus 32 and Deuteronomy 9:8-29.
   2. Only the intercession of Moses saved them from destruction.
E. They rebelled at Kadesh-barnea and refused to enter the promised land (106:24-27).
   1. Consult Numbers 13:1-14: 45.
   2.They did not believe God, they murmured against Him and refused to obey.
   3 For that they were sentenced to spend forty years in the wilderness (Num. 14:22-23, 28-29, 34).
F. At Baal-peor, they again reverted to idolatry and provoked God (106:28-31).

1. You may read of this in Numbers 25:1-18.
2. God sent a plague among them to punish them.

G At Meribah, they again rebelled and angered God (106 32-33).

1. See Numbers 20:1-13.
2. This provoked Moses to act rashly and lose his earthly reward in Canaan (Num. 20.2-13).

III. When Finally in Canaan, They Still Were Disobedient (106:34-42).

A. They refused to destroy the Canaanites (106:34-39).

1. See Deuteronomy 20:16-18; Joshua 17:13.
2. They intermarried with the idolaters.
3. They learn their sinful ways.
4. They served their idols.
5. They even sacrificed their own children to demonic gods.
   a. Note that all idolatry is in fact demon worship, no matter had old, how elaborate, how artistically beautiful or how refined.
   b. The sacrifice of their children caused their land to be polluted with blood. What do you think the blood of 54 million aborted babies has done to our land?

B. Consequently God abhorred them and delivered them unto their enemies (106:40-42).

IV. Yet in All of Their Failures, God was Merciful in Judgement and Gave Them Relief (106:43-46).

A. He remembered his covenant with their fathers and spared them.
B. Even this they did not appreciate

V. His Closing Prayer For Deliverance (106:47).

Doxology Which Closes the Fourth Book of the Psalter (106:48).

Lesson to Remember:

1. Consider the suffering and loss sin has cost Israel and other individuals and nations of the world The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).
2. There has never been but one solution to the problem of sin; repentance and obedience, whether it be an individual or a nation. Always remember and be grateful for the wonderful grace of God which causes Him to spare us when justice would demand our destruction.
3. In our congregational worship, we should be reminded of the final thought of this psalm “Let all the people say amen. Praise ye Jehovah” (106:48c).
5. Confession is good for the soul.
6. God is good (106:1)

BOOK V

Psalm 107

A Call To Thanksgiving

Intro: This psalm is the first of the fifth volume of the Psalter. The final division has the largest number of psalms and those contained therein are generally greater in length than others. Few of these psalms have titles, except for authorship or dedication. There seems to be a link between Psalms 104, 105, 106 and 107. In 104 we have a narrative of Creation, 105 gives a history of the Patriarchs; 106 is the story of Israel in the Land of Promise until the Babylonian Captivity; 107 speaks of the Return of the Exiles from Babylon. The writer celebrates the restoration of the Hebrews from Babylonian Captivity and calls upon those delivered to praise God for their blessings.

More than any other psalmist, this author expresses his belief in God's intervention in the affairs of men in response to the prayers of his children. A refrain is seen in verses 8, 15, 21 and 31.

Prologue: (107:1-3).

A. An exhortation to the redeemed of Israel to praise God (107:1-2a).

B. For their deliverance from captivity and restoration to their homeland. (107:2b-3).

I. Praise God For His Goodness in Saving His People From Their Afflictions (107:4-32).

(The four examples of deliverance used by the author may possibility be figurative descriptions of the Hebrews in their Captivity).

A. He saved famished pilgrims from death in the wilderness (107:4-9).

1. They were near death.
2. They called upon the Lord for mercy
3. He heard their prayers and delivered them.
4. Refrain: "Praise Jehovah for his loving-kindness" (107:8).

B. He saved those who were imprisoned, setting them free (107:10-16).

1. They were being punished for their rebellion against God.
2. When their rebellious spirits were broken, they prayed unto God and he saved them.
3. Refrain: For that they should praise Him (107:15).

C. He saved those who were sick, by healing them (107:17-22).

1. They suffered because of their foolish sins.
2. They were nigh unto death.
3. They called upon Him, He heard their prayers and healed them.
4. Refrain: They should praise Him for their healing (107:21).

D. He Saved mariners from the stormy seas (107:23-32).

1. Hebrews were not a sea-faring people. They relied upon the Phoenicians and the Philistines to take care of their shipping needs. They feared sea travel and avoided it as much as possible.
2. The author vividly pictures their small ships tossed about in a stormy sea.
3. When the sailors cry to God for mercy, he hears and answers them (107:28-30).
    a. "Let him that knows not how to pray go to sea" (Basque Proverb).
4. Refrain: They too should praise God for his deliverance (107:31).

II. God Should Be Praised For His Righteous Governance of the World (107:33-41).

A. He can punish wicked nations by turning their fruitful lands into barren deserts (107:33-35).

B. He can reward the righteous by making the barren land fruitful for them (107:36-38).

C. He can take away their prosperity if they forsake Him (107:39-41).

Conclusion: The application the righteous will make of these truths (107:42-43).

A. They will see it and be glad.

B. Iniquity will be put away.

C. They will give heed to God's lessons.

D. They will consider God's loving-kindness.

Lessons to Remember:

1. If you are redeemed, don't keep it hidden. Say so!
2. Let every man and woman who has experienced God's special blessings and deliverance say so and all the world will resound with His praise.
3. Be forever thankful that God hears and answers prayers.
4. There is no situation too difficult for God to rescue us from it
5. No might of man can stand against the power of God.
6. "The Word of God belongs to those who obey it" (Augustine).

Psalm 108

A Song Praising God and Pleading for Victory in Battle

Intro. This hymn is attributed to David. It is a composite of Psalms 57 and 60. It appears to be a song prepared to be sung in anticipation of an attack upon the Edomite fortress of Petra. Thus it would be categorized as a battle hymn. The Mesoretic scribes inscribed it as "A Song, a Psalm of David." As noted earlier that statement meant the psalm was to be sung with instruments.

I. His Resolve to Praise and Adore God (108:1-6).

A. This is borrowed from Psalm 57:7-11.

1. He was resolute in his commitment to praise God (108:1).
2. "I will sing praises...with **my glory"** refers to the musical gift God had bestowed upon him.
3. "I will awake right early" (wake the dawn, ft. note), means rather than be awaken by the dawn, he would wake the dawn with his songs of praise.

B. His praise would reach beyond the Hebrews to Gentiles (nations) (108:3).

C. "Thy beloved" is God holy people, Israel (108:6).

II. He Appeals For Divine Help Against Enemies (108:7-13).

A. This section is taken from Psalm 60:5-12.

B. He recalls God's promises to their fathers (108:7-9).

1. To give the land of Canaan to the Hebrews (108:7-8).

C. God is represented as speaking.

1.He is presented as a conquering king, portioning out the conquered land to his people.
2. Shechem stands for the land west of Jordan.
3. Succoth stands for the land east of Jordan.
4. Manasseh, in Gilead represents the tribes east of Jordan.
5. Ephraim and Judah, for those west of Jordan.

D. Ephraim is assigned the responsibility of protecting his land (108:8b).

E. Judah is assigned to administer the government of his people (108:c).

F. Hostile Gentile neighbors will be made Israel's vassals (108:9).

1. "Moab is my washpot" (108:9).
   a. A vessel for washing feet. The vessel stands for the servant that used the vessel to wash his master's feet. (Compare I Samuel 25:41).
2. "Upon Edom will I cast my shoe." Refers to an Oriental custom of casting a shoe upon land that is to taken into one's possession.
   a. David's army had defeated Edom under his general Joab in a battle in the Valley of Salt (I Kings 11:15-16).
3. "Over Philistia will I shout" in victory.

G. His confidence that God will give them victory over the Edomites (108:10-13).

1. He declares his faith that God will bring him into the fortified city (108:10).
   a. This refers to Petra (Sela), the fortress capital of Edom.
   b. It was situated in a box canyon approached by one narrow defile. Its walls towered 300 ft. in the air. Its approach corridor was as narrow as 12 feet in some places.
2. Evidently they had failed in an earlier battle with the Edomites (108:11).
3. Only God can give them the victory they need.
4. He is utterly confident that God will bless them with triumph (108:13).

Lessons to Remember:

1. We too need to be resolute in our determination to worship and praise God.
2. In quiet hours, when we are not distracted by business or others, is a good time for private devotions.

3. No enemy can stand before our mighty God.
4.Victory in the face of defeat is especially sweet, but it will occur only when the heart is fixed on God.
5. God will give us help against our adversaries (108:12).
6. God can do what no man can do (108:12b).
7. “God hath spoken once, twice have I heard it” (Ps. 62:11).
8. Words good enough to be used once should be good enough to be used again.

Psalm 109

A Call For Vengeance Upon His Adversaries

Intro: This psalm is attributed to David and is dedicated to the Chief Musician of the Temple singers. It is an imprecatory prayer-song, i.e., one calling for wrath and destruction upon his enemy. It is the last of the imprecatory psalms and the strongest in invective. It is the most bitter of all Scripture. The author pleads for help against a gang of cruel and merciless enemies who are endeavoring to bring about his ruin by false accusation and treacherous slanders. Their hostility was in response to his love and kindness to them. Some folks are troubled that such a bitter request for judgment is found in God’s Word. The solution is found by remembering that the author was a Hebrew living under Moses’s Law. That law was also their civil code. It called for an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (Lev. 24:19). We live under a different rule that teaches us to love our enemies and pray for them (Matt. 5:43). David views his enemy, not as his alone, but also God’s. Among those who were bitter adversaries of David were Doeg, Cushi, Shimei and Ahithopel. He likely had one of these men in mind in writing this. Peter cites vs. 8 of this psalm and applies it to the betrayal of Judas and his subsequent death and replacement in the Apostolic band (See Acts 1:20). Because of that it has been called “The Iscariot Psalm.” What Judas personally did to Christ, the bulk of the Jewish nation also did. They rejected him, sought to dethrone him from his rightful reign over them. They secured his death at the hands of the Romans. During the Middle Ages, Franciscan monks of the Roman Catholic Church, could be hired to recite this imprecation as a curse against one’s enemies.

I. His Plea For Help Against His Enemies (109:1-5).
- A. His request for help (109:1).
- B. His plight described (109:2-5).
  - 1. He suffered from lies and slanders of wicked men (109:2-3a).
    - a. Compassed about means to encircle.
  - 2. They had no cause to hate him (109:3b).
  - 3. They returned hatred for his love (109:4-5).
    - a. His only hope was prayer to God for assistance (109:4:b).

II. His Imprecation On His Adversaries (109:6-20).
- A. May he be tried and condemned without mercy (109:6-10).
  - 1. The wicked man over him, is an unrighteous judge.
  - 2. “An adversary” is an aggressive accuser.
  - 3. Let him be found guilty (109:7a).
  - 4. Let his prayer or petition to the court be turned against him (109:7).
  - 5. Peter appeals to vs. 8 as a basis for choosing a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:20).
- B. May judgements fall upon his posterity (109:9-15).
  - 1. Such was a part of the Mosaic code (Ex. 20:5).
  - 2. “Their desolate places” means their desolated homes.
  - 3. “The extortioner” refers to the heartless creditor.

4. “Let his posterity be cut off.” This was one of the greatest tragedies that count befall a man in the Ancient East.

C. His fearful fate will be the consequence of his own sinful behavior (109:16-20).

1. Cursing was an integral part of his enemy’s life, like water and oil absorbed into the body.

III. His Supplication For God’s Merciful Protection and Deliverance (109:21-29).

A. He felt his life slipping away like the shadow on the sun dial (109:23a).

B. He felt as helpless as a locust in a wind storm (109:23b).

C. The shame and confusion with which his foes will be clothed is of their own making.

IV. His Thanksgiving For Expected Blessings (109:30-31).

A. An adversary will be at his enemy’s right hand, but God will be at his (109:31).

B. His enemy will be condemned and punished, but God will deliver him (109:31).

Lessons to Remember

1. When faced with adversaries who persecute us, prayer will always be our best weapon and defense.

2. Persecution is more painful if it comes from those whom we have shown love and compassion.

3.Those who hate and harm God’s people should be reminded that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31).

4. If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31).

5. Men may curse the saints but God will bless them (109:28).

6. For every deliverance we should always be thankful to God.

Psalm 110

Song of the Coming Messiah

Intro: David is the author of this matchless psalm. Christ validated his authorship (Mark 12:36) It is one of the most vivid Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. It is quoted 21 times in the New Testament, more than any other Old Testament passage. This psalm along with Psalm 2 gives us a thrilling view of Messiah’s reign a thousand years before he was born. Some prophetic passages had a dual application, first to a righteous king of ancient times and then to Messiah, but this one is unique in that it refers to Messiah alone. Jewish rabbis, seeking to avoid the application of this to Jesus, seek to apply it exclusively to King David. David makes it clear that he received this message from the mouth of God. Christ said, that David wrote this by the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:36).
This psalm is a wellspring of doctrine:
(1). It reveals the triune nature of the Godhead (vs. 1);
(2). It foretells the incarnation of Christ, that he would come as David’s Lord (vs. 1);
(3). It tells that he would hold the offices of both High Priest and King of God’s people (vs4);
(4). It predicts his ascension and coronation (vs. 1);
(5). It tells us He would be judge of all (vs. 6);
(6). It foreshadows the resurrection of the body, for he will subdue all enemies, including death (vs. 1; I Cor. 15:25-26);
(7). It speaks of life everlasting, for He will be a priest forever (vs. 4).

The ancient fathers styled this psalm, “the sum of our faith” and “the treasure of holy writ.” Augustine described it as “brief in the number of its words, but great in the weight of its thought.” Martin Luther regarded this as the crown and chief of all the psalms, “worthy to be set in a frame of gold and diamonds (W. G. Scroggie).

I. Messiah’s Reign Foretold (110:1-3).

A. Messiah’s coronation and empowerment (110:1-2).

1. Adonai is told by Yahweh to sit on the throne with him.

2. "Thus saith Jehovah, it is His revelation that I hear, it is His word addressed to me who, though He be my Son is yet my Lord- 'I give Thee honor and dignity equal to my own, I associate Thee with myself in kingly rule and dominion, until I have subdued every enemy who shall dare lift himself against Thee'" (Perowne)

3. Vs. 1 of this psalm is cited 15 different times in the N.T.

B. His enemies will all eventually be subdued under his reign (I Cor. 15:25-26).

1. To be made a footstool implies they will be prostrated before his throne of power in humiliation.

C. The rod of his strength means his mighty scepter of authority (110:2).

1. Note that his reign would issue forth from Zion, i.e., Jerusalem.

D. His soldiers "offer themselves willingly" (110:3).

1. No one is forced into his kingdom and service, they willingly volunteer themselves to serve him in battle.

2. His servants are dressed in "holy array" which means priestly garments.

a. John uses this same imagery in Revelation 19:14.

3.His warriors are as numerous as the morning dew.

4. His reign is his day of power.

a. His is an **arresting power**. Remember how he brought Saul of Tarsus to his knees? (Acts 9:3-5).

b. It is a **convincing, convicting power,** moving sinners to cry out "What must I do to be saved? (Acts 2:37).

c. It is a **life-giving power** (John 5:21).

It is a **liberating power** (John 8:36).

II. Messiah Will Be Both King and Priest Over God's People (110:4).

A. His office is confirmed by Jehovah's sacred oath.

B. His priesthood will last forever.

C. He will be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

1. His position would be greater than the Davidic kings or the Aaronic high priests.

a. Compare Hebrews 7:4-10.

2. Melchizedek was a priest of God, seven hundred years before the Levitical priesthood was ordained.

a. Even Abraham, father and founder of the Hebrew people, recognized the superiority of Melchizedek by giving him tithes and receiving his blessing.

3. That the Messianic king would be both priest and king demanded that Law of Moses give way to another law (Heb.7:12-14).

4. His priesthood being eternal, is the basis of our hope for salvation (Heb. 7:23-28).

III. The Assurance of Messiah's Triumph (110:5-7).

A. Messiah will triumph over every enemy, even powerful kings (110:5).

1. "Strike through" depicts a mighty warrior smiting with the sword.

B. He will be the judge of all nations (Compare John 5:22; Acts 17:31).

C. Like a mighty warrior, his enemies will fall before him (110:6).

D. He will drink of the brook in the way...and lift up his head (110:7).

1. Some take this to refer to the cup of suffering which he had to taste before the victory was his (Compare Mark 14:34-36, John 18:11).

Lessons to Remember:

1. Reluctant service, while better than disobedience, will never fully satisfy God.

2. It should never be forgotten that Christ does have enemies, and they are also the enemies of his people. They are doomed and will be trodden under his feet.

3. We Christians also are priests (I Pet. 2:5), and warriors in the army of Messiah (Eph. 6:11; 1 Tim. 6:11).

4. If David could discern between the persons of the Father and the Son, surely we with the light of the New Covenant should have no problem accepting the concept of the Divine Trinity.
5. From Peter we learn that this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ's resurrection, ascension and enthronement. His reign began on the Pentecost after his resurrection (Acts 2:29-35).

Psalm 111

A Hymn Praising Jehovah For His Wonderful Works

Intro: The author of this song is unknown. Psalms 111 and 112 seem to be by the same author as both are framed on the same model. Each is acrostic or alphabetical, with 22 lines in the Hebrew. The first word of each line in the original is in alphabetic order. In the Hebrew text, most of the lines consist of three words. The acrostic style was used to aid the people in memorizing the great truths contained therein. Other alphabetic psalms are 9, 10, 34, 37 and 119. Psalm 111 celebrates the power, goodness and righteousness of God, while 112 deals with the prosperity, beneficence and righteousness of the godly man. This is also one of the hallelujah psalms, in that it begins with "Praise ye Jehovah." It is thought by scholars that this and other following psalms were sung at the eating of the Paschal lamb (Compare Matt. 26:30). "Philosophy seeks truth, Theology finds it, but Religion possesses it. Human things must be known to be loved, but Divine things must be loved to be known" (Blaise Paschal).

I. The Author's Resolution (111:1).

A. To praise Jehovah.
B. He will give thanks unto him,
1. With his whole heart,
2. Before the congregation of God's saints.

II. The Motivation for His Praise (111:2-9).

A. The mighty works of Jehovah (111:2-4):
1. His works are great in design, size, number and excellence (111:2).
2. His work is honorable and majestic and endures forever (111:3).
3. His works are wonderful and worthy of our remembrance.
4. His works are evidence of his grace and mercy (111:4).
B. The goodness of God in providing for his people (111 :5-6):
1. He gave them food.
a. This may refer to the manna given in the wilderness.
2. He has honored the covenant he made with their fathers.
a. By delivering them from Egypt and by making them a great nation.
3. He hath demonstrated his power on behalf of his people.
a. By the plagues on Egypt and the miracles of their Exodus and wilderness wanderings.
4. He gave them "the heritage of the nations" (111 :6).
a. The land of Canaan which had belonged unto the Gentile nations.
C. To govern them, He gave them the Law on Sinai (111:7-8).
1. His law is true, just and dependable.
2. It is enduring (111:7-8).
D. He sent redemption to his people (111:9).
1. First by Moses and Aaron.
2. Time and again He delivered them by the Judges and other political and military leaders.
E. His name is holy and reverend (111:9).
1. "Holy and awe-inspiring" (Berkley).
a. God is deserving of such an exalted address.

b. His human servants, being sinful, mortal men, are not to take nor give such exalted honorifics (Matt. 23:8-12).
c. God is to be feared and respected because of his holiness and purity.

III. The Application to be Made of these Truths (111:10).

A. Remember the source of all true wisdom. It is "the fear of Jehovah."
B. The reward of obedience to God is "good understanding" of the important things of life.
C. There is no termination to our praise for God. It must be everlasting.

LESSONS TO BE REMEMBERED:

1. Let there never be a day when you fail to praise the Lord for his mighty works.
2. What God has said and done reveal to us what he is.
3. Because God is holy, we should always revere his name.
4. Since God's name is holy and reverend, it is a foolish man who dares to use it in swearing and profanity.
5.Let God's name be holy and reverend, but let the names of his servants be that of brothers and sisters or servants (Matt. 23:8-10). Thus did the Apostles (II Pet. 3:15).

Psalm 112

A Song Celebrating The Blessings Of A Righteous Man

Intro: This psalm is thought to be a companion of Psalm 111. The same unknown writer seems to have composed each of them. Both have the same format, being acrostics based on the 22 lines of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 111 praises the power, goodness and righteousness of God, this psalm sets for the prosperity of the God-fearing man. It too is a "hallelujah psalm." In this song, the author shows that there are rewards for righteousness. As the moon is to the sun, so is this psalm to 111. "This psalm is a banquet of heavenly wisdom." It praises God for blessing his faithful people.

I. His Thesis (112:1).

A. He praises Jehovah,
B. Because He blesses those who fear him.
    1. "Fear" means to revere him (Eccle. 12:13).
    2. The man who fears God, delights greatly in His commands.
    3. Because we fear God, we fear not him that can destroy the body (Matt. 10:28).
    4. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7).

II. The Blessings Bestowed Upon the Righteous Man (112:2-9).

A. His posterity shall be great (112:2a).
    1. Large numbers of offspring and descendants were coveted by the Hebrews.
    2. Generations of righteous souls will spring from him.
B. His family shall be blessed (112:2b).
C. Prosperity shall be his (112:3a).
    1. Under the Old Covenant, material prosperity was thought to be a sign of God's approval.
D. His righteous deeds will be long remembered (112:3b).
E. He will have heavenly light to guide him through life's dark hours (112:4a).
    1. On earth we are subject to darkness of sin, error, sorrow and death.
    2. Christ is our light to successfully deal with all of these (John 8:12).
F. He will be respected as "gracious, merciful and righteous" (112:4b).
G. He will be blessed for dealing graciously and lending to his needy neighbors (112:5a).
    1. He is not reckless in lending to dishonest people for "He guides his affairs with discretion" (KJV).
H. He will be vindicated when he stands before judges (112:5b).
    1. This assumes he is upright and not guilty of illegal activities.
I. He will enjoy stability in his life and business (112:6a).

J. His name will long be remembered by God and man (112:6b).
K. Evil tidings will not frighten him (112:7a).
L. His heart is fixed (i.e., thoroughly and unshakably set) on Jehovah (112:7b).
M. He will see his desire upon his enemies (112:8).
N. Because of his generosity to the poor, his name shall long be honored (1112:9a).
1. Paul cites this in II Corinthians 9:9.
O. His horn shall be exalted with honor (112:9b).
1. "Horn" is a symbol of strength or power. It is borrowed from the animal world.

III. The Effect Upon the Wicked of the Righteous Man's Blessings(112:10).
A. They will be grieved.
B. They will gnash their teeth in envy at his success.
C. They will melt away and perish. In the burning heat of their envy and resentment, they will melt away like snow.

Lessons to Remember:
A. We should be righteous because it is the right thing to do, not just because it pays us to do so. We, however, can enjoy the blessings such faithfulness brings from God.
B. Pity the envious soul which like the slug, melts as it goes through life, leaving its slimy trail before perishing.
C. To leave behind a flourishing and blessed posterity, don't concentrate on leaving them gold, but on teaching and commending them to Jehovah.
D. Good men are always benevolent, but not all benevolent men are always good. Good men are always prudent, but not all prudent men are always good. There must first be goodness and then its fruit.

Psalm 113

Praise To Jehovah Who Exalts The Humble

Intro: Psalms 113-118 form the Hallel (i.e., Hymn of Praise) which the Hebrews sang at Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. Psalms 113 and 114 were sung prior to the meal and 115-118 were sung afterwards. Dr. Alfred Edershine explains that the Hebrews sang this song as a responsive hymn. The Levites sang the lines and the congregation responded to each with the 'Hallelujah." Remember that following the Passover meal, Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn (Matt. 26:30). The author is unknown. Like many of the psalms of this Fifth Book, this is a hallelujah psalm (See vs. 1). It is a call to praise Jehovah, who though enthroned in heaven, condescends to care for the weak and lowly souls of the earth. The word "praise" and its related cognates are used in the Psalms 186 times. This song praises " the greatness and condescending goodness of the God of Israel, as exhibited in the lifting up of the needy from their low estate" (Spurgeon).

I. His Exhortation to Universal and Unceasing Praise of Jehovah (113:1-2).
A. All of His servants should praise his name (113:1).
1. Only the praise of **His servants** is acceptable to Jehovah (I Pet. 3:12).
B. Blessed by His holy name.
1. The name stands for Him to whom it applies.
C. The duration of man's praise should be, "now and forevermore" (113:2b).

II. Where and When to Praise Him (113:3).
A. From the Rising of the sun (the east).
1. To the going down of the same (the west).
2. Wherever men dwell, world-wide, they should praise Him.
3. From morning to night.
4. His name is to be praised.

III. Reasons Why We Should Praise Him (113:4-9).
A. He is high above all nations (kingdoms) (113:4a).

B. His glory is above (greater than) the heavens (113:4b).
C. His throne is on high (113:5).
D. He humbleth himself to be concerned with the material creation of heaven and earth (113:6).
E. He elevates the poor and oppressed (113:7-8).
1. The thought of this verse is borrowed from Hannah's song of praise when God gave her Samuel (I Sam. 2:8)
a. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill,
To make them sit with princes,
And inherit the throne of glory."
2. Mary, the mother of Jesus, expressed similar thoughts in her hymn of praise (The Magnificat).
a. "He hath put down princes from their thrones, and hath exalted them of low degree" (Luke 1:52).
F. He maketh barren women to bear children (113:9).
1. Among the ancient Hebrews barrenness was regarded as a curse.
2. A woman was not secure in her house until she became a mother.

Lessons to Remember:
A. Let our voices be heard among the mighty, world-wide chorus that praise God's name.
B. We are blessed to live in a place and age when to be born poor is not an unescapable situation. God has indeed blessed us.
C. We are fortunate to serve a God who is not only transcendent, but also imminent and involved in our world and lives.
D. Be grateful that under Christ, a woman can be joyful and happy even though she is childless.

Psalm 114

A Song Celebrating Israel's Deliverance From Egypt

Intro: This anonymous psalm has been called "One of the most beautiful odes ever to be written" (G. Scroggie). J. Perowne called it "The most beautiful of the psalms that touch upon the early history of Israel." "For perfection of form and dramatic vividness, it is almost, if not unrivaled, in the Psalter" (A. F. Kirkpatrick). Charles Spurgeon wrote, "True poetry has here reached its climax, no human mind has ever been able to equal, much less to excel, the grandeur of this psalm." This psalm was part of the Hallel sung by the Hebrews at their great festivals. The **purpose** of the writer was to show that the God of creation was the God and deliverer of Israel in ages past and at the present time. It was intended to encourage the Hebrews to remember Jehovah's past help and deliverance and, in gratitude, continue to be faithful to Him. The miracles of the Exodus are cited as the most striking proofs of God's omnipotence and concern for his people. This psalm is classed as a didactic song, or one intended to instruct the singers and hearers.

I. Israel's Deliverance From Bondage (114:1-4).
A. Israel was enslaved in Egypt (114:1).
B. God gave them the land of Judah for their own home (114:2).
1. And made it his sanctuary.
C. Nature yielded to God's guiding hand (114:3-4).
1. The Red Sea parted at his command (114:3a).
a. Compare Exodus 14:16-22.
2. The Jordan River opened for them to cross over (1214:3b).
a. Compare Joshua 3:14-17.
3. Mountains skipped like rams (114:4).
a. This refers to the earthquake at Sinai when Jehovah descended upon it to give Moses the law (Ex. 19:18).

II. The Poet Questions Trembling Nature (114:5-6).

A. He asks nature, “What does this mean?”

1. What aileth thee, to make you respond so?

B. To address nature as a rational being is a figure of speech called an “apostrophe.”

III. His Charge to Nature (114:7-8).

A. Tremble earth at the presence of Jehovah (114:7).

1. Who is the God of Jacob, i.e., the people of Israel?
2. The word tremble is used to describe a woman in labor of childbirth.
3. Not only is Jehovah their God omnipotent, he is omnipresent.

B. Their God gave them water to drink from a rock in the desert (114:8).

1. See Numbers 20:7-13.
2. This occurred on several occasions.
3. He turned the rock into a “standing pool of water” (114:8a).
4. He turned the flinty rock into “a gushing spring” (E. Harrsion).
5. Paul tells us that rock was symbolic of Christ who caused the water to flow from it (I Cor. 10:4).

Lessons to Remember:

A. The historical record of the Old Testament is alive with lessons for us today (Rom. 15:4).

B. We worship and serve the same Jehovah as did ancient Israel. What he did for them he can do for us today.

C. The poet has his or her place in the kingdom of God so long as he uses his gifts to glorify the God who made him.

D. Christ was with the desperate Hebrews to provide the life giving water they needed and he promises to be with us today, providing our needs (Matt. 28:20).

Psalm 115

A Song Praising God As Superior To All The Idols Men Have Made and Worshiped.

Intro. The author of this song is unknown. It is a hallelujah psalm and was part of the Hallel sung during the nation's festivals. In several ancient manuscripts, in the Septuagint and the Syriac Version, Psalms 114 and 115 are joined together as one song. This psalm was likely written during that difficult period when the surviving remnant of the Israelites was seeking to reestablish itself in the homeland and rebuild Jerusalem and the their temple. Their heathen neighbors mocked and ridiculed them in their weakness (Compare Ezra 2 and Neh. 4:1-4). Other prophets used similar biting sarcasm to belittle the idolatry of their enemies (Compare Elijah in 1 Kings 18:27; Is. 44:9-20; Jer. 10:1-16 and Hab. 2:18-19). The author calls upon God to vindicate His holy name before those heathen people who taunted them by asking "Where now is your God?" (115:2b). He calls upon his people to keep alive the praise of God which their ancestors had offered in days past.

I. His Plea to God (115:1).

A. Please give glory to your name by responding to our situation.

1. The author did not ask this for the nation's sake, but for God's sake,

II. The Problem He Faced (115:2)

A. Heathen neighbors were taunting them, asking,

1. “Where now is your God?"

III. His Response (115:3).

A. Our God is in the heavens.

B. He does whatever he pleases.

IV. He Ridicules The Idols of His Enemies (115:4-8).

A. Men have made and adorned their gods (115:4).
    1. Our God made mankind and richly blesses them.
B. Idols cannot talk (115:5a).
    1. They can make no promises, speak no truths, forgive no sins.
C. Idols cannot see (115:5b).
    1. They cannot see their devotees hence they cannot guide, bless or protect them
    2. Our God sees and bless us. He is omniscient. He never sleeps (1 Pet. 3:12).
D. They cannot hear (115:6a).
    1. They cannot hear prayers or cries of distress, sighs or moanings of their people (1 Kings 1 8:26-29).
    2. Our God can and does hear and answer our prayers (1 Pet. 3:12b; John 14:14).
E. They cannot smell (115:6b).
    1. They cannot smell and appreciate the sacrifices and incense offered to them.
    2. Our God can (Gen. 8:21).
F. They have no power (115:7).
    1. Their hands cannot bless or benefit, protect or punish them.
    2. Our God delivers by his mighty hand (Ps. 89:13).
    3. We are safe in our Father's hands (John 10:28-29).
G. They cannot walk (115:7b).
    1. They cannot come to their worshipers, rather, they must go to them.
    2. They cannot carry their worshipers, they must carry them (Jer. 10:5).
        a. Instead of helping them with their burdens...they are a burden for them to bear (Is 46.1 -7).
    3. Our God goes with us always in every situation (Ps. 23:4; Matt. 28:20).
H. You will become like the god you worship (115:8).
    1. If they are dumb, blind, impotent, so will you be.
    2. If they are corrupt, licentious and degraded, so will you be.
    3. If they are helpless, so will you he.

IV. Our God is Alive and Helps Us; We Must Trust Him (115:9-17).

A. All the house of Israel must trust and serve him (115:9).
    1. He is their help and shield.
B. The house of Aaron must trust him (115:10).
    1. These are the priests and Levites.
    2. He is their help and shield.
C. Those who fear Jehovah must trust him (115:11).
    1. God-fearers were Gentiles who attached themselves to the Hebrews and worshiped their God.
    2. He is their help and shield.
D. Reasons tor trusting and serving him (115:12):
    1. He has been mindful of them (the Hebrews) (115:12).
    2. He will bless all them that fear him (115:13).
    3. He will increase their numbers (115:14).
        a. This is a hint as to the smallness of the remnant that returned from Babylonian Captivity and their desperate need for additional helpers.
E. Jehovah blesses us so we must fear him (115:15).
F. He hath given us (Hebrews) this land (115:16).
    1. This refers to the land of Israel which God gave to Abraham's children.

V. God Is Worthy; We Must Praise Him Now and Evermore (115:17-18).

A. The dead cannot praise God on this earth (115:17).
    1. This means corpses cannot sing or pray to God
    2. They say nothing about the state of the dead. That Christ revealed in the gospel (11 Tim. 1:10).
    3. In the eternal realm the righteous dead do praise God (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-11).

B. God does not need our praise, but we desperately need to praise him.

Lessons to Remember:

1. Every believer, great or small, should always be extolling the living God.
2. If we wish to be among those privileged to praise God in eternity, then we must be with his church, praising how now?
3. We should ever be thankful for that day when we turned from the vain idols of this life to serve the living and true God (I Thess. 1 9).
4. Choose carefully what you worship for you will grow to like the god you worship,
5. Too often the "self made man" worships his maker.
6. What trust, consolation and hope are encased in the words, "Jehovah hath been mindful of us" (115:12).

Psalm 116

A Song Of Thanks To God For Deliverance From Death

Intro. This anonymous psalm is part of the Hallel. Remember Jesus sang this hymn with his disciples the night of his betrayal. It is a thanksgiving hymn and a hallelujah psalm, in that it offer praise to Jah, i.e., Jehovah. The precise nature of the author's danger is not apparent. Some think it might have been written to celebrate King Hezekiah's deliverance from death (II Kings 20:1-11). This psalm is intensely personal. Note the repeated use of the personal pronouns "I, me and my." They are used 37 times and are found in all but three verses Fifteen times the writer mentions Jehovah. Eight times He promises "I will." He speaks of his danger, his deliverance, his devotion and his delight.

I. He Professes His Love for Jehovah (116:1-2):

A. Because He had answered his prayers (116:1).
B. Therefore he promises to call upon Him as long as he lives (116:2).

II. He Recalls His Deliverance From Death (116:3-8).

A. Death had caught him in its evil snares (116:3).
    1. The picture is of hunters lying in wait for their prey with noose and net.
B. He called upon God for help and deliverance (116:4).
C. God was gracious and merciful and delivered him (116:5-6).
    1. Jehovah preserves the "simple."
        a. He speaks not of the simple-minded, although surely God does look after them. Harrison renders the words, "protects the innocent."
        b."He safeguards the helpless, the ignorant and the guileless."
D. He reminds himself to rest in Jehovah who had delivered him from death (116:7-8).
    1. "Soul" here means life.

III. His Pledge to Jehovah (116:9-19).

A. I will walk before Jehovah in the land of the living (116:9).
B. I believe in God's power and deliverance and I will speak of it to the world (116:10).
C. "I kept my faith, even when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted'" (RSV).
D. I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of Jehovah (116:11-13).
    1. In his alarm, he concluded that "all men were liars," by which he meant they will fail me in the hour of crisis. Only Jehovah was totally dependable for such emergencies.
    2. The cup of salvation likely refers to the drink offering of wine which was poured into a bowl by the altar when they offered their thank offerings to God.
E. I will pay my vows unto Jehovah (116:14).
    1. In the presence of all the people, i.e., in the public worship assembly.
F. Because God had spared his life he would offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving (116:15- 19).
    1. "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints" (116:15).
        a. This does not mean that He is pleased or happy when his people die. It means that their death is of great concern to Him. He does not lightly permit it.

b. Babylas, Christian bishop of Antioch, sang these words as he met his death during the Decian persecutions.

2. He publicly commits himself to Jehovah as his servant (116:16).

3. He will go to the temple in Jerusalem to offer his thanksgiving, to fulfill his vows and to call upon the name of Jehovah (116:17-19).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Before we can walk with the Lord, we must first love him (vs. 1) and call upon Him (vs. 2).

B. "Faith's triumph must be followed by grateful thanksgiving" (Kirkpatrick).

C. Heaven's blessings bring corresponding obligations.

D. "Our God is merciful" (vs. 5).

E. Let us resolve to walk with the Lord so long as we are in the land of the living; then we shall live with him in the land beyond the grave.

F. When we make a vow unto the Lord, he expects us to honor it (Eccle. 5:4). Many a soul in sickness has promised what in restored health he forgot.

G. When we believe, we should not be ashamed nor too timid to speak of our Lord (vs. 10).

H. Each of us should ponder what we should render to the Lord for all His benefits (vs. 12).

I. Never forget that you life and your death is precious in the sight of Jehovah (vs. 15).

Psalm 117

A Universal Summons For All Men To Worship Jehovah

Intro: This is the shortest of the psalms and the briefest chapter of the Bible. It is also the middle chapter of the complete Bible. It is a precious gem, easily overlooked because of its smallness. Kirkpatrick says, "The shortest of the Psalms is among the grandest." It consists of only 17 words in the Hebrew. Its brevity has led some scholars to surmise it is a fragment from some longer psalm. Some ancient manuscripts do attach it to the previous psalm. We have no knowledge as to who wrote it, or why or when it was composed. It is a doxology, i.e., a brief expression of praise to God which opens or closes hymn or a session of worship. It too is among the Hallelujah psalms. It is messianic and looks forward to the Christian Age when salvation would be extended to the Gentile nations. Paul cites this psalm in Romans 15:11 as proof of God's ancient design to extend salvation to the Gentile nations through Christ. This hymn was sung by Oliver Cromwell and His Protestant troop following their victory over the Catholic forces at Dunbar on September 3, 1650. It came to be known by the Puritans as "the Dunbar Psalm."

I. The Universal Charge to Worship Jehovah (117:1).

A. Praise Jehovah all ye nations (117:1a).

1. It invites all nations, i.e., Gentiles, to join Israel in praising Jehovah.

2. See Romans 15:11 where Paul shows this as fulfilled in Christ and his great commission to all nations.

3. In Revelation 7:9-17 we see the mighty multitude from all nations and races praising God before his throne...as this verse shows they would.

B. Laud him all ye peoples (117:1 b).

1. The parallel lines are typical of the Hebrew's use of repetition to emphasize an important point.

2. The KJV translates both lines with the single word "praise."

a. But two different words for praise are used.

b. The first is ***halal*** which means to glorify.

c.. The second is ***shabach*** which means to loudly adore or to shout with a loud voice.

d. The combined meaning is that we should publicly worship Jehovah with enthusiasm by magnifying and exalting his name (G. Scroggie).

II. Reasons Why We Should Praise Jehovah (117:2).

A. Because his loving-kindness is great toward us (17:2a).

1. Loving-kindness" is rendered 'steadfast love" in the RSV.

2. His mercy is great, i.e., sufficiently strong or powerful to give us victory over Satan's temptations and our sins.

3. Mercy is love that stoops, love that departs from the strict lines of desert and retribution. Mercy is love that is kind when Justice might make it otherwise. Mercy is love that condescends to that which is far beneath." (Alex. Maclaren).

B. The truth of Jehovah endureth for ever (117:2b).

1. "Truth is God's fidelity to every obligation under which he has come. His faithfulness to his promise...to his own character" (Maclaren).

2. Psalm 85:10 tells us that in God, "Mercy and truth are met together."

3. Mercy without truth would be powerless, and truth without mercy would be penal. But together they demonstrate that God can be just and still justify those who have faith in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:26). (Maclaren).

C. "Praise ye Jehovah" (117:2c).

1. Hallelujah, means praise Jah, i.e. Jehovah.

2. Note this little psalm both begins and ends with praise to Jehovah.

Lessons to Remember:

A. We can never be too busy or too important to praise Jehovah!

B. God has always had in mind a universal kingdom of all nations.

C. The exclusiveness of the Jews was not learned from the book God gave them.

D. We may and should praise some men for their accomplishments and deeds of courage and kindness, but only Jehovah is to be adored; and that without degree or limit (Heb. 13:15).

E. Though your sins be great, God's mercy is greater.

F. "The more desperate thy disease, the greater the glory of thy physician who hath perfectly cured thee" (Abraham Wright.).

G. There is a time for everything (Eccles. 3:1). This psalm and Psalm 119 demonstrate that in worship there is a time for brevity (2 verses) and time for extended praise (176 verses). May God give us wisdom to know when to be brief or long.

Psalm 118

A Song Of Thanksgiving For Jehovah's Goodness And Salvation

Intro: This is an anonymous psalm of thanksgiving and praise to Jehovah. It is the closing song of the Hallel which was used at Passover and other sacred festivals of the Hebrews. It would have been sung by Christ and the Apostles before leaving the upper room the night of his betrayal (Matt. 26:30). The design of the psalm, makes it clear that it was intended for temple worship. It is "liturgical" and was sung antiphonally, i.e., by the audience responding to the lines of the precentor or leader. Three sets of singers seem to be implied (1). The precentor, who speaks for the whole nation; (2). a chorus of people; (3) the Levites who served in the Temple. It is widely thought that this psalm was written to celebrate the completion of the second temple built when the exiles had returned from Babylonian Captivity (Ezra.6:15-18). Specifically the first celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles by the restored people (Nehemiah chapter 8). If it was written to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, then we should envision the great procession of worshipers approaching the gates of the temple, waving green branches of willow, myrtle and palm trees and singing God's praises with hosannas (John 12:12-13). Charles Spurgeon wrote, "Nothing can surpass the force and majesty, as well as the richly varied beauty of this Psalm." W. G. Scroggie described it as a work of artistic beauty, like "apples of gold in a network of silver" (Prov. 25:11). When Martin Luther translated this psalm into German he wrote, "This is my psalm, my chosen psalm...this psalm is nearest my heart...it has saved me from many a pressing danger, from which neither emperor nor kings nor wise men nor saints could help." Early Christians sang this hymn in defiance when pressured to participate in emperor worship. Verses 22-26 are prophetic of Christ.

I. An Exhortation to Praise Jehovah (118:1-4).

A. These verses were sung antiphonally, with the precentor singing the first line and the worshipers the second.

B. This section likely was sung by the worshipers as they approached the temple gates.
C. The exhortation to praise God is based on his goodness and his loving-kindness (118:1).
D. Note the speaker calls on three groups to join him in praise
1. Israel, the multitude (vs. 2).
2. The house of Aaron, the priesthood (vs. 3).
3. Them that fear Jehovah, referring to Gentiles who worshiped Jehovah (vs. 4).

II. The Author Relates His Experience Under God's Hand (118:5-18).
A. The precentor speaks for all of Israel.
B. God had answered the nation when they were in distress (118:5).
1. God is the ally of all who trust him.
2. God "set (him) in a large place," i.e., He had liberated him and given him freedom from his oppressors.
C. Jehovah is a better helper than any man or army (118:6-9).
D. With Jehovah's help they will triumph over every enemy (118:10-13).
E. He gives God all the credit and glory for their deliverance (118:10-14).
1. Jehovah is my strength, song and salvation.
2. This line is borrowed from the Song of Moses (Ex. 15:2).
F. He rejoices in the Lord because of their deliverance (118:15-18).
1."I shall not die, but live" (118:17). This is the Christian's theme song.
2. "Jehovah hath chastened me sore"
a. This God does only when and because we need it (Heb. 12:5-6).

III. The Sacrificial Service of Thanksgiving for God's Blessings (118:19-28).
A. "Open the gates...I will enter in...I will give thanks unto Jehovah" (118:19).
1. Here we see the procession before the temple requesting permission to enter in.
2. The righteous shall be given entrance into Jehovah's house (118:20).
B. Thanksgiving for received blessings is an integral part of true worship (118.21).
C. "The stone the builders rejected is become the head of the corner" (118:22).
1. This implies the psalm was written to celebrate the rebuilding of the temple.
2. Six times the rejected stone is mentioned in the New Testament and applied to the Lord Jesus (Mark 12:10-11).
D. This is Jehovah's doing and marvelous in ours eyes (118:23) (Compare Nehemiah 6:16).
E. "This is the day the Lord hath made" i.e., this day of victory, of resumption of worship in His house (118:24).
F. "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah" (118:26).
1. Originally this is the blessing the presiding priest pronounced on those who came to worship.
2. The people of Jerusalem applied them to the Savior (Matt. 21:9).
G. "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar" (118:27)
1. Here we see the priest as he prepares the animal for the sacrifice.
2. "Horns of the altar" are the upward pointing corners of the altar.

Conclusion: "Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; For his lovingkindness endureth forever" (118:29).

Lessons to Remember:
A. Whatever your circumstances in life, always remember that God is good (vs. 1).
B. One righteous soul with Jehovah on his side is a winning majority (vs. 6).
C. "It is better to put your trust in Jehovah than to put confidence in man" (vs. 8).
D. In the house of every righteous person should be heard "the voice of rejoicing and salvation" (vs. 15).
E. Because of Christ we can confidently believe, "I shall not die, but live" (vs. 17).
F. Put your hope in the stone that the builders rejected lest he become your stone of stumbling (vs, 22).
G. "This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (vs. 24). This should be our sentiment every day when we first awake and especially each Lord's Day.
H. Remember Jehovah is the one responsible for our prosperity and be thankful (vs. 25).

Psalm 119

An Inspired Tribute To God's Holy Scripture

Intro: This is the longest chapter in the English Bible. It is equal to the next 20 psalms. It is one of nine acrostic psalms. It is composed on an alphabetic pattern. Each division begins with a successive character of the Hebrew alphabet which has 22 components. Each subdivision has eight verses, all beginning with the same Hebrew character. It is the only psalm so arranged. This design made it more easily memorized. That eight verses are chosen for each stanza is no accident. Among the Hebrews, the number seven was considered to be perfect or complete. Eight was more than enough. The term ***shaman*** literally meant to 'super-abound.' It is the most detailed and intricately worked of all the psalms. Each stanza is able to stand alone without loss. The 119th Psalm is anonymous. It is generally believed that it was composed during the post-exilic period (following the Babylonian Captivity in 536 B.C.). Some attribute it to Ezra the Scribe. Internal evidence suggests that the author had been through great afflictions and hardships which he mentions 66 times. The author refers to himself 32 times in this psalm. God is mentioned in every verse. While we cannot be sure of the author, there are some things we can know about him. He was not an infidel or atheist. He was no wicked sinner. He did not hate God, nor did he disdain truth. He did not view the Bible as a human production, nor a dead document from the ancient past. He did not believe one could prove anything by the Bible. He did not believe the Bible was incomprehensible or of little value. He did not think the Bible to be a book of myths, legends, contradictions, and folklore (Robert Taylor). A. Davidson described this psalm as the "most elaborate eulogy existing, in any language, of God's word." The author seems to have been stirred to write after considering Psalm 19. His theme is "The glories of God's written word." The key verse is 119:1 "Blessed are they ...who walk in the law of Jehovah." Except for vs. 122, God's written Word is extolled in every verse. Nine times he speaks of God's testimonies, 22 times of his commandments, 24 times of his precepts, 24 times of his word, 25 times of his law, 13 times of his way, 4 times of his truth, 19 times of his judgements, 12 times of his righteousness and 22 time of his statutes. One scholar described this psalm as a miniature Bible; a condensed summary of eternal truth. It is an inspired tribute to God's Holy Word. J. A. Alexander suggests that "this psalm was intended as a manual of pious and instructive thought, designed for popular improvement, and especially for that of the younger generation..." W. Simmons wrote, "This psalm shines and shows itself...a star in the firmament of the Psalms, of the first and greatest magnitude." Johannes Palanterious called it, "the Alphabet of Divine Love, the Paradise of all Doctrine...the School of Truth." Franz Delitzsch labeled it, "The Christian's golden ABCs of the praise, love, power and use of the Word of God." Charles Spurgeon said, "It equally excels in breath of thought, depth of meaning and height of fervor." Augustine observed that it needs no "expositor... only a reader and listener." It has been called "The song of true-hearted, whole-hearted devotion." Theodoret called it...''an all-containing medicine for the varied spiritual diseases of men..." It is a psalm that has inspired other great hymns such as **"True-hearted, Whole-hearted**" by Frances R. Havergale (See vs. 2) and "**How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts?**" by Isaac Watts (See vss. 9-11). When Chaplain George Wishart was on the scaffold, waiting to die, he was allowed to choose a psalm to be sung before being despatched. He chose 119. Before it was two-thirds done. A pardon arrived, sparing his life.

I. *ALEPH:* The joy of walking in God's precepts (119:1-8).
II. *BETH.* A resolution to keep God's law (119:9-16).
III. *GIMEL*: Faithfulness to the law affords strength in persecution (119:17-24).
IV. *DALETH*: In affliction, he seeks a deeper insight into God's Word (119:25-32).
V. *HE:* A prayer for understanding and guidance (119:33-40).
VI. ***VAV:*** A prayer for God's mercy and for courage (119:41-48).
VII. *ZAYIN:* God's Word sustains and gives him hope in affliction (119:49-56).
VIII. *HHETH*: He keeps God's precepts and fellowships God's people (119:57-64).
IX. *TETH*. God's goodness drives him to the Word (119:65-72).
X. YODH: God's deliverance of his servant comforts others (119:73-80).
XI. *KAPH:* In persecution he finds hope in God's Word (119:81-88).
XII. *LAMEDH:* He praises he immutability of God's Word (119:89-96).
XIII. *MEM:* The law of God imparts wisdom (119:97-104).
XIV. NUN: He vows his fidelity to God's word (119:105-12).
XV. SAMEKH: He prays for strength to be loyal to God's Word (119:113-120).
XVI. AYIN: He commits his cause to God and clings to his Word, (119:121-128).
XVII. *PE:* The blessings of God's Word to those who seek after it (119:129-136).

XVIII. *TSADHE:* God's law commands the deepest reverence (119:137-144).
XIX. QOPH: The Word of God guided him when in trouble (119:145-152.)
XX. RESH: Surrounded by his enemies, he looks to God to revive him (119:153-160).
XXI. HIN: He has both loved and kept God's law (119:161-168).
XXII. *TAV:* He prays for insight into God's word (119:169-176).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Since God's Word is so precious to the author, surely it should be precious to us as well.
B. A man's attitude toward Scripture is a reflection of his character.
C. When one tries to be a Christian without keeping God's commands, he is deceiving himself and those who follow him (119:60).
D. True knowledge is based upon God's Word; true wisdom comes by living according to that Divine Word.
E. A person's heart is revealed by what he loves and hates.
F. God's Word, stored in the heart (mind), is the great prophylactic against sin (vs. 11).
G. Like the author, we should stick" to God's Word (vs. 31).
H. True happiness can only be found in walking in the law of the Lord (vs. 1).
I. There is soul-cleansing power in God's Word (vs. 9).
J. When we grow up we realize that afflictions can actually be good for us (vs. 67).
K. The older we get, the more value we place on God's Holy Book (vs.72).
L. It is acceptable to hate wickedness (vs. 128).

Psalm 120

A Prayer Song Requesting Deliverance From Slanderers

Intro: This is the first of 15 **songs of ascent**, literally, " songs of going up." There are several theories as to the meaning of this expression (1). Going up from Babylonian Captivity to Jerusalem; (2). The 15 songs were sung in succession as the priests ascended the 15 steps to the inner court of the temple; (3). The ascending themes of the 15 different hymns; (4). Songs sung by pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for worship. (Remember Jerusalem is situated on the top of a mountain). The later seems the more likely meaning of the four. "These Psalms form a true People's Song Book, speaking the language of the people and revealing their feelings and sentiments; it introduces us to their religion and also to their civil life, their family life, their day's work..." (As quoted by A. Barnes). **The key thought:** This psalm expresses the emotions of an anonymous saint forced to live among, slanderous people.

I. His Prayer for Deliverance had been Answered (120:1-2).

A. "I cried unto Jehovah, and he answered me" (120:1).
B. His continuing request (120:2).
    1. "Deliver my soul...from lying lips."

II. A Warning of Retribution for His Enemies (120:3-4).

A."What shall be given unto thee...thou deceitful tongue?"
B. You will reap what you are sowing (Gal. 6:7).
C. Sharp arrows with coals of juniper will be your reward.
    1. Your words, like sharp flaming arrows, will return to haunt you.
    2. Words that will burn like a hot destructive fire.
        a. "Coals of juniper" were charcoal briquettes made from juniper wood that burned long and hot.
    3. Arrows of God's judgement.
    4. Remember how Haaman's desire to destroy the Jews occasioned his own death on the gallows he built for Mordecai (Esther 7:9-10).

III. His Wistful Longing for Peace with His Neighbors (120:5-7).

A. The cause of his misery (120:5).

1. He sojourned (dwelt) in Meshech, a barbarous people.
2. And dwelt among the tents of Kedar, i.e., Arabians descended from Ishmael (Gen. 25:13).
3. The parallel explains the above, "Him that hateth peace" (120:6b).

B. He wanted peace but his neighbors preferred war.

Lessons to Remember:

A. There is no distress as great as that of one who is falsely accused (Ps. 31:13).
B. The slanderer will reap what he has sown (Gal. 6:7).
C. The conflict between "hawks and doves" is perennial.
D. When facing great problems, consolation and strength can be found in remembering past blessings.
E. All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (II Tim. 3:12).

Psalm 121

A Song Praising God's Providential Keeping Of His People

Intro: This lovely song of ascent was penned by an unknown author. It was designed to be sung by pilgrims as they journeyed up to Jerusalem for holy services. It has been called, "The Traveler's Psalm" and "The Soldier's Hymn." Kirkpatrick calls it an "exquisite Psalm" and a "sweet outpouring of quiet truth." It was inspired by the author's profound trust in the Lord's care and keeping of his people. It is designed for antiphonal singing. The first pair of verses were sung by the precentor. (Notice they are in the first person). The rest of the song is sung by the chorus of singers in the third person. The **key word** is ***"keep "*** Six times he speaks of Jehovah keeping his people. This may reflect the faith of Hezekiah when his kingdom was under attack by Sennacherib's great Assyrian army (Compare Isaiah 36:1-37:20).

I. The Author's Faith and Trust in God's Protection (1:1-2).

A. "Unto the mountains," i.e., the hills or mountains upon which Jerusalem and the holy temple of God stood (Comp. Ps. 78:68-69).
1. It is not from the mountains of Zion that help comes, but from Jehovah whose temple is there.
a. Heathen neighbors had the temples of their idols on hills, but they were impotent to save.

B. The "Maker of heaven and earth" speaks of God's creative power (121:2).
1. If he can create a world, he can protect a tiny individual or nation he has created.

II. The Safety of All Who Trust in Jehovah (121:3-8).

A. "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved," i.e., to slip and fall (121:3).
B. He "will not slumber," because God is omnipotent and needs no rest.
1. Earthly guards and watchmen might be overcome by sleep and allow injury to befall their charges,
2. But Israel's watchman is divine, not human, he will never fail to protect his people (Heb. 13:5).

C. Jehovah is our keeper or guardian (121:5a).
l. Six times he is so described.
2. "He that keepeth Israel," alludes to Jacob's night at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-16).

D. "Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand" (121:5b).
1. Shade offers protection from the burning desert sun.
a The meaning here is that He provides us what ever protection is needed
2. From the sun by day...the moon by night (121:6).
a This means protection day and night, or all the time,
b. It is interesting that ancient people and some contemporary primitive people believe that too much exposure to the moon will cause "moon stroke" or lunacy which is from the term "luna." Some mistakenly appeal to this verse for their "divine proof"

E. Our God preserves us "from ***all evil"*** (121:7a).
1. Through him we are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:31-39).
2. He keeps or preserves our soul (121:7b).

a. To the Hebrews this meant our life.
b. If the soul is kept safe, all is safe.
c. He keeps us as a rich man guards his treasures; as a presidential guard preserves his chief's life and well-being.

F. He preserves our "going out and coming in" (121:8).
1. We go out to labor and come in to repose.
2. We go forth in youth and come home to God at life's end.
3. This refers to the whole of life (I Thess. 5:23).
4. "Keep" is from the word ***shemuroth*** which signifies the eyelids. As they protect and keep the eyes, so Jehovah keeps his people.

Lessons to Remember:

A. "It is wise to look to the strong for strength" Spurgeon.
B. Jehovah is the sole keeper of the soul.
C. God's children are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (I Pet. 1:5).
D. In the hymn, **Sweeter Than All**, we sing, "Christ will me his aid afford, never to fall, never to fall.
E. " The shepherd of the flock is the shepherd of every sheep, and will take care that not one, even of the little ones, shall perish" (Matthew Henry).
F. God has not kept us safe thus far, only to abandon us in some later trial or tribulation.

Psalm 122

A Prayer Song For The Peace Of Jerusalem

Intro: The Mesoretic scribes attributed this psalm to David. However, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Syriac and Chaldee Versions do not. Nor do some ancient Hebrew manuscripts. Since it speaks of the temple as in existence, it seems certain that David was not the author. This is a song of ascents, sung by pilgrims as they made their way to the holy city for worship. Such sacred pilgrimages are the background that prompted this writing of this hymn. Compare Luke 2:41-45. Three times each year, faithful Hebrews sought to go up to Jerusalem at Pentecost. Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles for worship. While the words were penned by a devout Hebrew lyricist, the author was inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. This psalm helps us to comprehend the great love the Hebrews had for their holy city, Jerusalem. It also helps us understand the bitter conflict now raging between Jews and Palestinians over the control of Jerusalem. "There are few more eloquent expressions of deep love for the worship of the Lord than the opening sentence of this psalm" (W. T. Purkiser). Gregory of Nazianzus was a pagan. His wife, Nonna, a Christian. Daily she prayed for his salvation. One night he dreamed he was singing, "I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the lord." This so impressed him that he soon was converted and baptized. He grew to be a noted Christian leader, spending 45 years as a teacher of God's people. When Wolfgang Schunch, the Christian martyr of Lotharing, Germany, heard that he was to be burned to death, he began to sing this lovely psalm.

I. His Joy in Worship (122:1-2).

A. The thrill of worship.
B. The joy of worshiping with others.
C. The joy of being inside God's house.

II. His Love for Jerusalem (122:3-5).

A. The emotions he experienced in seeing Jerusalem restored (122:3).
1. Once it had been in ruins, now it was built (The Hebrew term made be rendered "rebuilt").
2. It was now compacted together, i.e., solid and unbroken and perhaps speaks of it rebuilt walls.
B. It was Jerusalem to which the 12 tribes of Israel would go for fellowship and worship.
C. In Jerusalem were thrones for judgment and those of the House of David.
1.Thrones for judgment refers to courts with their judges.
2. Thrones of the house of David refers to the offices of the chief administrators of the nation.

III. His Exhortation to Pray for Jerusalem (122:6-7).

A. Pray for the peace of the city.

1. Peace is from "***shalom***" which means, "peace, prosperity, perfection, health."

B. Pray for the prosperity of the city.

1. Jerusalem as her capital, stands for the entire nation of Israel.

IV. His Resolution (122:8-9).

A. For his brethren and companions

B. For the House of Jehovah,

C. To seek their good.

Lessons:

A. As they held Jerusalem in highest esteem so we would honor and esteem God's church.

B. That which produces gladness in our hearts is an accurate indicator of our spiritual character.

C. Good children are happy to go home, faithful Christians are always happy to go to God's house for worship.

D. As he saw Jerusalem compacted and built together, so we should work and pray for the day when all who love Jesus will worship and serve God as one united body of believers.

E. As they prayed for their holy city, we should daily pray for the peace of the Lord's church which is the new or heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22).

F. "Peace and prosperity go together and are secured by prayer" (G. Scroggie).

Psalm 123

A Song Of Unfaltering Faith And Patience In The Face Of Contemptuous Scorn

Intro: This is a song of ascents, written by an anonymous author. It is a simple prayer with but one thought, a plea for help against scornful enemies. The occasion for writing was the contempt of sinners which the author was experiencing. It likely was written in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah when the remnant of Jews who returned from Babylonian Captivity sought to rebuild their city, temple and nation (Neh. 2:19). It has been called "a deep sigh of a pained heart" of a persecuted saint. Some have called it "the Psalm of the Eye," based on vss. 2-3. Ancient writers called it "Oculus Sperans, the Eye of Hope." S. Cox described it as "a little gem, cut with the most exquisite poetry." Note that the author opens in the first person (vs. 1), and then finishes in the plural. Thus the precentor would sing the first line and the audience or choir would respond with the following words.

I. The Author's Faith Declared (123:1).

A. It is God alone to whom he looks for help.

II. The Hope of the Worshipers Expressed (123:2).

A. As servants look to their master

B. So they look unto Jehovah.

1. For any sign or signal of a command, a wish or desire.

2. As the source from whence he blessings flow.

III. Their Prayer (123:3a).

A. Have mercy upon us, O Jehovah.

B. Bestow upon us thy grace.

IV. Their Trouble Revealed (123:3b-4).

A. For we are filled with contempt,

1. That is, their enemies had poured contempt upon them.

B. Those who were at ease were scoffing at them.

C. The proud ones held them in contempt.

Lessons to Remember:

A. It is good to have some one to look up to, especially if that person is God.
B. To reproach people because they are Jehovah's servants is to reproach Jehovah himself (Matt. 25:40).
C. Scorn and contempt are like an acid that eats into the soul.
D. Why should any man ridicule men for yielding to their own convictions of what is right?
E. This psalm shows that the force of prayer is not in many words but in fervency of spirit (Martin Luther).
F. We should view trouble and persecution as a highway to blessings.

Psalm 124

A Hymn Praising God For National Deliverance

Intro: This song of ascents is attributed to David by the Mesoretic scribes. However, most recent scholars think it came from an inspired writer of a later period. The song clearly was written to commemorate and thank God for deliverance from some near fatal calamity. Some think it refers to the deliverance of Judah from Assyria's army in the days of King Hezekiah (Is. 37: 36-38). Others believe it refers to their deliverance from Babylonian Captivity (II Chron. 36:22). Yet others are convinced it refers to their deliverance from Sanballat, Tobiah and other heathen foes in Nehemiah's day (Neh. 4:7-22), Still others assign it to the deliverance of the Jews from extermination by the intercession of Esther. "The whole psalm is alive with joy, the joy of an escape, of a triumph, as wonderful as it was unexpected" (From J. J. S Perowne). In their darkest hours, the Hebrews had only their prayers to Jehovah to protect them. The ancient Spartans refused to build walls for their city. They said, "our spears are our walls." The walls of the church are the prayers of the saints. The Protestant Hugenots of France, ruthlessly persecuted by the Roman Catholics, always began their worship with the last verse of this song. In 1582, an imprisoned minister, John Durie, was set free in Edinburgh. He was met and welcomed by 200 friends as he entered town. Soon more than 2000 gathered around him and they all began to sing, this psalm. His persecutors were terrified at the sight of these saints singing these sacred lines.

I. He Acknowledges their Divine Deliverance (124:1-3).
A. Their deliverance was solely the work of their God (124:21-2).
B. Their enemies would have devoured them (124:3).
1. "Swallowed up" means swallowed alive like the large fish swallows its prey, and like the earth swallowed up Korah and his band (Num. 16:32-33).

II. The Extent of their Dangers (124:4-5).
A. The danger was like the raging waters of a swollen, flooding river. It would have swept everything in its path.
B. "Proud waters" literally means "wild waves".

III. The Closeness of their Escape (124:6-7).
A. It was as if they had been snatched out of the mouth of a ravening beast (124:6).
B. Like a bird caught in a snare, by God's help they escaped before the fowler took them away (124:7).

IV. The Lessons this Taught Them (124:8).
A. Jehovah, their creator, was also their deliverer.
B. Their covenant God had remembered his people.

Lessons To Remember:
A. We know God is on the side of his people, are we on His side?
B. You might already have been swallowed up if God had not intervened to save you.
C. Pressures, temptations and persecutions, no matter how great, cannot wrest the faithful from God's hand.
D. Never forget from whence your help comes, and be thankful.

Psalm 125

A Song Of The Believers' Confidence In Jehovah

Intro*:* This song of ascents is by an anonymous author. It may reflect events in the days of Nehemiah when the returned remnant of the Jews were rebuilding Jerusalem's walls under great duress by their enemies (Neh. 6:10-18). Some think it refers to events in King Hezekiah's reign, during the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib and his Assyrian armies (Compare II Kings 18 and 19). It is a lovely hymn of heavenly trust. During the stormy days of the Scottish Reformation, when Bloody Queen Mary and her Catholic allies made war on the Protestants, they frequently sang this hymn to reassure themselves.

I. The Permanence of Those Who Trust in Jehovah (125:1).

A. Their trust in Jehovah makes them as permanent as Mt. Zion.

B. They cannot be moved: but will abide forever.

II. The Protection Jehovah Provides His Saints (125:2).,

A. As the mountains round about Jerusalem are her bulwark,

B. So Jehovah surrounds his people with His protection.

C. His protection lasts forevermore.

III. The Divine Promise to the Righteous (125:3a).

A. The scepter of the wicked will not rest upon the lot of the righteous.

1. The "scepter of the wicked" is their authority to rule.
2. The "lot" of the righteous is their inheritance.

IV. The Peril that the Righteous Must Avoid (125:3b).

A. They must not allow their hand to do iniquity.

V. The Author's Prayer For God's Blessings Upon the Righteous (125:4).

A. Do good O Jehovah to them that do good and are upright in heart.

VI. His Prediction Concerning the Wicked (125:5a).

A. The wicked, who walk in crooked paths, will received their just reward.

VII. His Benediction: Peace be upon Israel (125:5b).

A. Paul bestows this blessing upon the church in Galatia (Gal. 6:16).

B. "Peace is the end of tyranny, hostility, division, disquiet, alarm: peace is freedom and harmony and security and blessedness" (F. Delitzsch).

Lessons to Remember:

A. "Trust in the Lord, always, altogether, and for all things" (Robert Nisbet).

B. Sinners are as unstable as sand; saints as permanent as Mt. Zion.

C. Like guards posted around an encampment, Jehovah is round about his people, to protect them (vs. 2).

D. Crooked people walk a crooked path, but saints walk the straightened and narrow way (vs. 5).

E. Those who choose to walk in crooked paths will have their final end with crooks in eternal punishment.

F. Never a day should pass that we fail to pray for God's peace upon his church, the Israel of God.

Psalm 126

A Song Of Thanksgiving For God's Great Blessings

Intro. This song of ascents is by an anonymous author. It almost certainly belongs to the early days of Israel's restoration to their homeland following the Babylonian captivity (Compare vs. 1 with II Chronicles 36:22). The returnees were thrilled that God had so blest them, but they prayed that many more of their brethren would join them to aid in rebuilding their nation. This psalm provides the basis for two of our favorite hymns. "**Great Things He hath Done**" is based on vs. 2b; "**Bringing in the Sheaves**" is based on vs. 5-6.

I. The Wonder of Their Emancipation (126:1-3).

A. The author gives Jehovah the credit for their freedom.

1. The proclamation came from Cyrus, King of Persia, but God had stirred his heart to do so (II Chron. 36:22).

2. They credited God both for sending them into captivity and for releasing them.

3. To the Hebrew writers, history was "His-story."

B. The news of their release was so unexpected and astonishing that they could not believe their ears.

1. They thought they were dreaming.

C. When they heard the news they broke into laughter and singing (126:20a).

D. Their heathen neighbors recognized God's hand in their deliverance (126:2b).

E. The Hebrews agreed, their great God had indeed done this great thing.

II. Their Prayer for a Still Greater Blessing (126:4-6).

A. "Turn again our captivity, O Jehovah" (126:4).

1. "Bring back now the rest of our exiles, to fill us up like a stream in the dry South."

2. They needed more of their fellow Hebrews to come home so their task of rebuilding could be completed.

B. "As streams in the South"

1. As the winter storms bring rushing waters to the dry stream-beds of the desert Negev, so they hoped to see a great inflowing of returning refugees.

C. Their efforts at rebuilding and restoring their nation are likened to a farmer cultivating and sowing his fields.

1. Sowing in tears refers to the toil and anxiety of the farmer, all of the possible problems that he may encounter before he secures his harvest.

D. When their mission is completed, it will be like a farmer rejoicing in his harvest.

Lessons to Remember:

A. As Jehovah had done great things for Israel, so will He do great things for us.

B. As there is no reaping without sowing and cultivating and that is an arduous, difficult undertaking, so in spiritual matters, any thing of value will come only after the necessary toil of preparation and prayer.

C. As there is a time for weeping and mourning, so there is an appropriate time for God's children to sing, rejoice and be happy.

D. Never be surprised at the marvelous things God can and will do for you.

Psalm 127

A Song Teaching Dependence Upon Jehovah For Every Blessing

Intro: This Song of Ascents is attributed to Solomon. Several expressions in the psalm are also found in Solomon's Proverbs. The expression "his beloved" (vs. 2), is similar to Solomon's given name, "Jedediah," which means "beloved of Jehovah" (II Sam 12:25). It is didactic in nature and is classed by some as wisdom literature. If Solomon composed it, we can imagine it relating to the building of the temple of Jehovah. It would have been an apt song for those exiles who returned home after the Babylonian Exile to rebuild their lives and their nation. This psalm has been described as a bright picture of social and domestic happiness of a nation or a household which is truly dependent upon Jehovah. The writer contemplates social, civic, business and domestic aspects of life which he believes will end in failure without the blessings and involvement of Jehovah. It has been called. "The Builder's Psalm." Benjamin Franklin quoted the first verse of this psalm in his famous speech to the Constitutional Convention in 1787. He urged his fellow delegates to appeal to God in prayer for his assistance and blessing on their efforts. Samuel Cox wrote in 1874 that one could see on the lintel of the door of many an old English house the Latin phrase, *Nisi Dominos Fnistra,* which translates, "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor

in vain..." In Anglican Churches in days past, this psalm was appointed for the "Thanksgiving of Women after successful childbirth."

I. Jehovah Must Build the House if it is to Stand (127:1a).

A. This is true, whether it be the house of Jehovah, or undertakings for our own use.

B. When contemplating the building of a congregation or a house of worship, how important this truth is.

II. Jehovah Must Be the Keeper of the City if it is to Survive (127:1b).

A. Walls, watchmen, armies and military equipment can only do so much.

B. A nation must have God's approval and blessings if it is to survive.

1. Compare Daniel 4:17.

III. Jehovah Must Bless and Provide If Our Labor Is To Succeed (127:2).

A. Toil without God's blessings will be in vain.

1. "To rise up early and to take rest late" refers to man's effort to extend his working hours in order to reach his desired goal.

2. "To eat the bread of sorrow" (KJV) means "gaining your bread with anxious toil" (Moffat).

B. God gives "his beloved sleep."

1. He gives his children safety and peaceful repose. We can lie down in restful sleep, confident that our God will watch over us and bless our feeble efforts, making them sufficient for our needs.

a. Consider the blessings that come to us while we sleep:

b. We receive renewed health and vigor for our bodies.

c. We receive mental repose and refreshment.

d. We enjoy sweet and pleasant memories in our dreams.

e. Providential gifts such as rain, and drying winds work for the farmer's good. The fruits of the earth grow and ripen. While we are doing nothing but resting, God's providence is at work for our benefit.

IV. Jehovah Blesses the Family (127:3-5).

A. Children are a heritage of Jehovah.

1. That is, a gift bestowed by Him.

2. Rather than view a pregnancy as a blight a curse or a burden, Christians should view it as a reward from the Lord.

3. Among the ancient people a large flock of children were viewed as a special blessing. In a rural society, they were your work force. In a day when each man had to protect and defend his property from marauders, strong sons were his defense force. In an age without insurance or Social Security, many children were your providers and protectors in old age.

B. Children are like arrows in the hand of a mighty man (127:4).

1. A mighty man is a warrior.

2. A warrior needed many arrows to defeat his enemy.

3. So children were like arrows to their father.

4. A warrior without adequate arrows is at a real disadvantage,

5. Blessed is the man who hath quiver full of arrows, i.e., children.

C. The man with a large family will not be put to shame when he confronts his enemies.

1. The gate of the city was where business and the courts were conducted.

Lessons To Remember:

A. Is God the architect and the builder of your house?

B. Any human project without God's blessing and help is destined to ultimate failure.

C. All success in life is from God! Don't forget to be thankful.

D. Quiet, peaceful sleep is a gift from Jehovah.

E. All who have the mind of Christ see children as blessed gift from Jehovah.

F. All children come as a blessing form God but by neglect, they many grow up to be a curse to their family and society.

Psalm 128

The Happiness Of Those Who Fear Jehovah

Intro: This lovely psalm was penned by an anonymous author. It is grouped with the songs of ascents which were sung by pilgrims on their way to the great festivals at Jerusalem. It is a didactic song, in that it teaches important lessons to its recipients. It continues the thought of Psalm 127 which proclaimed that children are a heritage or gift from the Lord. Here, the picture painted is of a man and woman, married with children who labor to earn their bread. Together they are blessed by God: safe, healthy and happy. He enumerates those things which some think to be burdensome in married life and shows that God turns these things into blessings: the labor necessary to provide for a family; the limitations on a man in taking a wife; the children that come. God will make all to be a blessing to him. His many children will bless not only him but the nation as they contribute to its growth in population and in the good they do.

Ancient pagans all had their household gods whom they vainly hope would bless their homes. The God of our homes is Jehovah, the living God, who can and will bless our homes. Martin Luther called this psalm "The Marriage Song." Charles Spurgeon called it "A Family Hymn." The popular song**, Home Sweet Home** was written by John Howard Payne, who never knew what it was to have a home. Born in America in 1792, he wrote that song as part of an opera called, "The Maid of Milan." For a while, he was a popular actor in London. But his life and career were a failure. Many times he was left to wonder without lodging. One cold night he was homeless in New York. While wondering the streets he heard the words and melody of Home Sweet Homes wafting from a cozy cottage. He died in 1843 in Tunis, Africa, an exile from his home

I. His Beatitude (128:1).

A. "Blessed" means "happy."

1. "Blessed" never occurs in the singular in the Hebrew. God's blessings are always manifold. This means, "O the blessings of the man."

B. "Feareth the Lord."

1. "Fear of the Lord" is the characteristic of Old Testament religion.

a. "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).

b. Fear of Jehovah does not speak of morbid, slavish fear, but loving reverence and trust (Eccle. 12:13).

c. The man who fears God is blessed in himself, in his labor, in his wife, his children, in grandchildren, in his nation, all the days of his life.

C. "That walketh in his ways."

1. Fear is the inward principle and walk is die outward expression of it.

2. No one truly fears the Lord who does not walk in his ways.

II. The Domestic Rewards For Faithfulness (128:2-4).

A. He shall eat the labor of his hands (I28:2a).

1. This means that he could harvest his crop in peace without marauders stealing his produce.

2. Or, as free men, they would be able to reap the reward of their labors rather than seeing them go to a slave master.

3. Moses warned if they neglected God, their harvest would be taken by their enemies (Lev. 26:16).

B. "The labor of his hands" reminds us that God expects us to labor and earn our living (Gen. 3:17; II Thess. 3:10).

1. It precludes stealing, defrauding or living off the possessions of others.

2. He promises to bless and protect the labor of those who so work to provided for themselves.

C. Happiness will be his (128:2b).

D. His wife shall be as a fruitful vine.

1. A blessing to him and his children.

2. She not only will take, she will provide.

3. This speaks first of all of providing children for the marriage.

4. “In the innermost part of thy house” refers to her faithfulness in her domestic duties...in the home.

a. Larger tents and houses had the women’s quarters at the rear of the dwelling.

E. “Children, like olive plants, round about thy table” (128:3b).

1. This likens his children to numerous young seedlings sprouting up around the parent olive tree.

III. His Prayer for His Fellow-Citizens (128:5-6),

A. Jehovah bless you out of Zion, where his temple stood.

B. May you see good days for Jerusalem so long as you live.

1. That means to see Jerusalem once again, a safe, stable, prosperous city.

C. May you live long enough to see your children’s children, i.e., your grandchildren.

1. In that age, people died young. Average life span was 35 years or less.

2. To live long enough to see grandchildren was a universal longing.

a. “Children’s children are the crown of old men” (Prov. 17:6).

3. Today, the tragedy is often reversed as many outlive their minds and their health and spend years as hopeless invalids.

D. Peace Be upon Israel, the people and nation of God (128:6b).

Lessons to Remember:

A. “Before the Fall, Paradise was man’s home; since the Fall, home has been his Paradise” (A. W. & J. C. Hare).

B. “Of houses (or families), are made cities, of cities, provinces, of provinces, kingdoms.”

C. The welfare of a nation depends on virtuous families and virtuous families living by the fear of Jehovah.

D. A good wife should be as a fruitful grape vine, not a berry briar.

E. Pity those godless souls who live by the code, “It is best not to be born at all, or to die as soon as possible.”

F. A man’s heart can be seen in his walk.

G. God’s ways are blessed ways.

Psalm 129

A Prayer For The Defeat Of Israel’s Enemies

Intro: This song of ascents is also anonymous. The second half of it is an imprecation, i.e., a prayer for punishment and doom upon the nation’s adversaries. This psalm is very similar to 124 and both are likely by the same author. The writer stresses that Israel’s many deliverances over the years always were from “the righteousness of Jehovah.” The occasion for its composition was likely the celebration of their release from Babylonian Captivity and their return to their homeland. The first four verses look to the past and the afflictions they had suffered. The last four verses look to the future and the judgment of their enemies by God. This psalm is full of illustrations from rural farm life. When the Waldenses, a small band of believers in northern Italy, were under heavy persecution by the Roman Catholic authorities, their men met and swore a solemn oath of mutual support in their resistance and then engaged in worship. Henri Amaud mounted the pulpit, with his sword in one hand and his bible in the other, and preached from this psalm. He pledged he would never rest until his brethren could return in peace to their homeland.

I. He Reflects on God’s Past Deliverances from their Enemies (129:1-4).

A. Israel's history was one of ongoing persecution by various enemies.

1. The nation’s youth was spent in Egyptian bondage.

B. In spite of all attempts to destroy them, their enemies had not prevailed.

C. Plowers plowed upon their backs...made long furrows.

1. The lashes of the taskmasters laid stripes upon their backs that reminded him of the furrow cut in the earth by the farmer’s plow.

2. Those who laid on the stripes did it throughly, enjoying their cruel deed.

D. But God was righteous in protecting, preserving and delivering them (129:4a).

E. He cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

1. Likely the cords (or bonds) that bound them in their slavery.
2. The cords may well refer to the harness that attached the plow to the oxen. If God cut those harness cords, they could no longer draw the plow over the backs of his people. This of course is part of his figure of the rigors of slavery.

II. His Imprecation upon the Nation's Enemies (129:5-8).

A. He prays they will be:
1. Put to shame, i.e., humiliated.
2. Turned backward, i.e., frustrated,
3. Defeated, i.e., destroyed like grass on the rooftops.

B. They hated Zion (129:5b).
1. Zion (Jerusalem) stands for the nation, of which it was the capital and center.
2. Those who hated Zion hated the God of Israel and his religion.

C. Let them be as grass upon the housetops.
1. The roofs of their houses were flat, plastered sun baked with mud and straw. Seed would sprout in the mix but soon withered in the hot sun.
2. Hence he prayed that they would be short-lived and soon gone.

D. Reapers would not bother with such worthless sprigs of grass that grew on the roofs tops.
1. They would not gather them in their bosom, i.e., the front fold of their robes which were used to gathered produce before tying it into bundles or depositing it in its final storage place.

E. May they not say, "The blessing of Jehovah be upon you" (129:8).
1. May there be no customary, friendly greeting extended them such as Hebrews usually passed.
2. Compare the greeting of Boaz to his harvest workers (Ruth 2:4).

Lessons to Remember:

A. We must remember the past and the lessons learned, lest we repeat the mistakes then made.

B. "Survived sorrows yield joy and hope."

C. The Lord's church can well sing the thoughts of vs. 1-2: "Many a time have they afflicted me...Yet they have not prevailed against me."

D. The church of Jesus is so useful, benevolent and innocent of harm, so full of goodness that those who harm her are wronging the human race and deserve to be treated as enemies thereof.

E. In death, the righteous are praised, honored and remembered. The wicked are buried, "unwept, unhonored and unsung."

F. As so many only think to call upon God in times of affliction, He sends such to them for their own good.

Psalm 130

A Penitent Cry For Forgiveness

Intro: This anonymous psalm is one of the songs of ascents sung by pilgrims as they went up to Jerusalem to worship. It is the sixth of seven penitential psalms which express a sense of sinful guilt and a sincere repentance thereof (Compare Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102 & 143). Some think this psalm may have been written by Hezekiah when he was recovered from his severe illness (Compare Isaiah 38:9). When most worship was conducted in Latin, this psalm was known as "De Profundis," the Latin for 'Out of the Depths." It is often used in Catholic rituals as they hope to pray souls out of purgatory. The **key word** is "hope" (vs. 7). The **key phrase** is "plenteous redemption." This anticipates the grace and salvation of the gospel of Christ. When Martin Luther was recovering from a serious illness which had been accompanied by great temptations, he said to his attendants, "Come, to spite the Devil, let us sing the Psalm De Profundis." He liked to call this a "Pauline Psalm" because of its emphasis on grace, mercy and hope. At daybreak, on Aug. 1,1830, the salves in the West Indian Colonies were to receive their freedom. The night before, great multitudes never went to sleep, as they eagerly awaited the first light of dawn and

their promised freedom. So we should wait in joyful anticipation for God's blessings. Eight times the author mentions the name of God in his eight verses.

I. His Plea for an Audience With God (130:1-2).

A. "Out of the depths he cried unto God (130:1).

1. This is a figure of one awash in deep waters that threaten to swallow him up

a. Compare Psalm 18:16.

2. This compares our sins to a ocean that might well swallow us.

B. We sing, "I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore" (**Love Lifted Me**).

1. Another hymn says, "Out of my bondage, sorrow and night, Jesus I come to Thee." (**Jesus I Come**).

II. He Sees God's Grace as his Only Hope (130:3-4).

A. "If...Jehovah shouldest mark iniquities...who could stand?

1. No could.

2. If God kept a record of all our sins, we would be hopeless, but thankfully He does not do so, therefore we have hope.

3. To appreciate God's grace, imagine if He scrutinized our every sin and never forgave what he found (Mal. 3:2-3).

4. Compare Romans 4:7-8. To His saved ones, God does not reckon sin.

B. But there is forgiveness with thee...(130:4a).

1. The word "forgiveness" occurs only three times in the Old Testament (Neh. 9:17 & Dan. 9:9).

C "That thou mayest be feared." God forgives us in order that we might fear Him. We would dread a stern unforgiving God b

III. He Expresses His Patience and Hope for Pardon and Salvation (130:5-6).

A. He will patiently wait for the Lord to answer his prayer.

1. Waiting requires patience and trust.

2. They that wait upon the Lord shall mount up on eagles wings (Is. 40:31).

B. His faith gives him hope.

1. In hope we are saved (Rom. 8:24).

2. Hope is like an anchor, sure and steadfast (Heb. 6:19).

C. His faith and hope are based upon God's dependable Word (130:5b).

1. Rom. 10:17 "Faith cometh of hearing the word of God."

D. As the watchman is absolutely confident that morning will come, we can be confident in God's salvation.

1. "I have greater hope in the Lord than the watchmen who wait for the dawn; more than the sentry who expects the morning light" (Harrison).

2. "More anxiously than the watchmen" (Kirkpatrick).

IV. His Exhortation To God's People (130:7-8).

A. Hope, for with Jehovah there is loving-kindness (i.e., grace).

B. And "plenteous redemption" i.e., "A wealth of saving power" (Moffatt).

C. God will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

1. "He himself will redeem or pay the ransom, which he did by sending his only begotten Son (Matt. 1:21; Eph. 1:7).

2. "He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities" is a word-painting of man restored and of Paradise regained" (Octavious Winslow).

Lessons To Remember:

A. It is better to be in deep dangers, praying, than on a high mountain playing" (Archibald Symson).

B. To be truly acceptable to God, one must have this awareness of his own sin, be truly penitent and know the assurance of God's pardon.

C. Few of us will ever know the full joy of salvation until we have found ourselves in the depths and experienced God's salvation.

D. Be grateful that God does not keep a record of our past sins. Be kind and do the same for your fellow-man.

E. Two words are precious jewels of our faith, “hope” and “plenteous redemption.”

Psalm 131

A Humble Soul’s Talk With God

Intro: This song of ascents is attributed to David. It could well be an echo of David’s answer to his wife Michael when she ridiculed him for his joyous worship before the Ark of God (II Sam. 6:16-22). Perowne calls this, “One of the most beautiful (psalms) in the whole Book.” “It is a literary gem of exquisite beauty and surpassing spirituality” (Cohen). It is “the most perfect expression of the child-like spirit, which... is characteristic of the subjects of the kingdom of Heaven” (Maclaren). Davison describes it as “An exquisite little picture of humility and resignation, unsurpassed perhaps in the Scriptures.” “The writer, in repudiating the spirit of presumptuous knowledge, implies that at one time this had been his attitude of mind: but he has come to his better self, and has quieted the turbulence of his thoughts” (Oesterley).

I. He Confesses his Humility Before God (131:1).

A. His heart was not haughty

1. Haughty is defined, “Showing oneself above others”... always used in the evil sense of arrogant, disdainful” (**Vine’s Dictionary of Biblical Words**).

B. His eyes were not lofty.

1. God hates haughty eyes (Prov. 6:17).
2. The humble publican would not lift up his eyes (Luke 18:13).
3. “Pride has its seat in the heart but looks forth from the eyes and expresses itself in the actions” (Perowne).
4. “For Jehovah hath... respect unto the lowly” (Ps. 138:6).

C. He did not exercise himself in things too wonderful for him.

1. It is a mark of true wisdom not to exercise ourselves in great matters that are beyond our knowledge or experience.
2. “I do not seek, O Lord, to penetrate thy depths. I by no means think my intellect equal to them: but I long to understand to some degree thy truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand that I may believe; but I believe that I may understand” (Peter Anselm).

Ⅲ. He Confesses the Peace He has Found in God (131:2).

A. His soul was quieted, or at peace, like a weaned child asleep in his mother’s arms.

1. As a baby must be weaned from his mother’s breast, so we must be weaned from those things of the world that keeps us from growing up in Christ: worldly pleasures, temptations and ambitions.

B. To appreciate how hard this may be for some Christians, remember how hard it is for some babies to be weaned.

III. He Exhorts his Fellow Citizens to Hope in Jehovah Always and Forever (131:3).

A. Israel is the people of God.

B. Hope is like medicine to the soul. Where there is hope we can survive almost anything without yielding to Satan.

1. Without hope we are of all creatures, most pitiful.

C. Having once committed our hearts to God, it is essential that we cling to him in hope forevermore.

1. Not to do so is to forfeit our salvation (II Pet. 2:20-22).

Lessons to Remember:

A. “Few words, short lines, sober images, all conspire to place in striking relief that virtue which certainly was not a characteristic of the Jewish nation” (Reuss).

B. “All virtues together are a body whereof humility is the head.”

C. “Too often, to claim humility is to forfeit it.”

D. “The worst kind of pride is that which apes humility.”

E. Unless forgiveness humbles us, we have not truly received it.

F. “For I say...to every man...not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly...” (Rom. 12:3).
G. No man can rob us of our hope in God, but we can forfeit it.
H. What can the world give us that compares with peace and trust that God gives us? We can rest like a babe asleep in its mother’s arms?

Psalm 132

A Song Beseeching Jehovah’s Blessings Upon His Holy Temple

Intro: This is yet another song of ascents by an anonymous author. It was likely composed at the time when Solomon’s temple was dedicated (See II Chronicles 5 & 6). The **theme** of this song is the Temple and the Throne of Israel. It is a prayer that God’s promises to David regarding a permanent house for his worship will not fail of fulfilment and that David’s heirs may ever sit upon his throne. To properly understand this and the other psalms, careful attention must be paid to the parallelisms used by the authors. The author implies that many of the Hebrews had long ignored and even forgotten the ark of God before David’s rise to power

I. A Prayer that God Would Remember David’s Resolution to Build the Temple (132:1-5).

A. Remember David’s affliction
1. As he labored to provide a permanent house for God’s ark (I Chron.22:14).
2. “The Temple was built in David’s heart before it was built by Solomon’s hands” (Cox).
B. It was with David that the covenant had been made, therefore they used his name in their prayer.
C. David’s solemn vow (132:2).
1. “I will not come into...my house, nor go up into my bed...” A hyperbolic expression.
2. Meaning he would not rest until he had built a suitable house for Jehovah.
D. It is interesting that David seemed to place more importance on building a permanent temple than did God himself.
1. Compare II Samuel 7:5
2. When Israel finally got their temple built it did not result in greater loyalty, love and service to God on their part. For many it became a fetish.

II. He Briefly Traces the History of the Ark of God in Times Prior to David (132:6-10).

A. “We heard of it in Ephrathah.” Rumor had it that the ark was somewhere in Ephrathah.
1. Although David grew up in Bethlehem, he had never seen the ark of God that rested near by.
2. Ephrathah was the ancient name of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
B. Evidently, David instituted a search to locate the ark and found it “in the field of the wood.” This is the meaning of Kiriath-jearim.
C. Having found it, David had the ark taken up to Zion to the tabernacle he had constructed for it.
1. A tabernacle was a tent, a temporary structure.
2. David’s dream was to revive the worship of Jehovah among his people (132:7).
3. He understood what later Hebrews did not, that God did not actually dwell in the tabernacle or the temple. His throne is in the heavens. Those buildings were no more than his footstool (I Chron. 28:2).
D. “Arise O Jehovah, into thy resting-place” (132:8).
1. Moses used similar words in reference to the removal of the ark (Num. 10:35).
2. “Thou, and the ark of thy strength.” The ark with the ***shekinah*** was the symbol of God’s presence among them.
E. Let thy priests by clothed with righteousness.
1. That is, appropriately adorned to go about ministering before the ark (Ex. 28:2).
a. Also that their personal lives and conduct be appropriately holy.
F. “And thy servants shout for joy.”
1. Holiness and happiness should always be found dwelling together.
2. The priests and those they led in worship would all rejoice together.
G. Turn not away the face of thine anointed (132:10).
1. He refers to Solomon, David’s son, the chosen and appointed heir and king (II Chron. 6:42).

2. Turn not away his face, i.e., do not refuse his petitions.

III. The Divine Answer to Their Prayer (132:11-18).

A. Jehovah's oath to David.

1. Compare II Sam. 7:9,12.
2. God's immutable promise was sealed with an oath (Heb. 6:16-18).
3. The fruit of his body would sit upon his throne, i.e., his fleshly descendants would succeed him. Thus his dynasty would be established and preserved.

B. The condition for the fulfilment of this promise

1. "If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony" (132:12).
2. The Hebrews wanted the promise without observing the conditions; so do many church folks today.
3. Conditions test our obedience and trust. They solemnly warn us to be faithful (Rev. 2:10).
4. David's heirs failed the test, thus the promises relating to the political kingdom failed. They were renewed later on in God's Son, the heir of David.

C. For Jehovah hath chosen Zion (132:13).

1. God chose it, David fought and captured it, Solomon built the temple upon it and God's ***Shekinah*** dwelt there.
2. Zion was no different than any other Canaanite city until God selected it for the place of his temple.
3. "Forevermore," is a relative, not an absolute promise. When the Hebrews refused to obey God and when they rejected his messiah, they forfeited the promise.

D. This is my resting place...here will I dwell" These are anthropomorphic phrases to indicated that there his house (temple) would be built and there his ark would reside.

E. God's rich promises (132:15-18).

1. I will abundantly **bless her provision**. Food and every need will be supplied.
2. I will **cloth** her priests with salvation.
3. I will make her saints to **shout with joy.**
4. will make **the horn of David to bud.**
    a. Horn stands for power and strength, as in the animal kingdom.
    b. "David" stands for his dynasty, his heirs on the throne.
5. I have ordained a lamp for mine anoint, i.e., **light and guidance.**
6. His **enemies I will cloth with shame**; i.e., defeat and humiliation.
7. David's **crown will flourish,** i.e., be brilliant, beautiful and respected.

Lessons to Remember:

A. We should pray that God will remember and bless the righteous souls who preceded us and blest us by their labors.

B. We need David's spirit of dedication concerning the physical welfare of God's church. Too many are content to be well-

C. We stand on a rock-solid foundation if we have God's immutable oath for our promise.

D. God desires to abide with those whom He loves. He dwells in the heart of every faithful Christian (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20).

E. If Jews could rightly appeal to God to bless their kingdom and religion for the sake of David, their ancestor and benefactor, can we not call upon God to bless his church-kingdom for Christ's sake.

F. "He who is ready to vow on every occasion will break his vow on every occasion" (Henry Hurst).

G. When David busied himself to build God a house, God requited him by promising to build him (David) a house, i.e., a dynasty.

H. Those who rule nations would do well to heed vs. 12. God is saying "either govern your kingdom by my words or else 1 will root you out and destroy you forever" (M. Luther).

I. We an easily ask too little in our prayers, but never too much. When we come before such a great and mighty king, large petitions are in order, if they be according to his will.

J. Those who are not clothed with salvation will be clothed with shame (vs. 18).

K. Righteousness in the pulpit and rejoicing in the pew are the keys to a successful church.

Psalm 133

On the Blessing Of Brethren Dwelling Together In Unity

Intro. This too is a song of ascents. The theme is the blessings and joy of national and spiritual unity. It is attributed to David by the Mesoretic scribes. The occasion is unsure. Several possibilities have been suggested: (1). When David was coronated after eight years of civil war. All the people assembled at Hebron and said, "We are thy bone and thy flesh," meaning united under his leadership (II Sam. 5:1). Second Chronicles 12:38-40 notes "And there was joy in Israel" (2). Following the civil rebellion of Absalom. "David bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man" (II Sam. 19:14). 3). Perhaps it was in Hezekiah's day when he organized a great Passover and invited the alienated Hebrews of the Northern Kingdom to come and observe the feast with their brethren of the South (II Chron. 30:5-27). Their coming down from the northern regions near Mt. Hermon would fit the picture of the dew coming down from thence to Zion, which in nature would never actually happen. (4). Possibly it refers to the restoration of the nation following the Babylonian Captivity. "The people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem" (Ezra 3:1). (5). As demonstrated when pilgrims from all the tribes of Israel assembled at Zion along with those of the Diaspora, i.e., from foreign lands, and were united in worship before God. "This psalm is an effusion of holy joy, occasioned by the sight of the gathering of Israel as one great household at the yearly feasts" (Alexander). Of this psalm Herder wrote, "It has the fragrance of a lovely rose." "Nowhere has (unity) been so gracefully illustrated, as in this short ode" (Perowne). It is a precious jewel of only 37 words, each one rich in meaning. Augustine says that this psalm gave birth to the monastic movement, attracting those who hungered to dwell in unity with like-minded brethren.

I. A Call to Consider the Virtues of Unity (133:1).

A. "Behold" Stop; look and consider this. It is something noteworthy and important.

1. Unity is a wonder, seldom seen.

B. How good and pleasant.

1. "Rare and lovely" (Moffatt).

2. Good and pleasant are two different things. A thing may be good but not pleasant or pleasant but not good. Unity is both.

3. It is a wonderful thing when brothers live together in harmony.

a. It is pleasant to God.

b. It is pleasant to the brothers so united.

c. It is pleasant to others to behold that unity.

d. "We are blood brothers of every Blood-bought and Blood-washed soul in the universe" (P. F. Bresee).

C. "Brethren"

1. In Scripture, brethren is never used of all men, but only of such as are united by some affinity, chiefly religious.

a. Our unity in Christ does not rest on physical, national, social or cultural uniformity. It is a unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3-4).

2.We may have brethren in the flesh, with whom we share no spiritual affinity. We may be brothers in nationality but be unrelated spiritually.

3. The psalmist speaks of fellow-Israelites.

4. Today we would speak of our fellow-Christians.

II. He Poetically Describes the Beauty of Brotherly Unity (133:2-3),

A. It is like the precious oil of consecration.

1. This refers to the oil of consecration used to anoint priests for their office (Ex. 30:22- 30).

a. Unity is a holy thing like the sacred oil of consecration.

2. It was olive oil made fragrant by adding aromatics such as myrrh, cinnamon, calamus and cassia.

3. For us, the Holy Spirit is the common anointing of all Christians, who are also priests of God (I Pet. 2:5,9), serving in his temple, the church (I Cor. 3:16).

a. The Holy Spirit is likened to oil (Is. 61:1)

b. See II Corinthians 1:21-22.

4. When Aaron was anointed, the precious oil flowed from his head to the skirts of his garments. So the blessings of unity flow from the leadership to the youngest follower, to the most distant disciple.

5. Aaron is named since he was the first priest so consecrated. He also was representative of all who followed in the sacred office (Ex. 28:41).

B. Unity is like the dew of Mt. Hermon.

1. It is refreshing, life-giving, gentle, pervasive.

2. "The dews of Syrian nights are excessive; on many mornings, it looks as if there had been a heavy rain" (G. A. Smith).

3. In a parched land, dew is precious and a proper emblem of God's blessings on his people.

C. "There Jehovah commanded the blessing."

1. In Mt. Zion, where his temple stood, and where they assembled for worship.

D. "Even life for evermore."

1. Unity brings eternal life to brethren. For alienation always involves sin on the part of one or both parties. God hates him that soweth discord among brethren (Prov. 6:16-19).

2. Unity helps bring eternal life to the lost who upon seeing the love and joy of our unity will be drawn to Christ and his church where they will find salvation.

Lessons to Remember:

A. If it was good and pleasant for the Hebrews to dwell in national unity, how much more is it for Christ's disciples to do so.

B. Our unity rests not on physical, national or racial identity, it is a unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3-4).

C. Our unity must be based on certain divine truths that are essential to Christianity: one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God (Eph. 4:4).

D. Unity among brethren wells up from the heart, based on Christian faith and love. It cannot be successfully legislated and enforced by law.

E. Christian unity is more than a sentimental feeling of friendship, family or nationality. It is a unity based on a common Lord, faith, salvation, standard and hope.

Psalm 134

A Song Of Greeting To Those Who Watched The Temple By Night

Intro: This anonymous psalm is the last of the Songs of Ascents. It tells of the close of the day's worship at Jehovah's temple. The evening sacrifice had been offered, the final psalm had been sung. The watch was set for the night. It consisted of 24 Levites, three priests and the Captain of the Guard who were charged with keeping watch from sunset to sunrise. The priests kept the altar fire, fed the lamps and guarded the sacred structure from intrusion and from plunder (Spurgeon). The last cloud of smoke from the evening sacrifice had mixed with the darkening sky: the final note of the last evening hymn had died away. As the worshipers made their departure, they sang this final hymn. The watchmen then responded with their benediction (Adapted from Spurgeon). The psalm is sung in antiphonal manner. It is a beautiful little ode of only 23 words, each filled with sublimely beautiful. "The notes of this music are not new, but the arrangement of them is" (Scroggie).

I. The Call to the Priests and Levites to Praise God (134:1-2).

A. "Behold," means "come now and bless the Lord."

1. "Bless God," means to praise him in a reverential and adoring manner.

B. "Ye servants of Jehovah," speaks of the priests and Levites of the night watch.

1. The people "rejoiced over the priests and Levites that waited" i.e., ministered before Jehovah (Compare Nehemiah 12:44-47).

C. In those ancient days, the priests and Levites were the privileged people of God, enjoying special status and standing. Now all Christians are priests (I Pet.2:9) and the church is God's temple (I Cor. 3:16).

D. That "stand in the house of Jehovah."

1. This meant to serve their turn in the temple service (Comp. Deut. 10:8).

2. The ancient rabbis said that only the high priest was allowed to sit in the sanctuary, the rest were expected to stand as always ready to attend to their duties (John Trapp).

E. “Lift up your hands to the sanctuary.”
1. Lift up their hands in prayer (I Tim. 2:8).
2. “To the sanctuary” where the ***shekinah***, the symbol of God’s presence, was located.

II. The Response of the Priests (134:3).
A. Their benediction: “Jehovah bless thee.”
1. This was the customary blessing pronounced upon the worshipers (Comp. Num. 6:24-26).
2. “Bless thee out of Zion,” the place where God’s temple stood.
a. The Lord’s church is our spiritual Zion (Heb. 12:22-23).
B. “Even he that made heaven and earth,” i.e., He is the Creator of all.

Lessons to Remember:
A. We need to encourage those who devote their lives to the service of the Lord.
B. We too are privileged to offer up our sacrifices and praises to God by day and by night.
C. Our prayers should be lifted up to God continually (I Thess. 5:17).
D. Remember that God’s blessings flow forth from his Zion and today the church is his Zion.
E. Every good and perfect gift comes from God the Creator and Sustainer of all (James 1:17-18).

Psalm 135

A Call To Praise Jehovah For His Goodness, His Works And Judgements

Intro: This anonymous psalm is a mosaic composed of lines and phrases from many other psalms and books of Scripture. It is classed with other hallelujah psalms. “We have not here to do with a song which gushed fresh from the singer’s heart, but with echoes of many streams which a devout and meditative soul made its own...” (Maclaren). The writer’s heart is full of praise to his God. Fifteen times he refers to God as Lord,, four times as Jah, once as Adon, once as Elohim; a total of 38 references to God in his 21 verses. The day the great missionary, David Livingston, left his home in Blantyre, Scotland for Africa, he arose, had breakfast, read this psalm and then walked away to Glasgow to embark. Little did he or the world know the impact he would make on the world through his years of missionary service.

I. A Call to Praise Jehovah (135:1-2).
A. “Praise ye Jehovah.”
1. He ought to be praised.
2. He ought to be praised by each of us.
3. He ought to be praised now.
4. He ought to be praised in everything forever.
B. “Ye that stand in the house of Jehovah” i.e., the priests.
1. Every Christian a priest of God under Christ (I Pet. 2:5, 9).
2. The church of Christ is his holy temple (Eph. 2:20-22).

II. Our Motives for Praising Jehovah (135:3-14).
A. “For Jehovah is good” (135:3a).
1. He is intrinsically good.
2. He is good, i.e., benevolent in his dealings with us.
3. He is the source from whence all good and perfect gifts come (James 1:17).
B. “His name is pleasant” i.e., sweet (135:3b).
C. The Hebrews were chosen to praise his name (135:4).
1. They were chosen to be God’s own peculiar people.
2. To be trustees of His Truth.
3. To be the maintainers of His divine worship.
4. To be mirrors of his mercy.
5. Israel was his chosen people in that ancient day, Christians are now his chosen ones (Eph. 1:3-4).
D. For His Greatness (135:5-14).

1. God exhibits his might, mercy and majesty in nature, history and religion (Adapted from Scroggie).
2. As seen in Creation (135:5-7).
a. Heaven, earth, sea and abyss are the totality of existence.
(1). His will is implemented in and through creation.
b. "I know" tells us he had no doubts, no tentative speculations about God.
c. His knowledge was the product of inspiration, observation and experience.
d. "He is great." God's greatness includes his might, mercy and majesty.

E. For his sovereign rule (135:6).
1. Whatever He pleased to do, he hath done.
a. In nature:
(1) He maketh vapors to rise, i.e., evaporation of waters.
(2) He makes lightening and rain.
(3) He sends forth the winds.
(4) Such natural phenomena are His providential agents.
2. Over nations who opposed and oppressed His people Israel (135:8-11).
a. He smote the first born of Egypt (Ex. 11 & 12).
(1) Along with nine other plagues.
(2) But only after they defied Him and refused to free his people.
b. He overthrew and destroyed powerful kings.
(1) Sihon, king of the Amorites (Num. 21:23-24).
(2) Og, king of Bashan (Deut. 31:4).
(1). These two were the first and greatest to oppose God's people in their march towards the promised land.
(3) All the kingdoms of the Canaanites.
(a).Thirty-one small states were defeated and subdued.
(4) He gave their land to His people, Israel.
(a) The Canaanites, by their moral and spiritual corruption, forfeited their right to their homeland. God took it from them and gave it to a better people.
(b) God appointed the Hebrews to be their executioners and for their fee, they received the land of their victims.

F. For His Name is memorable among the nations across the centuries (135:13).
1. His memorial name is **Jehovah the I Am** (Ex. 3:4-15).
2. His name stands for His nature which is eternal and immutable.

G. For His mercy to Israel (135: 14).
1. He judges his people, i.e., avenges them against their oppressors.
2. He repents of his judgements when His people return to him (135:14b).
a. As a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pities us (Ps. 103:13).

III. Jehovah Contrasted With the False Gods of Their Heathen Neighbors (135:14-18).

A. These lines are borrowed form Psalm 115:4-8.
1. Israel's God is living, merciful, majestic while those of the heathen are dumb, blind, deaf and lifeless.
2. That they are made of precious metals means nothing in terms of their usefulness to their devotees. They are a burden to be born rather than a benefactor who can bless them.

B. They that made idols shall be like unto them, i.e., dead and useless.

IV. His Closing Exhortation to Praise Jehovah (135:19-21).

A. "O House of Israel," i.e., all the nation.
B. "O house of Aaron," i.e. the priesthood.
C. "O house of Levi," those who assisted the priests in temple service.
D. "Ye that fear Jehovah," refers to God-fearers, Gentiles who feared and served Jehovah.
E. Bless Jehovah out of Zion, i.e., Jerusalem which He had chosen for that purpose.
1. For there His temple stood.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Man is inherently religious, the only creature who is. He must have something to worship. Ignorant of, or rejecting the true God, he will turn to objects of his own making.

B. The more cultured and highly educated, the more extravagant will be man's idolatry.

C. Those of us full of praise for our Maker and Savior should encourage others to join us in his praise.

D. The Egyptians had smitten the "first born" of Jehovah. They paid for their crimes with the death of their own first born.

E. Men become like the God they worship (vs. 18).

Psalm 136

In Praise Of God's Mercy

Intro: The reader will notice that this psalm is very similar in content to the preceding one. Both speak of God's creative work, his judgements on Egypt and the victories he gave Israel over Og and Sihon. Each speak of Canaan being Israel's heritage. This song was composed by an anonymous author. It is a liturgical psalm, designed to be sung antiphonally in temple worship. The choir of priests and Levites sang the first line and the congregation responded with the refrain. This was a common mode of worship among the ancient Hebrews (Compare II Chron. 7:3, 6 & Ezra 3:11). The first line pursues the theme of the song while the second line is a refrain or response. The response "For his loving-kindness endures forever," is repeated 26 times, once in each verse. The Hebrews called this psalm, "The Great Hallel" to distinguish it from another hallel consisting of Psalms 113-1 1 8. The author praises God with four divine names, Yahweh (Jehovah), Elohim (God), Adon (Lord) and El (God of Heaven). He borrows several of his phrases from the book of Deuteronomy. The key thought is that divine mercy permeates all of God's creation, providence, redemption and judgements. "Loving-kindness" of the American Standard Version is synonymous with mercy, kindness, favor and goodness. Henry Smith wrote, "Mercy is the sweetest word in all of Scripture." God's mercy is like a perennial fountain, never running dry. When Syrianus and his troops assaulted the church in Alexandria, Egypt during their evening worship (c.a. 337), many disciples were wounded and killed. Athanasius, their leader, ordered his singer to commence this psalm and the congregation responded, "For his mercy endures forever."

I. A Call for Thanksgiving to God for What He Is.

A. To Yahweh (Jehovah), the self-existing one (136:1).

1. Their covenant God.

B. To Elohim (God), the God of creation (136:2).

C. To Adon (Lord) and master over all (136:3).

II. A Charge to Praise and Thank God for What He has Done (136:4-25).

A. He is the God of creation (136:4-9).

1. His works are great (136:4).
2. He created the heavens (136:5).
3. He created the continents on which we live (136:6).
4. He created the luminaries of heaven (136:7-9).

B. He is the God of redemption (136:10-15).

1. He delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage (136:10-12).
2. He opened the Red Sea for Israel's escape and swallowed up the army of Egypt in it (136:13-15).

a. He **overthrew** Pharaoh and his hosts." The Hebrew verb means "shook off."

B. He is the God of **providence** (136:16-22).

1. He led them safely through the harsh wilderness (136:16).
2. He defeated powerful enemies such as Og and Sihon of transjordan (136:18-20).
3. He gave their land to Israel for their inheritance (136:21-22).
4. Time and again He delivered Israel when they were oppressed by their enemies (136:23-24).
   a. Canaanites, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, etc.
   b. "In our low estate" means, "When we were humiliated" (Harrison).
5. He provides for all of his creation the necessities of life (136:25).

A Closing Call to Thanksgiving (136:26).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Give thanks unto Jehovah, it is the least we can do for One who has been so gracious to us.
B. Let us always be praising God who is our redeemer.
C. Nothing of the material world is eternal, but Jehovah and his mercy are.
D. The eternality of Jehovah is an indispensable ingredient of the Divine Nature.
E. God's judgments upon his enemies were blessings upon Israel.
F. Each time you sit down for a meal, "give thanks unto Jehovah" who gives us our food.
G. Ever be grateful for the mercy of God, also called his grace, for without it none of us could be saved.

Psalm 137

A Sorrowful Song Of The Hebrews Exiled In Babylon

Intro: The author of this psalm is unknown but it is obvious he had been an exile in Babylon. It seems to have been written after the return of the Captives to their homeland in 536 B.C. (Compare the tenses of vss. 1-3). When they returned, they found that their land had been ravaged. The spoilers had debased everything. His heart is bitter with what he sees and remembers and thus he writes. This psalm is unique in its mention of the Babylonian captivity by name. It is an imprecatory psalm in which the author prays for God's vengeance upon his nation's enemies. "The words are burning words of a heart breathing undying love to his country (and) undying hate to his foe'' (Spurgeon). "This Psalm is universally admired. Indeed nothing can be more exquisitely beautiful" (Spurgeon).

I. The Author Reminisces About Those Hard Years in Exile (137:1-3).

A. The place of their exile (137:1).
    1. Babylon was a place of many rivers; among them the Tigris, Euphrates, Chaboras and Ulai, plus numerous canals.
    2. When among Gentiles and with no place to assemble, the Jews resorted to the river banks to worship in privacy (Compare Lydia in Acts 16:13-14).
B. Their sad remembrance (137:1 b-2).
    1. They remember Zion (Jerusalem), the capital and religious center of their homeland.
    2. Their remembrance brought bitter tears.
    3. They hung up the harps for they had no heart to sing in those sad circumstances.
C. The taunting they endured (137:3).
    1. Their overlords demanded that they sing for their entertainment.
        a. "They that led us captive" means "the spoilers."
    2. They insisted that they do so "happily."
    3. They wanted them to sing some of their spiritual songs that praised Jehovah.

II. Their Loyal Devotion to their Homeland (137:4-6).

A. How could they sing Jehovah's songs for the entertainment of those heathen? (137:4).
    1. Rather than play and sing for their entertainment, they prayed for their destruction.
B. His imprecation upon himself. (137:5-6).
    1. If I ever forget Jerusalem and what she stands for:
        a. Let my right hand forget her skill, i.e., to play the harp.
        b. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, that I may never sing.

IV. His Imprecation Against their Enemies (137:7-9).

A. Against Edom for their hatred of the Hebrews.
    1. Edom's ancient blood feud against their Hebrew kinsmen was implacable,
        a. See the book of Obadiah.
    2. The Edomites rejoiced when Babylon took Jerusalem and set about to destroy it. They encouraged them to "rase it" which means to destroy it to the foundations.
B. Against Babylon (137:8-9).

1. Daughter of Babylon is a personification standing for the nation and people.
2. The new law teaching us to love our enemies had not yet been given (Matt. 5:43-44).
3. Dashing children to death was common among the warring nations of that day (II Kings 8:12).
    a. a. In the Viet Nam War, the Viet Cong resorted to such violence.
4. What they had done to Israel was terrible, now let their judgements by likewise terrible. "I will visit upon you the evil of your own doings" (Jer. 23:2).

Lessons To Remember:

A. The backsliding of the Jews had brought them to that sad state of captivity.
B. Our unfaithfulness exposes us and our God to the ridicule of the world.
C. May we never be in an environment of persecution such as they endured.
D. No feuds are so bitter as family feuds.
E. God's code of justice includes retribution against evil doers. Our society needs to remember this as we deal with the tidal wave of crime that confronts us.
F. We should be careful lest we profane the Lord's hymns by presenting them as entertainment to unworthy enemies of God.
G. As the ancient Hebrews were not subject to Christ's New Covenant, so we are not subject to Moses' Code.
H. Wicked people who harm God's children will reap what they sow (Gal. 6:7).
I. May we have the love, loyalty and devotion to Christ's church, our Mt. Zion, as did those Jews to Jerusalem.
J. Christian students might have a similar experience in some of our American schools of higher learning where God's name is profaned, his book despised, his church ridiculed and his people taunted on a regular basis.

Psalm 138

A Song Of Heartfelt Thanksgiving

Intro: This and the following seven psalms are attributed to David. To be found in this last volume of the Psalms suggests that they were written after he had completed the first edition of his psalter (See Psalm 72:20), or perhaps were discovered at a later date and added to the collection. It is a song of pure thanksgiving. There is a marked contrast in this and the previous Psalm. There the author refused to sing, but here he breaks forth in song. There he had trouble and sorrow, but here trouble and triumph. There Gentiles are execrated, but here he predicts they will one day praise his Lord (Adapted from Scroggie).

I. He Acknowledges the Blessings He had Received (138:1-3).

A. His whole-hearted praise (138:1).
    1. Likewise, our worship, praise and service should be whole-hearted (Matt. 22:37).
    2. Notice that the object of his praise is not mentioned until verse 4.
B. His praise is courageous because it was "before the gods" of their enemies.
    1. In the face of the idol gods of his enemies.
    2. Perhaps before notable dignitaries. Jesus uses the term thus in John 10:34-35.
    3. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego praised God before the kings of Babylon and their false gods.
C. His pledge to worship and give thanks unto his God (138:2).
    1. "Towards thy holy temple" where God's presence was revealed.
        a. So did Solomon and Daniel (II Chron. 6:20 and Dan. 6:10).
        b. In the Hebrew, the word "temple" means house or mansion and could refer as well to the tabernacle as to the temple of Solomon.
D. Good reasons for his vow to worship Jehovah (138:2b-3).
    1. For God's loving-kindness.
    2. For His truth.
    3. For his matchless Word, the Scripture.

a. This verses has troubled many interpreters.
b. Harrison renders it, “You have exalted your name and your word above all else.”
c. “By the accomplishment of His promises, Jehovah has surpassed all previous revelations of Himself’ (Kirkpatrick).
d. God’s Word is as exalted, important and authoritative as He himself.
e. Where else but in His word could we learn anything about the full-nature of God and his will for us?
f. For prayers God had answered.

4. For the encouragement and strength He had given.

II. He Anticipates the Day When God’s Praise Will be Universal (138:4-6).

A. All the kings of the earth shall praise Jehovah.
1. As did Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:334-37), and Darius (Dan. 6:25-27).
2. When, the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ (Rev. 11:15).

B. The most high Jehovah has respect unto his lowly servants
1. But he does not extend his blessings to the haughty.
2. I Peter 5:5, “He giveth grace to the humble.”

III. His Assurance that the Divine Purpose for His Life Will be Realized (138:7-8).

A. He is confident that in times of trouble, God will revive, or renew him.
B. God will protect him against his enemies.
C. Jehovah will perfect that which concerned him.
1. He “will accomplish his promises and purposes for us” (Kirkpatrick).
2. He was sure that what God had commenced in his life, he would complete.
3. “He who began a good work in you will perfect it...” (Phil. 1:6).

D. His prayer: “Forsake not the works of thine own hands” (vs. 8).
1. “For himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).
2. His creating hands formed us in the beginning. His nail-pierced hands saved and redeemed us at Calvary. His glorified hands keep us safe in this life (Heb. 13:6). So into his hands we should commend our lives and spirits (Luke 23:46), and all the work of our hands should praise Him (adapted from John Burgon).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Believers have never been promised immunity from the troubles and hardships of life.
B. God’s hand is for us or against us, depending on whether we are for or against him (vs. 7).
C. Remember that you are a work in progress. God’s hands will consummate that which he planned for you (vs. 8).
D. In any place, before any people, we should never be ashamed to praise our God.
E. God’s Holy Word is a mirror that reflects to us His glory.
F. Where humility is the cornerstone, there glory shall be the top stone” (William Seeker).
G. David was vexed with rival gods, we with rival gospels. Before them we must be strong, faithful and courageous.

Psalm 139

A Celebration Of God’s Wonderful Greatness

Intro: The lovely song is attributed to David and dedicated to the Chief Musician. The author stand in awe of the mighty God he served. Scholars have been lavish their praise of this psalm. “This Psalm is the most glorious on the theme of the ways of God and unequaled in the five Books of the Psalter” (Ibn Ezra). “This Psalm is one of the sublimest compositions in the world" (George Rogers). “The writer of this Psalm must have been gifted, almost above all the sons of men, with poetic genius, as well as with divinely inspired insight” (Bishop’s Commentary). "Language utterly fails me in the exposition of this Psalm...” (Herder). "Nowhere are the great attributes of God: His Omniscience, His Omnipresence, His Omnipotence, set forth so strikingly as they are in this magnificent Psalm” (Perowne). “The description of the Divine attributes is nowhere else to be found with such simplicity and sublimity of language: yet with such loftiness and profoundness of thought...” (Scroggie). “That is the Psalm which I should wish to have before me on my deathbed” (Erskine).

I. The Wonder of God's Knowledge (139; 1-6).

A. He is omniscient, i.e., he knows all.

1. Five time he states that God knew him (vs. 1, 2, 4, 23).

2. God had "searched" him and known him, i.e., examined, explored carefully.

B. He knows what we do (139:2a).

1. Our down-sitting and our up-rising.

2. "Walking or resting, 1 am scanned by thee" (Moffatt). This speaks of the daily activities of life (Deut. 6:7).

C. He knows what we think (139:2b).

1. Comp. Heb. 4:12-13).

D. He knows where we go (139:3).

1. "Searchest out my path" as grain is winnowed to keep the good and discard the worthless.

E. He knows what we say (139:4).

1. "He that refraineth his lips doeth wisely" (Prov. 10:19).

F. He knows what we need (139:5).

1. He besets us behind and before, i.e., he is all around us,

2. Like an army that has laid siege to a city.

G. God's omniscience is too grand for him to comprehend (139:6)

II. The Wonder of God's Presence (139:7-12).

A. His power and presence are universal, or omnipresent.

B. Thus it is impossible to hide from or evade God's Spirit.

1. In the heavens, He is there.

2. In Sheol, the unseen place of the dead, He is there.

3. From the endless east to the most distant west, He is there.

4. In the darkness of night or in some deep cavern, He is there.

5. In the brightest light of day, He is there.

a. "Do not I fill the heavens and the earth? saith Jehovah" (Jer. 23:24).

b. Thus we sing of the all-seeing eye watching us.

III. The Wonder of God's Power (139:13-18).

A. His God is omnipotent or all powerful.

B. His example of God's marvelous power: The creation of human life.

1. God formed him in the womb (139:13).

2. The human body is fearfully and wonderfully made.

a. The average heart beats 103,689 times per day; breathes 23,040 times; inhales 438 cubic feet of air; eats 3-4 lbs. of food; drinks 3 quarts of liquid and perspires two pints through the skin. It generates 450 tons of energy per day. We use 7,000,000 brain cell each day.

3. "My frame was not hidden from thee" refers to his skeletal frame.

4. He was "curiously wrought." It is as though the child in utero is being embroidered by God (Gesenius).

5. "My unformed substance" means rolled together like a ball.

6. Note that God considered David as a real person from the moment of his conception. (Compare Jer. 1:5).

C. God foreknew the days and events of his life, even before he was born.

1. Inspired writers do not hesitate to speak of God's foreknowledge and man's free will, attributes that exist side by side without contradiction (Josh. 24:15).

IV. The Wonder of God's Judgements (139:19-22).

A. God will judge the wicked.

1. Those who sin against their fellow man (139:19).

2. Those that sin against God (139:20).

B. He shares the hatred of God for God's enemies (139:21-22).

1. Modern men have such a low and weakened view of God that they cannot comprehend His holy judgment on sin. Many Christians have such a weak and inadequate view of sin that they cannot see the need for its punishment.

V. His Pious Prayer (139:24).

A. "Search and try me, means "ascertain my motives" (Harrison).

B. Lead me in the way everlasting, the straitened and narrow way (Matt. 7:14).

C. Scroggie calls this prayer, "one of the most beautiful and meaningful of the entire Psalter."

Lessons to Remember:

A. The omnipresence of God may frighten an unbeliever but it comforts the Christian to know He is there to bless, protect and sustain him (Is. 41:10).

B. "The will of God will never lead us where the grace of God cannot keep us."

C. We would do well to follow the example of the writer in addressing the infinite God as his finite servants.

D. This psalm declares that man is God's creation, not a pantheistic part of the divine essence as the Hindus and New Age folks teach.

E. It is never wrong to hate the things that God hates.

F. Linnaeus, the Swedish naturalist, had a sign over his door that said, "Live innocently; God is here."

Psalm 140

A Prayer Beseeching Protection From His Enemies

Intro: This song is attributed to David and dedicated to the Chief Musician, i.e., the leader of the temple choir. Several events in the life of David qualify for the background of this hymn: His experience with King Saul, Doeg the Edomite, and Ahithophel who betrayed him and Absalom, his rebellious son, all provide an adequate context (See 1 Samuel 22 & 23). This and the three following Psalms are similar in content. In all of them, the author is being harassed and persecuted by implacable enemies. Note that he does not seek to impose his personal revenge upon his enemies. He consigns them to the Lord's hands. It has been described as "The lament of a hunted soul." When Demaratus was asked if he held his tongue because he was a fool or for lack of words, he observed, "A fool cannot hold his tongue."

I. His Plea For Divine Deliverance From the Wicked (140:1-5).

A. His enemies had declared war on him (140:2).

B. One of their chief weapons was slander (140:3).

1. Their slanders were as deadly as a serpent's bite.

2. They sharpened their tongue like a serpent." The rapid motion of the serpent's tongue reminded him of a man sharpening his knife.

3. "Adder's poison is under their lips." As an adder's poison is in his mouth, so are the poisonous words of the slanderer as they pour forth from his mouth.

C. "Selah." A musical notation supposed to mean silence, or pause. It is thought to be the signal for a musical interlude. It might mean, pause and reflect on this thought.

D. His enemies had laid all sorts of snares in his path (140:4-5).

1. "To thrust aside my steps." "Plotted to trip my feet" (Berkley).

II. The Prayer He had Prayed to Jehovah (140:6-8).

A. "Give ear." An anthropomorphism meaning please hear my request.

B. "Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle" speaks of a battle helmet. God was his battle helmet that protected him and kept him from harm.

C. "Grant not the desires of the wicked." To answer David's prayer would of necessity deny that of his enemies who wished to destroy him.

III. His Imprecation upon His Wicked Enemies (140:9-13).

A. Note that he asks that the evil they directed at him be turned upon them.

B. “Let the mischief of their own lips cover them,” since they had slandered him with their words (140:9b. Also note vs. 3).

C. Since they would have consumed him with their burning words, let burning coals fall upon them as it did on Sodom (140:9).

D. As they had set traps to snare him, let them be cast into deep pits filled with fire (140:10. Compare vs. 5).

E. As they had hunted him to destroy him, may they become hunted men (140:11. Note vs. 5).

IV. His Affirmation of Faith in Jehovah’s Providence and Justice (140:12-13).

A. “I know that Jehovah will maintain the cause of the afflicted and justice for the needy.”

1. All things will work together for their good (Rom. 8:28).
2. They will be more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

B. The righteous:

1. Shall give thanks unto Jehovah and
2. Dwell in His presence.

Lessons to Remember:

A. The wicked will reap what they have sown (Gal. 6:7). Their wickedness will come home to curse them.

B. “The deadliest of all venom is the slandering of the unscrupulous” (Spurgeon).

C. Good men, godly men, live by prayer.

D. A righteous soul will always be thanking God for his mercies.

E. When evil people pursue us to harm us, our first and most effective weapon is prayer.

F. The slanderer is as dangerous as serpent. Beware of him or her.

G. The faith that Jehovah will sustain us gives us strength and courage to face any adversary.

Psalm 141

A Prayer For Sanctification And Protection

Intro: This psalm is attributed to David and may well refer to his persecution by Saul or the rebellion of his son Absalom. It is a petition from first to last. It poses a special problem because of the difficulty in understanding verses 5-7. Comments addressing the problem will be given with those verses. “Few psalms in so small a compass crowd together so many gems of precious and holy truth” (Barton Bouchier). This psalm was often sung by the early Christians as a part of their evening worship.

I. His Prayer (141:1-2).

A. For an audience with God (141:1a).

1. “Make haste unto me.” It is a bold request to ask God to hurry up.
2. The only time God is represented as hurrying is when the father ran to welcomed the prodigal home (Luke 15:20).
3. “Give ear unto my voice.” This an anthropomorphism which pictures God as bending over to hear the request of his child.

B. “Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee.”

1. As the smoke of the sweet incense wafted upwards toward heaven, the Hebrews envisioned their prayers going up to God. They also thought of God being pleased with the sweet fragrance of the incense and hoped their prayers would be likewise pleasing.

C. “The lifting up of my hands” in prayer.

1. An ancient custom. Like a small child imploring his father, so they lifted up their hand to God when praying (I Tim. 2:8).

D. May my prayers be as “the evening sacrifice.” The Hebrew word ***mine hah.*** refers to the meal offering added to the burnt offering of the lamb (Ex. 29:38-42). It consisted of “fine flour with oil and frankincense, or unleavened cakes mingled with oil, burnt upon the altar (Lev. 2:1-11).

II. His Plea for Heaven’s Help in Doing Right (141:3-4).

A. “Set a watch” means appoint a watchman to guard my mouth and monitor my words (141:3).
B. “Incline not my heart to any evil thing.”
1. “Lead us not into temptation” (Matt. 6:13).
C. Lest he be tempted to accept the luxuries (dainties) of the wicked.
1. “To eat of their dainties” means “to sample their pleasures” (Harrison).
2. Satan can beguile us with a thousand golden dainties.

III. Let Me be Receptive to the Reproofs of the Righteous (141:5).

A. To be able to gracefully accept the reproofs of others, we need God’s help to overcome our human pride.
1. Such corrections are truly blessings bestowed upon us.
2.Their corrections will be as oil upon the head, i.e., soothing, refreshing and beneficial.
B. Prov. 27:6, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are profuse.”
1. Eccles 7:5, “It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.”
C. “For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.” This is obscure in older versions. The RSV is clearer, “for my prayer is continually against their wicked deeds.”

IV. Observation on an Obscure and Difficult Passage (141:6-7).

A. The difficulty is not in the words used, rather it is in fitting the thoughts conveyed into the general context of the psalm. It is our ignorance of the circumstances of which the author wrote that makes it difficult for us to understand them.
B. Revised Standard Version: “When they are given over to those who shall condemn them, then they shall learn that the word of the Lord is true. As a rock which one cleaves and shatters on the land, so shall their bones be strewn at the mouth of Sheol.”
C. Berkley Version: “When their judges are hurled down along the sides of a rock, then they will listen to my words, for they are pleasant. As when a man plows and breaks open the earth, so our bones have been strewn about at the graves’s opening.”
1. “When the judgments in reserve for the leaders of my enemies shall come upon them, they will perceive, too late, how reasonable are my words, and wish that they had harkened to them sooner” (Alexander).
D. New English Bible: “ They shall founder on the rock of justice and shall learn how acceptable my words are. Their bones shall be scattered at the mouth of Sheol, like splinters of wood or stone on the ground”
E. To cast a condemned person off a rocky cliff was a common mode of execution in those days (II Chron. 25:12; Luke 4:29).
F. “Our bones scattered at the mouth of Sheol” pictures dead bodies left unburied after a battle.
1. Plowing of the earth turns up and exposes rocks that reminded him of the bleached bones of the victims of war.
2. For bones to lie unburied was counted one of the greatest calamities by Easterners (**Oriental Customs**, Burder).

V. His Plea for Protection Against his Enemies (141:8-10).

A. “Mine eyes are unto thee, O Jehovah,” i.e., 1 constantly look up to Thee for help and approval even as a child does to his father.
B. "Leave me not destitute” i.e., do not abandon me and leave me defenseless.
C. "Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me,” speaks of the traps set for his destruction, whether literal or and figurative.
D. Let the wicked enemies be snared in the traps they have set for me (141:10).
1. May they reap what they have sown (Gal. 6:7).

Lessons to Remember:

A. “ God will accept us in His way, not ours, and His way is always by sacrifice” (Scroggie).
B. God never promises us that we will be exempt from temptation and trial. Such things are the disciplines that produce Christian character (Heb. 12:3-13). He does promise grace to help us stand before them all (II Cor. 12:9-10).
C. Prayer is the life-line of the righteous.
D. It is a sign of spiritual maturity when we are willing to be rebuked or corrected by our spiritual family.

E. When the wicked are overthrown, some of them will pay attention to the words of the righteous which they formerly despised. But Satan prefers to reign in Hell rather than serve heaven (Milton).
F. No matter how desperate our plight, we can always lift our eyes to heaven and expect God's attention and help.
G. It is better to be rebuked by a righteous soul than flattered by a wicked person.
H. The mouth that offers up prayers to Jehovah must be guarded lest it allow wicked words to defile it.
I. Daily ask yourself if you need a guard posted to check the words you are tempted to speak.

Psalm 142

A Cry For Help By A Depressed Soul

Intro: This song is attributed to David. It reflects his condition and thought when hiding from vengeful Saul in the caves of Adullam and Engedi (I Sam. 22:1, 24:3). Eight of the psalms are identified as referring to David's persecution by Saul. It is a ***maschil*** which means to instruct, to make attentive, or intelligent. Thus it is a didactic or teaching psalm. The term ***maschil*** is affixed to 13 of the psalms. It is in the form of a lament, i.e., a song of sadness wherein he pours out his sorrow unto God. This type of psalm reminds us of the value of praying out loud to God in our private devotions. It gives us an example of pouring out to the great Jehovah our fears, frustrations and needs, fully expecting that he can and will hear and answer us. Our hymn, "**Tell It To Jesus**" reflects the thought of this psalm as does "**Jesus Lover of My Soul**." This psalm contains numerous quotes from other psalms.

I. He Declares His Course of Action When in Trouble (142:1-2).

A. "I cry with my voice..." (141:1).
1. This means, "to shriek from anguish or danger."
2. "With my voice," "audible, vocal prayer as contrasted with mental prayer (Hos. 14:2).
B. "I pour out my complaint before him"
C. "I show him my trouble."

II. He Declares his Predicament (142:3-4).

A. His spirit was overwhelmed within him (142:3a).
1. He was overwhelmed with depression.
2. "When my spirit was so wrapped in trouble and gloom, so muffled round with woe that 1 could not see the path before me" (A. S. Aglen).
3. Is it not amazing that the man who could courageously confront and bring down a giant could be overwhelmed by his mental depression.
B. God knew the path he had to walk (142:3b), i.e, He understood David's plight.
C. His enemies had laid traps to ensnare him.
D. No friend or helper could he find (142:4).
1. No helper was found on his "right hand" where a protector would be found if he had one. This speaks figuratively of the armor-bearer who stood beside his master when in combat.
2. "No man careth for my soul." This is the saddest verse in the Bible.
3. David was not left alone, for some 400 men came to join him (I Sam. 22:1-2).
4. Note that Elijah expressed this same despondence (I Kings 19:10).
5. "There is no man that knoweth me." Here the word "know" means to recognize or acknowledge him as a friend.
D. Refuge hath failed me, i.e., no asylum of safety could be found.

III. His Prayer for Deliverance (142:5-7).

A. "Jehovah, Thou art my refuge" (142:5).
1. This phrase is reflected in several of our hymns.
2. "Thou art my portion in the land of the living," i.e., my allotment.
3. "The land of the living" means here on earth in contrast to death.
B. "Attend unto my cry,"
1. " For I am brought very low."

C. “Deliver me from my persecutors,”

1. “For they are stronger” than I am.

D. “Bring my soul out of prison.”

1. “Soul” here means his life, i.e., deliver me before I perish.

2. At this time David was not in a literal prison, although he was forced to live in hiding and could not move about freely or return to his home.

E. “I will give thanks unto thy name.”

F. My righteous friends shall compass me about.

1. They will encircle me like a crown.

2. In celebration of my deliverance.

Lessons to Remember:

A. God not only knows our trials and tribulations, he cares and is concerned for our welfare.

B. A full heart makes the mouth full of words of prayer.

C. In prayer we are not actually informing God, for he is omniscient. We are pouring out our heart which he wants us to do. It helps us focus on God.

D. “He who has learned to pray has been taught the most useful of the arts and sciences” (Spurgeon).

E. Pity the poor person for whom no one cares.

F. No person can have Christ exclusively to himself. But each believer receives his allotment, which is more than he can ever use up or exhaust. It will meet his every need.

G. “Human help fails most when most needed” (Spurgeon).

H. It is easy to promise thanksgiving for a requested blessing. It is much harder to remember to be thankful after receiving it.

I. “Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage...” (Lovelace).

Psalm 143

A Psalm Of One Who Longed For And Lived For The Lord

Intro. David is listed as the author of this psalm. The contents of the psalm indicate that the author was in trouble, that his spirit was overwhelmed, thus he sought God’s favor and deliverance. This and the previous psalm are alike in many ways and reflect similar circumstances. In the Septuagint, this note is added “When his son Absalom was pursuing him.” Ancient scholars class this and six psalms as penitentials, i.e., psalms expressing the thoughts and desires of a penitent heart. The author pleads that God’s judgment on him will be tempered with mercy. This psalm is a mosaic made up of some 40 thoughts from other psalms. Charles Spurgeon described it as “a mingled strain, a box of ointment composed of divers ingredients, sweet and bitter, pungent and precious.” Thomas Bilney of England was burned at the stake during the reign of King Henry VIII. His final words, while at the stake, were those of this Psalm. Three times he repeated, “and enter not into judgment with they servant...”

I. His Intense Desire and Longing For the Lord (143:1-6).

A. His petition that God would hear his request (143:1).

1. He pleads not just for God to hear, but that he will also answer his prayer.

B. Knowing his sinfulness, he prays for mercy rather than for justice (143:2).

1. “Enter not into judgment with thy servant”

a.“Do not summon your servant for sentence” (Harrison)..

b.“Do not go to law with me, to prosecute me” (Alexander).

c. He was keenly aware of his sin and unworthiness.

2. “For in thy sight no man living is righteous”

a. “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:11).

b. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves...” (I John 1:9-10).

C. The situation he was in (143:3).

1. "The enemy hath persecuted my soul." "Soul" stands for himself.
2. He had be smitten down to the ground, i.e. "Trampled to the ground" (Harrison).
3. He was forced, to dwell "in dark places," i.e., caves (I Sam. 22:1, 24:3).
4. Like the dead in their dark tombs.

D. His state of mind (143:4)
1. His spirit was overwhelmed, i.e. had fainted within him.
2. His heart was desolate, i.e. grown numb within him" (Moffatt).

E. The method of dealing with his problem (143:5).
1. He remembered God's dealings and blessings from the past.
2. He meditated on all of God's works.
3. He spread forth his hands in prayer (Compare I Tim. 2:8).
4. His soul thirsted after God as a weary land. The parched land cracks as it waits hopefully for refreshing ram. So he patiently waited for God's blessings to refresh his troubled soul.
5. "***Selah***," a musical pause and encouragement to reflect on the message.

II. His Pledge to Live for the Lord, Regardless of His Circumstances (143:7-12).

A. He renewed his urgent prayer (143:7).
1. He begged God to hurry lest he perish while waiting.
2. He felt his spirit failing within him.
3. If God did not respond he would be like them that go down into the pit (grave).

B. He desperately wanted to see God's face, hear his voice and know which path he should take (143:8).
1. "In the morning" speaks of the better day that would follow his dark night of despair.
2. The ground for his boldness in prayer was,"For I lift up my soul unto thee."

C. He begged God's help, to whom he fled, as he sought to evade his enemies (143:9).

D. His request (143:10-12b):
1. Teach me to do thy will;" an essential ingredient of godly living.
2. May Thy good Spirit lead me in the land of uprightness.
    a. We too are led by God's Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14).
    b. "Land of uprightness," literally, a "level land," i.e. one free of obstacles and dangers. "The way of the righteous is level" (Is. 26:7 New Revised Standard Version).
3. "Quicken me," i.e., revive me or renew my life.
    a. Not for his sake or glory, but for Jehovah's own sake.
4. "Bring my soul out of trouble." God's help was his only hope for survival.
5. Cut off and destroy mine enemies.
    a. Such would be an act of loving-kindness to David.
6. The verbs in verses 11-12 are future tense. Thus should read "Thou wilt receive me, Thou wilt bring my soul out of trouble, Thou wilt smite my foes..." (Kirkpatrick).

E. The basis of his request and hope for a hearing (143:12c).
1. "For I am thy servant."
2. Note also: "For in Thee do I trust" (vs. 8b).
3. "For 1 lift up my soul to Thee" (vs. 8d).
4. "I flee unto Thee to hide me" (vs.9b).
5. "Thou art my God" (vs. 10a).

Lessons to Remember:

A. Our plea to God must always be for mercy rather than judgment.

B. He who asks God to hear his prayer must be willing to hear God's message of instruction.

C. "Teach me to do they will" should be the daily prayer of every saint of God.

D. Sorrow for past sins may be no more than "sorrow of the world," if it lacks a genuine commitment to do better in the future,

E. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

F. If we want Him to be our God (vs. 10), we must be his faithful servants (vs. 12).

Psalm 144

David's New Song of Praise

Intro: This is a psalm of David. It is a composite of lines from Psalms 8, 18, 33, 39, and 104. It has been classed as a "royal or kingly" psalm because David writes as ruler of God's people. The Septuagint adds the notation, when he went "against Goliath" perhaps because of his reference to God's deliverance of him from the "hurtful sword." Others consider the expression, "Who subdueth my people under me" (vs. 2), to link it to the occasion when David was finally acknowledged as king of the nation by all the tribes (See II Samuel 5:1-5). The flow of thought in the psalm reminded G. Scroggie of a day opening with bright morning sun (vs. 1-2), then overcast by midday clouds (3-11), but ending in a glorious sunset (12-15). Throughout, this psalm exhibits a strong military flavor.

I. His Praise to His God (144:1-2).

A. "Blessed be Jehovah."

1. "Blessed" is used some 50 time in the Psalms.
2. When referring to God, blessed means, "worthy of adoration."

B. What Jehovah meant to David:

1. He was his rock, i.e., his protection and advantage in battle.
2. His teacher who taught him his military skills.
3. The source of all his blessings.
4. His fortress.
5. His high tower.
6. His deliverer.
7. His shield.
8. His refuge.
9. The one who had unified his nation
10. His leader whom he gladly followed as he subdued his enemies.

II. His Prayer for God's Protection Against His Enemies (144:3-12).

A. He first contemplates the relationship of God and man (144:3-4).

1. "What is man?" The Hebrew has four words for man:
   a. ***Adam***, which refers to his origin from the dust.
   b. ***Ish***, which identifies his sex as male.
   c. ***Enosh***, which describes his mortality.
   d. ***Geber***, which refers to his strength as "a mighty man."
2. God "takes knowledge of man" (144:3). This refers to God's observation, recognition, consideration, perception, deliverance, understanding and acknowledgment of man the creature.
3. God "makest account of' man. Literally, He weaves a pattern for his life.
4. Man is likened to *vanity*, i.e., a breath of air or gust of wind.
5. Man's days are like a shadow. The best we can hope for is the shadow of a tree or a fence, but for many it will be the shadow of a bird in flight.

B. His supplication for rescue from his enemies (144:5-11).

1." Bow thy heavens. O Jehovah and come down."
   a. Bend them like one pulling back the curtains.
   b. The picture may be of clouds lowering before a storm.
2. Touch the mountains and they shall smoke as at Sinai. Reveal yourself to me and my enemies.
3. Send lighting like arrows to scatter my enemies.
4. Rescue me and deliver me from the *great waters* of affliction.
5. Deliver me from alien enemies who use deceit in their diplomacy.
   a."Whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood, i.e. false oaths.

C. His promise: To celebrate a positive response to his prayer, he will write and sing a new song to God's praise and honor (144:9).

1. God gives salvation to kings, i.e., deliverance from their enemies.
2. God had rescued David from the hurtful sword (perhaps referring to Goliath).
3. His plea for deliverance renewed.

III. An Appendix on Domestic Happiness (144:12-15).

(Note the dissimilarity between this portion and the rest of the psalm).

A. Happy are those who are blessed in their families (144:12).

1. With sons flourishing like saplings under a tree.
2. With daughters lovely as polished cornerstone in a palace.

B. Blessed are those whose farms are prosperous (144:13-14b).

1. With garners full of bountiful crops.
2. With sheep multiplying by the thousands.
3. With oxen fat and healthy to do their task.

C. Happy are those who are blessed in their nation (144:14b-15a).

1. No breaking in, or invasion by enemy armies.
2. No going forth, that is no going forth to engage the enemy, no fleeing their cities or going into exile.
3. No outcry in the streets, i.e., no cry of alarm or of battle cries.

D. His moral: "Happy is the people who God is Jehovah.

Lessons to Remember:

A. Each of us would do well to do a survey, writing down just what God means to us.

B. Until ones religion becomes personal it is of little value.

C. One of our greatest mistakes is to forget just how brief life is.

D. A prayer for future mercies is best begun with thanksgiving for former mercies.

E. Man, as created by God, was rational, responsible, immortal, holy and happy. But now under Satan's domain, he is fallen, sinful, guilty, miserable, helpless to escape his plight by his own strength, doom. But under Christ, he is redeemed, renewed, restored and prepared for his return to Paradise.

F. For all the blessings we have received, each should sing praise to Jehovah.

Psalm 145

A Song Praising God's Greatness And Goodness

Intro: This is the last of the Psalms attributed to David. It is the only one called a "***Tehillah*** Psalm", i.e., a Psalm of Praise. The title, **Tehillah** has been bestowed upon the entire book of Psalms. In the Hebrew, the Psalter is entitled "***Sepher Tehillim***," i.e. Book of Praises. This psalm is written in acrostic or alphabetic form according to the Hebrew alphabet. Note however that the letter Nun is not used. In the Jewish liturgy, this Psalm is used as a daily prayer, both morning and evening. In the ancient Jewish Talmud Babli, it is said "'Everyone who recites the Tehillah of David thrice a day may be sure that he is a child of the world to come." The early Christians commonly sang this song before their mid-day meal. It is a song of resolutions. Six times he pledges "1 will." It stresses the eternal nature of God and his reign. It is unique in its universality for it calls upon all men of all nations to worship Jehovah. It is a song of pure praise, containing no confessions and no requests. Men have been profuse in their praise of this psalm. It has been called "one of the most beautiful of the psalms;" "an exquisite Psalm;" "a magnificent ode of praise;" "one of the most inspiring hymns in the Psalter;" "the crown jewel of praise." There is a Muslim Mosque in Damascus, Syria which over 1200 years ago was a Christian Church. Over the door are inscribed the words, "Thy kingdom O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." Though He is hated and despised by professors of that religion, the declaration of his reign is daily proclaimed to all who enter.

I. The Greatness of His God (145:1-6).

A. His greatness declared (145:1-2).

B. God is great in his person (145:3).

C. He is great in his works (145:4).

D. He is great in his majesty (145:5).

E. He great in his judgements (145:6).

II. The Goodness of His God (145:7-9).

(Note how he heaps up the various aspects of God's goodness: "great goodness, righteousness, gracious, merciful, slow to anger, of great loving-kindness, tender mercies").

A. God's goodness is abundant (145:7).

1. "Abundantly utter" (KJV). The Hebrew ***naba*** means, to "pour forth, gush out, bubble over like a fountain."

2. "They shall sing," The Hebrew ***ranan*** means, "To shout aloud for joy."

B. His goodness is compassionate (145:8).

C. His goodness is universal (145:9).

III. The Government of His God (145:10-13).

A. His kingdom is glorious (145:11-12).

1. The term kingdom literally means "reign."

2. From heaven, God reigns over all of his creation.

a. One aspect of his reign was the Hebrew nation.

b. So today, Christ in heaven reigns over all of creation, including men and nations, but only his church is his submissive, obedient people (I Tim. 6:15; Col. 1:13,18).

B. His kingdom is powerful (145:11).

C. His kingdom is majestic (145:12).

D. His kingdom is everlasting (145:13).

IV. The Grace of His God (145:14-20).

A. God is gracious to those who fall (145:14).

1. Our inability to forgive and give another chance to those who fall into sin is the measure of our lack of godliness.

B. God is gracious to those who are hungry (145:15-17).

C. God is gracious to those who pray (145:18-19).

1. "'Their cry" means "'to cry aloud for help, to attract someone from a distance."

2. To appropriate God's grace for ourselves we must call upon him, fear him and love him.

C. God is gracious to those who love him (145:20).

Conclusion: "My mouth shall speak the praise of Jehovah; and let all flesh bless his holy name..." (145:21).

Lessons to Remember:

A. When men think of their personal greatness, God is diminished in their sight. When they think of God's greatness, their importance dwindles in their own estimation.

B. God's grace is seen not only in salvation, but in his patience, sympathy and understanding for those who struggle to overcome sin in their lives (Compare John 8:1-11; Luke 7:32-50).

C. Pride is the great enemy of praise.

D. Our world must not be viewed as a prison to hold us and make us miserable, it is a school wherein we are trained for immortality and eternity.

E. If God waited until we were worthy of His blessings, we would never receive them. Grace means He gives what we do not deserve.

F. The more we love God, the more we will hate evil and want to see it destroyed.

G. Always be grateful that God is "slow to anger."

Psalm 146

A Song Praising Jehovah As The One True Helper

Intro: In our English Bibles, this Psalm is not ascribed to a particular author, but the Septuagint (LXX) attributes it to Haggai and Zechariah. Many scholars think it was written for use in the second temple. It was used in the morning service of the ancient synagogues. This and the four psalms that follow are Hallelujah psalms beginning and ending with that phrase. These last five psalms provide a "glorious finish to the most wonderful Hymn Book in the world (Scroggie). There is marked similarity between this and psalm 145.

It is a “pearl, a sacred censer of holy incense, pouring forth ... sweet perfume” (Spurgeon). In 420 A. D., the Britons, who early accepted Christianity, met an army of Picts and Saxons near Mold in Flintshire. The Britons were unarmed, but their leaders, Germanicus and Lupus ordered them to repeatedly shout Hallelujah when the enemy horde drew nigh. This strange response struck terror in the hearts of the adversaries and they fled in great confusion. On his death bed, John Janeway ask for family and friends to join him in singing psalms of praise to God. He said, “I will sing with you as long as my breath doth last, and when I have none, I shall do it better.” When George Carpenter of Bavaria was to be burned at the stake for his faith, he assured his brethren, “Let this be a sure sign unto you of my faith and perseverance, in the truth; that so long as I am able to hold open my mouth, or to whisper, I will never cease to praise God and to profess his truth.” Witnesses confirm that he did just that.

I. His Resolution to Praise Jehovah (146:1-2).

A. “Praise Jehovah O my soul.”

B. His pledge: As long as I exist I will praise Jehovah.

II. He Warns Against Trusting Men for What Only God Can Give (146:3-4).

A.“Put not your trust in princes”

B. Nor in any “son of man.”

1. Any descendant of Adam.

C. His reasons for the warning (146:3b-4):

1. There is no help in them.
2. They are mortal, they will die
    a. “His breath goeth forth.” i.e., his spirit leaves him (James 2:26).
3. Their thoughts, schemes and best intentions will die with them.
4. God can take them away in the midst of their scheming and planning.

III. His Beatitude (146:5).

A. “Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help.”

1. The Hebrew term translated blessed or happy is used 26 time in the Psalms.
2. Jacob was weak and sinful like us. Yet he trusted God and grew to be a pillar in God’s kingdom. a. This gives us great hope for ourselves.

B. God is not only our savior but our helper as well (Comp. Rom. 8:26,31).

IV. Reasons Why Faith in Jehovah Will Bring Us Happiness (146:6-10).

A. His power: He created all that is (146:6a).

B. His faithfulness: He keepeth truth forever, i.e., “keeps faith forever” (Berkley).

C. He is just and executeth justice for the oppressed.

D. His bountiful provisions (146:7b).

E. His power to deliver. He “looseth the prisoners.” (146:7c).

1. Not wicked evil doers, but innocent folks held in captivity.

F. His compassion:

1. He openeth the eyes of the blind.
2. He raiseth up them that are bowed down in misery.
3. He preserves the sojourners, i.e., those travelers and resident aliens who lived among the Hebrews, who had no rights of citizenship.
4. He upholds the fatherless and the widow.

G. He loves the righteous (146:8c).

H. He confounds the wicked (146:9).

1. He turned their way, or plans, upside down.

IV. His Conclusion: (146:10).

A. “Jehovah will reign forever.” This line is taken from the Song of Moses (Ex. 15:18).

B. “Praise ye Jehovah.”

Lessons to Remember:

A.“Death is tyrant over the prince and peasant alike” (T. LeBlanc).

B. Put not your trust in the top of the social scale, for their fate is at the bottom thereof.

C. For one man to put his spiritual hopes in another man is like one beggar asking another for alms, or a blind man asking another blind man to lead him.

D. In terms of eternity, Solomon and Saladin have no advantage over scavengers and slum dwellers.

E. To trust man instead of God dishonors God, degrades us and always disappoints those who do.

F. "The Lord would not be God if he did not deal with evil and evildoers" (Scroggie).

G. Everything goes wrong with wrong doers.

Psalm 147

A Song Praising Jehovah For The Restoration Of Jerusalem

Intro: The author of this majestic hymn is unknown. It is one of the hallelujah psalms. This song reflects the excitement, joy and happiness of the Jewish exiles who returned from Babylonian Captivity and saw their beloved Jerusalem rebuilt from its ruins (Compare Nehemiah 12:27- 43). This background would indicate it was written for the services of the second temple. It celebrates the Lord's almighty and gracious rule over His people and the world of nature (Perowne). Interestingly, the translators of the Septuagint translation divide this psalm into two separate songs. Verses 1-11 form the first and verses 12-20 the second song. Concerning the last five psalms Spurgeon wrote, "The flow of the broad river of the Book of Psalms ends in a cataract of praise." The heart attuned to Jehovah looks beyond the surface of nature's activities and sees the marvelous workings of God's providence.

I. Praise God for His Power in Redemption (147:1-6).

A. Praise Jehovah (147:1-2):

1. For it is **good to do so.**
    a. It is good to obey his command to sing his praises.
    b. It elevates those who participate in praising God.
    c. It shows our appreciation and gratitude to our Creator and Provider.
2. It is **pleasant to praise Him**
    a. When praise flows from hearts of love, nothing is more pleasant.
    b. It is a source of joy to all who sing God's praises.
    c. It is one of the fundamental reasons for which we were created.
    d. Pleasant because God is pleased and delighted therewith (Ps. 50:23).
3. Praise to God is **comely,** i.e., fitting and proper.

B. Praise Him because of his blessings on Jerusalem, the holy city (147:2-3).

1. He caused the beloved city to be rebuilt.
    a. This provides the **key** for understanding this psalm.
2. He gathered the scattered exiles and brought them home to the homeland.
3. He provided relief for those whose hearts ached in the misery of their captivity.
    a. Christ was sent to "heal the brokenhearted." (Luke 4:18).

C. God's greatness is seen in his power (147:4-6).

1. "He counteth the number of the stars"
    a. Sixty years ago astronomers estimated there were at least 100,000,000 stars.
2. "He calleth them by their names," like a shepherd does his sheep.
    a. If He knows the stars by name and number, surely He knows the whereabouts, situation and needs of all His children.
3. "His understanding is infinite," i.e., He is omniscient.
    a. If their God knows the stars by name and number, surely he can know the whereabouts and situation of each of his children.
4. He upholds the meek and brings down the wicked (Ps. 147:6).
    a. Meekness refers to the humility of the righteous.

II. Praise God for His Power in Nature (147:7-11).

A. For making the clouds (Ps. 147:7-8).

1. For their beauty.

2. For the protection they provide from the burning sun.
3. For their ability to transport moisture from the sea to the thirsty land.
4. The Hebrews had no understanding of what we call "secondary laws of nature." They believed that God acted directly upon matters and therefore was the immediate cause of every event in nature.

B. For his provisions for the beasts of the earth (147:9).
1. All of which depend upon him for their survival.

C. Although God created the powerful horse and the strong warrior, we must not place our trust in them (Ps. 147:10).
1. The horse of which he speaks is the war horse, and by extension a king's cavalry.
2. "The legs of a man" refers to the strong legs of the foot soldier, the infantry.

D. God is pleased rather with them that fear him and hope in his mercy (See Eccle. 12:13).

III. Zion Should Praise God for His Protection of and Providence for Israel (147:12-20).

A. For the security and defense of their cities (Ps. 147:13a):
1. He "strengthened the bars of (their) gates" so enemies could not breach them.

B. For her blessings, "He hath blessed (her) children within her," i.e., her citizens (147:13b).

C. For her peace: "He maketh peace in (her) borders" (147:14a).

D. For her abundance: "He filleth (her) with the finest of the wheat" (147:14b).

E. For His powerful word by which he governs his world (Ps. 147:15).
1. "His word speeds swiftly on its way" (Berkley).

F. For His ability to melt away every obstacle that confronts Him and His people.
1. He creates the winter snow and ice of winter and he causes them to melt away.
2. "He giveth snow like wool," i.e., He covers the earth with snow as the wool covers the body of the sheep.
a. Ancient Greeks and Romans called snow, "wooly water."
b. Snow was extremely rare in central and southern Palestine.
3. Snow serves the same purpose as the fleece of the sheep for certain plants and animals which its insulates and protects from winter's deadly cold.
4. He scattereth hoar-frost like ashes, i.e., as easily as one would scatter ashes.
5. He casteth forth his ice like morsels of bread. This seems to speak of hail.
6. Men could not cope with bitter cold, but Jehovah could (Ps. 147:18).

G. Praise God because He gave His written Word alone to Israel (147:19-20).
1. Of all the ancient nations, only Israel was given a written revelation from Jehovah (Rom. 3:1-2).
a. With that privilege came the heavy responsibility to honor and obey that Word.

Lessons to Remember:

A. God, who daily provides 500 lbs. of food for an elephant in the wild and a thousand pounds of food for the great blue whale, has no trouble supplying my paltry needs.

B. As we contemplate the marvelous creation and the laws of nature, never forget that behind them all stands Jehovah, their Creator and Sustainer.

C. Nothing is more pleasant and comely than saints singing praises to their Master.

D. The Ruler of the universe is not impressed by a nation's arsenal and armies. He is impressed with its godly citizens.

E. The question is not can God bless America? It is, Will He? Given the prevailing public attitude toward Him, His Will and His Church, why should He?

F. What a remarkable privilege it is to have in our possession God's Word. Never forget the obligation that lays upon us to honor and obey it.

Psalm 148

An Exhortation To All Of Creation To Praise Their Creator

Intro: The author of this inspiring hymn is unknown. It is a hallelujah psalm. It is commonly believed that this psalm was written for the praise of God by one who survived the Babylonian exile. Verse 14 says, '"He hath lifted

up the horn of his people," which suggests the fortunes of the nation had gone from that of defeat and exile to restoration. This psalm, "should be contemplated as we would contemplate a sublime sunrise or sunset" (Scroggie). Our hymn, "**Let Them Praises Give Jehovah**," is an adaptation of this psalm. Scholars have been profuse praising the author and his psalm. It has been called, "The epitome of Hebrew praise." "As a hymn of praise it is the most sublime in the whole book" (Adam Clark). "The joy song of the psalter " "A universal symphony of praise to Jehovah." As spectacular and majestic as the creation is, we must remember that because of the Fall of Adam and Eve, the Creation too is under a curse. God said to them, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. 3:17). Paul speaks of the creation groaning under the "bondage of corruption" and longing to be delivered (Rom. 8:21- 22). The glorious thought of this psalm will be realized in the heavenly realms. "And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and things that are in them, heard I saying," give praise unto the Lamb of God (Rev. 5:13).

I. A Charge to Praise God in the Heavens (148:1-6).

A. Let there be celestial praises to Jehovah (148:1):

1. Those nearest to the Creator.
    a. Note the descending order of the charge.
2. Let his angelic hosts praise him (148:2).
    a. "Hosts" is a military term, describing the angels as his army.
    b. "Bless Jehovah, ye his angels, that are mighty in strength, that fulfil his word...ye ministers that do his pleasure" (Ps. 103:20-21).
3. Let his sun and moon praise him (148:3)
    a. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Ps. 19:1).
4. Let all the stars praise him (148:3b).
    a. "The heaven of heavens" means the highest heavens.
5. Let the clouds of heaven praise him (148:4b).

B. Reasons why they should all praise Him (148:5-6):

1. He is their creator (148:5).
2. He hath established them, or set them in their proper order and place (148:6).
3. He hath preserved them by his divine decrees (Comp. Jer. 5:22).

II. A Charge to Praise Him in the Earth (148:7-14).

A. Let all things terrestrial praise Jehovah:

1. Note the progression from the inanimate, to animate, to man.
2. Let the sea-monsters praise him (148:7).
    a. The King James Version mistakenly rendered this "dragons."
    b. This refers to whales, giant sharks, and the like.
3. Let all the deeps praise him, i.e., the great bodies of water when the sea- monsters live.
4. Let the inorganic elements of nature praise him (148:8).
    a. Let fire and hail praise him.
        (1). Fire stands for lightning.
    b. Snow and vapor praise him.
        (1). Vapor stands for rain.
    c. Stormy winds.
    d. All of these are manifestations of Jehovah's power and function, according to His will, to bless or curse the earth.
5. Let the mountains and hills praise him (148:9a).
6. Let the vegetable kingdom praise him (148:9b).
    a. Fruitful trees are those which bear fruit.
    b. Cedars stand for trees of the forest that yield timber.
7. Let the creatures of the earth praise him (148:10).
    a. Beasts (wild animals) and cattle (domesticated animals).
    b. Creeping things includes reptiles, small animals and insects.
    c. Birds.
8. Let all mankind praise their creator (148:11-12).
    a. All, without distinction of sex, age or rank should join the chorus of praise.
    b. Kings and their subjects,

c. Princes and judges, i.e., lesser rulers,
d. Young men and virgins, those in the strength of youth,
(1). Virgins is the counterpart to young men and speaks not of their marital state or status.
e. Old folks and children.
(1) Old men stands for all older people.

B. Reasons why all should praise Jehovah (148:13-14).
1. His name alone is exalted (148:13a).
a. His name stands for Jehovah himself.
b. No other being is his equal or superior.
2. His glory surpasses all things in heaven and on earth (148:13b).
3. He hath lifted up the horn of his people (148:14a).
a. Horn is used symbolically for strength and power, like the bull elk's antlers.
b. This likely refers to the restoration of the nation following their long exile in Babylon. Their strength had been broken but God had now restored it.
c. He has given "a song of praise for all His godly ones" (Berkley).
(1)"The children of Israel, the people who are near unto him."
(2)"For what great nation is there, that hath a God so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God...?" (Deut. 4:7).
(a) They were his chosen one, his children.
(3)Today Christians are God's spiritual Israel (Gal. 6:15-16). The church is his Mt. Zion and heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-23) and his holy temple (Eph. 2:19-22).
4. "Praise ye Jehovah"

Lessons to Remember:

A. The divine invitation is extended to all of humanity to join the hallelujah chorus in praising Jehovah.
B. No grander or higher endeavor can occupy our time and energy than expressing praise to the God who made us.
C. Each and every individual thing we see in our world proclaims, "A hand divine hath made me."
D. As a beautiful house, or an exquisite car is an advertisement of the skill of its designer and builder, so do all the things of creation proclaim Jehovah's glory.
E. Our God is not far from us, for in him we live and move and have our very being (Acts 17:28).
F. Christian: never forget whose child you are. Everything you say and do should be to the praise and glory of Jehovah.

Psalm 149

A Song Of Praise In Victory

Intro: The author of this hymn is unknown. Some commentators attribute it to the time of the Maccabean victories over the Seleucids of Syria. Others think it was written to celebrate some military victory. It seems more likely to come from the time of the restoration of Israel under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah as do the others of this closing section of the Psalms. It is a jubilant song which calls upon Israel to praise Jehovah, their Maker and Deliverer, who had restored them to a position of honor and dignity. A misunderstanding and misapplication of this psalm has led to horrible crimes by some religious zealots. Casper Sciopius, in his "**Clarion of the Sacred War**," used it to motivate the Roman Catholic princes of Europe to launch their Thirty Years War (1618-1648 A. D.) against their Protestant neighbors. Thomas Munzer employed it to incite the peasants of Germany to ignite their Peasant's War. When we read such passes from the Old Testament, we must remember that our war and weapons are not carnal but spiritual (II Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:17).

I. A Call to Praise Israel's Maker (149:1-4).

A. Praise Jehovah with a new song (149:1).
1. A new song, expressive of new hopes and joys of a new era in the nation's history. Their restoration was a time of new beginnings.

B. Praise Him in the assembly of the saints (149:1b).

1. Their assemblies were at Jehovah's temple.
2. Today God's holy temple is his church (Eph. 2:20-22).

C. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him (149:2a).

1. He calls upon the people to recognize and honor their Creator, both as individuals and as a nation.

a. Literally, the Hebrew reads, "Let Israel rejoice in God his Makers" (Simon de Muis). This is one of the many hints of the triune nature of our God that are found in the Old Testament.

2. Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King (149: 2b).

a. Joy is the natural characteristic of true Jehovah worship.

D. Praise Him with songs, music and dance (149:3).

1. The timbrel is the tambourine.
2. Dancing was a natural expression of joy among the Hebrews.

a. Miriam led the Hebrews in a dance of joy, celebrating their salvation from Egypt (Ex. 15:20). David joined the people in joyful celebration and dancing when the ark was carried up to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:13-14).

b. Those who use this psalm to justify their use of instrumental music in the worship of the church would have to allow dancing on the same basis.

E. A basis for their praise and worship (149:4).

1. "For Jehovah taketh pleasure in his people."
2. "He will beautify the meek with salvation."

a. "He adorns the humble with victory" (Revised Standard Version).

b. Salvation is God's "beauty treatment" for the soul.

c. Only the meek (humble) realize their need for salvation. God graciously gives it to them.

II. Praise God for Future Triumphs Over Enemies and Honor Upon His People (149:5-9).

A. Such is an occasion for songs of praise (149:5).

1. High praises in their mouths by day.
2. By night let them sing for joy upon their beds.

a. In peaceful times they can lie down rejoicing and praising God rather than fearfully awaiting attacks from marauding enemies.

b. On the same beds where they wept because of oppression, they can now sing songs of praise for victory and freedom.

c. "How I long for my bed! Not that I may sleep: I lie awake, often and long! But to hold sweet communion with my God" (Bapa Padmanji).

B. With both song and sword (149:6).

1. Thus did Nehemiah's workers as they rebuilt Jerusalem' walls (Neh. 4:9-16).

2. Judas Maccabeaus' troops warred with the Seleucids "contending with their hands, and praying unto God with their hearts" (II Macc. 15:22-27).

3. In England's Revolution, Oliver Cromwell's troops, "the Ironsides," went into combat singing psalms. Enemies reviled them as "psalm-singers." But they won.

4. "High praises of God."

a. High because of Him to whom they are offered.

b. High in our list of priorities of life.

c. High in their effect; the benefits they bring us.

d. High in the estimate which God places on them. He delights in them.

C. God would use Israel to execute vengeance upon the heathen (149:7).

1. To capture and bind their kings and nobles.

D. "To execute upon them the judgement written" (149:9a).

1. "Behold it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense...into their bosom..." (Is. 65: 6).

2. Many Old Testament passages predicted that God would give Israel victory over their idolatrous neighbors, especially those who had persecuted them.

a. Compare Isaiah 41: 15-16.

3. “For that nation that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted” (Is. 60:12).

E. “This honor have all of his saints” (149:9b).

1. It will bring honor to God’s chose people when their enemies are judged.

2. “He (the Lord) is the honor of all His saints” (Amplified Bible).

Lessons to Remember:

A. It is appropriate that those who are new creatures by a new birth should sing a new song to their Savior.

B. Every child of God should live with a song of praise in his heart and on his lips.

C. Praise and power always go together.

D. Israel of old was to be militant against the enemies of Jehovah. We Christians are to be militant for God's truth and the conversion of the world to Christ.

E. Their weapon was a sharp two edged sword, ours is the sword of the spirit, the word of God (Eph. 6:17).

F. God is both the Redeemer and Judge of mankind. Those who refuse His offer of salvation thereby choose damnation!

G. Folks who rail at, revile, curse, condemn, persecute and execute pious people, speak differently after the death of their victims. They then proclaim them faithful and sincere servants of God.

Psalm 150

The Closing Doxology Of The Psalms

Intro: This Hallelujah psalm is anonymous. It consists of only 37 words in the original Hebrew. It was likely composed to provide a suitable closing hymn to the Sacred Psalter. Note that each of the four previous sections had its doxology. “The triumphant strains resounding in the hallelujah finale make a noble and fitting conclusion to the Psalms, the grandest symphony of praise to God ever composed on earth” (Oesterley). “Tears, groans, wailing for sin, meditations on the dark depths of Providence, fainting, faith and foiled aspirations, all lead up to this” (Maclaren). “There is nothing in the Psalter more majestic or more beautiful than this brief but significant finale...” (Alexander). It is profuse in praise, “the most comprehensive and illuminate illustration of perfect praise in the whole Psalter” (G. Morgan). It is a rapturous call for all to join the divine chorus in adoration of Jehovah. The poet lingers not to argue, teach, or explain, he only urges all to praise the Lord. The lyric poets of the most cultivated nations only sang of wine, love, blood and the victories of those who competed in the games, while the Hebrew songwriters spoke to God their Creator as loving children to their heavenly Father. It was said that this psalm was sung by the Hebrews when they brought their baskets of first fruits into the sanctuary. The ancient rabbis taught that there are thirteen attributes of Jehovah hence the thirteen hallelujahs of this psalm, one for each attribute. Others said there are thirteen according to the number of the tribes. Remember, Joseph’s two sons and Levi made thirteen tribes in all. The Psalter begins with, “Blessed is the man...” and closes with, “Praise ye Jehovah.” In days long past, when the making of church bells was considered a religious profession, the bell casters would sing this psalm as they went about their work (Bouchier).

I. Praise God With Songs Both in the Sanctuary and in the Heavens (150:1-2).

A. The sanctuary was his temple in Jerusalem.

1. Today we praise him in his church (Heb. 2:12) and in our daily lives. We ourselves are a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:18-19).

B. The firmament of his power.

1. “In his majestic heavens” (Harrison).

2. Where the angelic hosts praise him (Rev. 5:11-12).

C. Reasons why all should praise Jehovah (150:2):

1. For what He does: “for His mighty acts.”

2. For what He is: “His excellent greatness.”

a. Not all greatness is excellent, but God’s is.

b. For his “exceeding greatness” that is beyond our comprehension.

II. Praise God with Musical Instruments (150:3-5).

A. Praise him with wind instruments (150:3-4).

1. With trumpets, of which there were two types:

a. The **shophar,** made from a ram's horn. It was used primarily to summon people for worship, as were church bells in days past.

b. The straight metal trumpet, used for musical purposes.

2. With pipes of which there were two types:

a. The single pipe or flute.

b. The Pan pipes, which consisted of several hollow reeds of varying lengths tied together in a descending order.

B. Praise Him with stringed instruments (150:3b-4).

1. Psaltery, a larger, ten stringed harp played with a plectrum.

2. The harp stroked with the fingers.

a. The harp was considered the national instrument of the Hebrews.

C. Praise Him with percussion instruments (150:4-5).

1. With timbrels, that is tambourines.

2. Loud cymbals, the larger ones with a deeper sound.

3. High-sounding cymbals, smaller with a brighter sound.

D. Praise Him with dance (150:4a).

1. As did Miriam and David (Ex. 15:20 & II Sam. 6:13-14).

2. The instrument in this case was the human body offered in rhythmic movement to Jehovah.

III. Let All of humanity Join Israel in Jehovah's Praise (150:6).

A. "Everything that hath breath, praise Jehovah."

1. Every one that hath a voice should praise God.

B. "And so did the congregated thousands take up their part with a shout; even as the voice of many waters" (**The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry**).

Lessons to Remember:

A. If men are dull in their worship of God, they do not act consistently with the true character of their religion.

B. When we look at this wonderful call to praise we see the following:

1. **Who** should be praised, the Lord God.

2. **Where** He should be praised, "In his sanctuary and in His firmament.

3 **Why** He should be praised, "For his mighty acts and excellent greatness."

4. **Wherewith** He should be praised by all with breath to sing and by all with skills to play the instruments of music in the temple services (Scroggie).

APPENDIX A

TWO KINDS OF MUSIC

Music dates back to the earliest days of the human race. Jubal a descendant of Cain, we are told, was the first to make musical instruments (Gen. 4:21). The ability to create music and play musical instruments is often a special gift with which one is born. Most can learn to play an instrument or sing, although a few seem to be tone-deaf and unable to distinguish the various tones of the musical scale. Along the way from the distant past to the present, many men chose to add instrumental music to their worship. Among those who worship idols, such additions made no difference as the entire system of their worship was offensive to Jehovah (Deut. 27:15). God instructed David to use instruments of music in the temple he wanted to build for Jehovah (II Chron. 29:25). When Christ established his church he called for singing hymns of worship (Eph. 5:19), but he made no provisions for musical instruments to accompany them. For the first 670 years vocal music prevailed in all the various churches where Christ was honored. When Pope Vidalia I sought to introduce their use in Rome it ignited a firestorm of opposition and he was

forced to removed the instrument. After another 330 years of apostasy had done its work, instruments became an accepted part of worship in those churches that followed the pope of Rome. Those identified as the Eastern Orthodox churches continued with their a cappella worship unto the present. Some of them do now allow their use.

The point of this lesson is to note two different kinds of music that have found their way into churches. As in the beginning there are churches that feel constrained to worship God as he has instructed us in his word. They offer up the fruit of their lips as a sacrifice of praise to their Creator (Heb. 13:15). Musical praise to God is an act in which each person present is expected to participate. We are to speak one to another in our hymns (Eph. 5:19). A cappella praise can be offered to God in any language, in all kinds of situations. The poorest of congregations can sing their praises to God as well as the most affluent. Even saints in prison can, like Paul and Silas lift their voices in praise of Jehovah (Acts 16:25). The uneducated primitive can sing hymns as well as the college graduate. This kind of worship needs no elaborate facility with perfect acoustics to be acceptable. A congregation might meet under a tree and sing with full acceptance. Those who thus worship God do not need to have special musical training in order to participate, although some rudimentary knowledge of music is helpful in learning new songs or in effecting harmony within the singers. Books with a thousand hymns are wonderful, but not a necessity for saints to praise God with their voices. From the little children just learning to sing to the aged saints with graveled voices all join in such worship. This kind of worship involves being filled with God's Holy Spirit and speaking to other worshipers with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in ones heart and making melody with your heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). It is engaged in mainly in the worship assemblies of churches.

There is another kind of music we style "**performance and observation music**." By this we mean that skilled singers and musicians perform and the audience is expected to sit quietly and observe their presentation. This type of music is found in both secular and religious settings. One could attend a concert on Saturday night and observe the skilled musicians and talented vocalists. Then on Sunday he could go to his church and do the same. The songs would be different but the roles of the artist and the observers would be the same. Performance music is usually reserved for those with musical training and exceptional voices and musical skills that are well developed and trained. While this level of music can certainly be entertaining and thrilling to hear, but it is not the kind of worship one reads of in Scripture. The praise of worship is offered to the Creator. It is not intended to entertain mortal men. It must please God, not men.

The failure of performance music in worship is twofold. Many churches will forgo singing of some of their hymns in order to hear the majestic sound of the organ being skillfully played by a fine musician. In such cases there can be no teaching and admonishing one another and no making melody with the heart to God. The second failure is the fact that many churches, lacking a skilled musician in their membership will hire a person who does even share their faith to perform for the church. I once worked with a fine old man who was an Episcopalian, but he was employed to sing for a wealthy Presbyterian church.
I enjoy all kinds of quality music. I frequently attend concerts to hear my favorite entertainers and musicians. I pay the price for my ticket and thoroughly enjoy it. It is pleasant to my senses and musical taste, but it is not worship. When I attend church, I go to worship my God. I sing with the spirit and with the understanding. Although we have a brother lead us by choosing our hymns and beginning them in the correct key and tempo, I do not applaud him, or even consider him a part of my act of worship. I sing to teach my fellow worshipers, to praise my God and to refresh my soul. I hope that you do the same.

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

For three basic reasons, we worship God in song without the use of instruments of music.

1. Christ did not authorize it. In his Great Commission, he said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go, make disciples of all nations....teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20). If you read the New Testament carefully you will notice that not once do you find any instruction for the church to praise God with instrumental music. You do however find several references to singing in worship such as the passage in Ephesians 5:19-20. Remember, Christ is head over all things to the church (Eph.

1:22). He has all authority and we are to teach men to observe all things whatsoever he commanded us (Matt. 28:18-20).

2. We are committed to worshiping and serving Christ as did the first Christians. Historically we know that it was some 600 years before instrumental music was introduced into Christian worship. It was only after churches had drifted far from the teachings of Christ and his apostles and had grown into what is now known as the Roman Catholic church that this practice was introduced in 670 AD. It caused such a furor that it was withdrawn and not unto the 11th century did it become a common practice. The Greek Orthodox church did not allow the used of instrumental music until the last century...and even now in some areas of the world they still do not use it. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church wrote that he had not objection to there being instruments of music in their chapels so long as they were neither seen or heard during worship. John Calvin, father of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches, called instrumental music a relic of popery, of the same character as beads and incense. Charles Spurgeon, the greatest of all Baptist preachers, refused to allow any instruments to be used with the singing in his congregation in London. This list could be extended. We are not unique in our position.

3. Our Bible consists of two grand divisions, Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament was given to the Hebrew people to regulate their faith and practice. It is from God and inspired and inerrant, but it was intended for that ancient form of worship (See Deut. 5:1-3). The New Testament was given to regulate the worship and service of those who follow Christ. Note the following verses that tell us that the Old Testament is no longer our standard for faith and practice. Paul explains to us that in his death upon the cross, Jesus fulfilled that Old Law, took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. He then exhorted us, "Let no man judge you" respecting its ordinances. Other verses that teach this lesson are Ephesians 2:14-14-15; II Corinthians 3:7-11; Hebrews 8:6-13. The Hebrews were given specific authority from God to use instrumental music in their worship. "Hezekiah...set the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandments of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets" (II Chron. 29:25). Thus when they praised God with instruments, they did what God had authorized them to do. If we had such authority expressed in the New Testament, we could do the same. But we don't find such it there.

If we go to the Old Testament to find approval for instruments of music, we can also go there to find approval for burning incense in worship, for a tribal, hereditary priesthood, animal sacrifices, circumcision, polygamy and other interesting practices. They all stand or fall together.

If you had been in Jerusalem in the first century and were privileged to worship with those first disciples do you think you would have had instrumental music? Today we wish to worship as they did and as the New Testament authorizes us to do.

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APPENDIX C

WILL GOD ACCEPT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP?

God tells us to worship him in song (Col. 3:16). Men have added instrumental music to the worship. Does God accept what has been added to his expressed will? Consider the following:

* Christ has all authority. He said, “Go...teach all nations, baptizing them...teaching them to observe all things...I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:18-20). We are to observe only what Christ has commanded in our service to him. But he does not command instrumental music for worship. Therefore, we should not use instrumental music in worship.
* Paul teaches us to admonish one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody (not on instruments) but with our heart (Eph. 5:19). In the New Testament, there is no mention of instrumental music in the worship of the church. This point is further emphasized when we realize that Jesus, the Apostles and Jewish converts were all accustomed to the instrumental music used in their temple worship.
* A musical historian notes that, "Only singing, however, and no playing of instruments, was permitted in the early Christian Church" (**Music, History and Ideas**, p. 34).

* Instruments of music were first introduced into churches in 670 A.D. by Pope Vidalia. This was after the church had been thoroughly corrupted by apostasy. It was in the 11th century before the use of instruments was accepted.
* Paul warns us "not to go beyond what is written"(I Cor. 4:6). John says, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God" (II John 9). To add instrumental music to our song worship is going beyond the doctrine of Christ. Those who do so "have not God."
* Moses relates the story of Nada and Abihu, sons of Aaron, who were priests of God. God commanded that when burning incense in worship they should use the fire from the perpetual altar of the tabernacle. They presumed it was alright to use fire from some other source. When they drew near to offer this strange fire,. God made the fire flash out and consume them (Lev. 10:1-3). This drastic lesson teaches us not to add anything, not authorized by Him to God's worship.

Churches of Christ worship God with vocal congregational singing. This is according to Scripture.

END

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