THE BOOK OF PSALMS

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INTRODUCTION

The book of Psalms is a collection of inspired Hebrew poems, prayers, and songs. There can be problems in interpreting them because they are expressions from man's heart.

The Psalms are words from men to God or about God. The language the writers used is a universal language, they are Hebrew poetry, but they express how people felt at the time of writing, which in turn helps us express ourselves to God.

It's important to remember that the Psalms don't teach doctrine but do support doctrine, and they can be highly figurative. They are prayers and hymns, which express truth about God and to God in a poetic fashion.

The Jews knew these Psalms really well, and when anyone read out the first line of any Psalm, the Jews would recognise it and be able to recite the whole Psalm in their minds.

AUTHORS

When we go through the Book of Psalms, we notice that there are actually many authors of the book. Moses is accredited with one psalm, Psalm 90, and David is accredited with seventy-three psalms, although some accredit him with seventy-seven.
Psalm 2 is quoted in Acts 4:25 / Psalms 3-9 / Psalms 11-32 / Psalms 34-41 / Psalms 51-65 / Psalms 68-70 / Psalm 86. Psalm 95 is quoted in Hebrews 4:7. Psalm 96 is quoted in 1 Chronicles 16:23-33. Psalm 101 / Psalm 103 / Psalm 105:1-15 are quoted in 1 Chronicles 16:7-22 / Psalm 108-110 / Psalm 122 / Psalm 124 / Psalm 131 / Psalm 133 / Psalms 138-145.
Solomon is accredited with two psalms, Psalms 72 and Psalm 127, and Asaph is accredited with twelve psalms, Psalm 50 / Psalm 73-83. Heman is accredited with one psalm, Psalm 88; Ethan is accredited with one psalm, Psalm 89.
Hezekiah is accredited with ten psalms, and the sons of Korah are accredited with eleven psalms, although some accredit him with only twelve, Psalm 42 / Psalms 44-45 / Psalms 47-49 / Psalms 84-84 / Psalm 87.
Many believe that because David was a psalmist, 2 Samuel 23:1-2, the singer of Israel and a skilled musician, that he was responsible for putting them together, 1 Samuel 16:16 / 1 Samuel 16:18 / 2 Samuel 6:5 / 1 Chronicles 16:4-6. We also know that David was a poet of Israel, 2 Samuel 1:19-27, and he was certainly familiar with the music and musical instruments with which many of the psalms were sung, Amos 6:5.

DATE

None of the psalms can be proved to have been of a later date than the time of Ezra and Nehemiah; the whole collection extends over a period of about one thousand years. Though collated into five books, there is no chronological order to the Psalms, either by content or date of writing.

THE BOOK

The Hebrew word for Psalms is ‘tehillim’, which means ‘praises’ and the English word ‘psalm’ comes from the Greek word ‘psalmoi’, which means ‘songs’ or ‘sacred songs’.

There are in the New Testament one hundred and sixteen direct quotations from the Psalms, it’s quoted by every New Testament writer except James and Jude. Jesus Himself said that there were prophecies of Himself in the Psalms, Luke 24:44 / Matthew 22:41-46 / Matthew 27:46, which tells us that some of the psalms were prophetic in nature concerning the Messiah.
Nine of the Psalms form eight acrostic units based on the Hebrew alphabet: Psalms 9-10 / Psalm 25 / Psalm 34 / Psalm 37 / Psalm 111 / Psalm 112 / Psalm 119 / Psalm 145. Five of these address the fear of the LORD: Psalm 25 / Psalm 34 / Psalm 111 / Psalm 112 / Psalm 145.
There are a few headings found with some of the psalms; they are usually found in the small print under the Psalm number. The LXX of the book of Psalms has fourteen more headings than the original Hebrew text.

Fifty Psalms have a heading, which are called orphan Psalms, and there are two types of headings.

1. Authorship headings.

2. Historical occasion headings.

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written.

The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

Throughout the psalms, the word ‘selah’ is often used and included in some translations. Although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said.

The book of Psalms is divided into five books. Each of the five books concludes with a doxology, that is, the last verse of the last book is the same, and each of the five books shows a particular reference to God.

In Book 1, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found two hundred and seventy-three times. In Book 2, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found seventy-four times. In Book 3, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found thirteen times, and finally, in Books 4 and Book 5, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found three-hundred and thirty-nine times. As you can see, the name ‘Yahweh’ is more popular in Book 1.

In Book 1, the name ‘Elohim’ is found fifteen times. In Book 2, the name ‘Elohim’ is found two hundred and seven times. In Book 3, the name ‘Elohim’ is found thirty-six times and finally, in Books 4 and Book 5, the name ‘Elohim’ is found seven times. As you can see, the name ‘Elohim’ is more popular in Book 2. These five books of Psalms have been put together as follows.

BOOK 1. PSALMS 1-41

All of which are ascribed to David except Psalm 1 / Psalm 2 / Psalm 10 / Psalm 33, which, though anonymous, may also be ascribed to him.

BOOK 2. PSALMS 42-72

Eighteen of which are ascribed to David and one to Solomon, Psalm 72. The rest are anonymous.

BOOK 3. PSALMS 73-89

Psalm 86 is ascribed to David, Psalm 88 is ascribed to Heman the Ezrahite, and Psalm 89 is ascribed to Ethan the Ezrahite.

BOOK 4. PSALMS 90-106

Psalm 90 is ascribed to Moses, and Psalm 101 and Psalm 103 are ascribed to David.

BOOK 5. PSALMS 107-150

Of these, fifteen are ascribed to David and one-hundred and twenty-seven to Solomon. Psalm 136 is generally called 'the great Hallel.' These would be the hymns Jesus sang with His disciples in Matthew 26:30. But the Talmud also includes Psalms 120-135. Psalm 113-118, inclusive, constitute the 'Hallel' recited at the three great feasts, at the new moon, and on the eight days of the feast of dedication.

OUTLINE

Blessings, fall, and redemption. Psalms 1-41
Ruin, and rescue by God. Psalms 42-72
God's temple. Psalms 73-89
God's kingdom compared to neighbouring nations. Psalms 90-106
Praise for God and His Word. Psalms 107-150

BOOK 1 PSALM 1:1-41:13

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As we open our Bible to study the first psalm, we soon discover that this psalm is really an introduction to all the others, hence why there is no heading. This psalm speaks about wisdom by contrasting the fruits of the righteous and the fruits of the wicked, Jeremiah 17:5-8 / Galatians 5:19-23. In other words, the first psalm sets out a clear contrast between those who are righteous and those who are wicked.

'Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.' Psalm 1:1-3

The word 'blessed', Psalm 1:1, literally means 'happy', and here the writer tells us that if a person isn't living a sinful lifestyle, they will be happy, Psalm 1:1. How do people obtain real happiness? Simply by obeying the will of God, Matthew 5:3-11, real happiness is found only in Christ, not in things of the world, Philippians 4:4.
Notice the words, 'walk', 'stand', and 'sit', Psalm 1:1. These words imply that sin is their lifestyle; they are constantly involved in sin, trying to fulfil their sinful lusts and desires, Proverbs 23:7.
Those who are 'mockers', Psalm 1:1, are those whose lives are totally different from the righteous, Proverbs 4:14-15. However, they go beyond just living differently; in arrogance, they go out of their way to verbally attack the righteous, Proverbs 1:22 / Matthew 27:29 / Luke 22:63 / Luke 23:11 / Luke 23:36.
In contrast to the sinners and mockers, the righteous delight in seeking God's law; they study and meditate upon His Word, Psalm 1:2 / 2 Timothy 2:15 / Matthew 7:13-14.
We must note that there is a difference between simply reading God's Word and meditating upon it. When we meditate upon God's Word, we actually stop and think about what we are reading. Studying God's Word isn't for information but transformation, Romans 12:1-2, studying His Word helps us keep our minds on godly things, Colossians 3:1-2.
The writer uses the metaphor of a tree, which continually receives water because it's planted by a source of water Psalm 1:3 / Psalms 17:5-6 / Jeremiah 17:7-8 / Ezekiel 47:12. As Christians, our faith is continually being nourished by the Word of God, John 7:38 / Romans 10:17.
The righteous will prosper in whatever they do, Psalm 1:3. However, this isn't speaking about becoming rich; the word 'prosper' is used here to describe how a righteous person is delivered from the wicked person.

'Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.' Psalm 1:4-6

The writer told us in the previous verse that the righteous will prosper, and here he says that the wicked won't, Psalm 1:4. When we look around at our world today, it certainly appears that the wicked are prospering, but we mustn't lose sight of their end; they will face judgment and destruction, Matthew 3:12.
It was common practice to throw wheat grain in the air, Psalm 1:4, which would allow the chaff to be blown away by the wind, Psalms 35:5 / Isaiah 5:24. The writer is telling us that God will protect the righteous by blowing the wicked away from them, Psalm 1:5.

We see God doing this with His enemies on numerous occasions throughout the Scriptures. God is going to remove the wicked and sinners from the assembly of the righteous. This is surely the ultimate destruction of the wicked and sinners, Proverbs 14:12 / Matthew 25:46 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.
The Lord watches over the way of the righteous, Psalm 1:6, which means He knows us, He knows each of us intimately, John 10:14 / John 10:27 / Matthew 10:20.
Because He knows us so well, He has the right to judge those who don't know Him, that is, the wicked, Psalm 1:6 / Psalm 119:115 / Matthew 7:21-23 / Matthew 25:41.

CONCLUSION

As Christians, we will face persecution, 2 Timothy 3:12, and the first thing we must do is acknowledge that persecution is real and we do have real enemies. We can't go through our Christian lives pretending that everyone loves us and everyone we meet will love us, Matthew 10:22-23.
The second thing we must do is ask God to deliver us from our enemies, Matthew 6:13. When we ask God to help us, we're admitting to ourselves that we're helpless. We need to admit we can't save ourselves; we need divine intervention, Daniel 3:17.
The third thing we must do is exercise our faith in God to deliver us, Hebrews 13:6. Having confidence that God will deliver us will help us to keep going forward in sharing the Gospel with others, Acts 26:17.
And finally, after being delivered, it's also important to remember to stop and thank God for delivering us, 2 Samuel 22:17-20. All too often God helps us out, but we forget to stop to thank the very One who helped us, Luke 17:11-19.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

As we read the second Psalm, it becomes very clear that this psalm is Messianic in nature. Whoever wrote this psalm clearly has the events surrounding the life of Christ in mind, Matthew 3:17 / Acts 4:25-26 / Acts 13:33 / Hebrews 1:5 / Hebrews 5:5.
We must remember that sometimes the Old Testament writers often spoke about the Messiah, but they didn't fully understand what they meant and how they would be fulfilled, 1 Peter 1:10-12.

'Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying, "Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles." Psalm 2:1-3

In the Bible, people were generally classed as either Jew or Gentile, and so, the nations that conspired were Gentiles, Psalm 2:1, that is, all those nations that weren't of Israel. When we turn to the New Testament, we see Luke, quoting these words, where he applies them to the hostility of unbelievers against Christians, Acts 4:25-26.
These Gentile nations 'conspire', but some translations use the word 'rage'. They appear to 'band together' against God's work through His people, Psalm 2:2, but all their plotting is in vain, all their efforts are absolutely useless, Genesis 11:1-9 / Isaiah 54:17 / Romans 8:31.

Notice they go against the Lord and His Anointed, Psalm 2:2. When we go back to Acts 4, we see this is a clear reference to King Jesus, the Messiah, and the church, against which the nations futilely set themselves, Acts 4:25-28 / Acts 13:33 / Hebrews 1:5 / Hebrews 5:5 / Matthew 3:17 / Romans 1:4 / Revelation 2:26-27 / Revelation 19:15.
Jesus, Himself clearly, alluded to the teaching of this very Psalm in Matthew 22:45.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The idea here is that it was the purpose of Jehovah and his Anointed to establish a dominion over men and that it was equally the purpose of the kings and rulers here referred to that it should not be done.'

They say let us break their chains and throw off their shackles, Psalm 2:3.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'They who are engaged in this combination or conspiracy regard Yahweh and his Anointed as one, and as having one object to set up a dominion over the world. Hence, they take counsel against both and, with the same purpose and design, endeavour to cast off the authority of each.'

'The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying 'I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain." Psalm 2:4-6

The psalmist here gives us a picture of God sitting on His throne in heaven laughing at the efforts of those who are against Him and His Anointed One, Psalm 2:4. In other words, He simply isn't concerned about those who oppose Him and His Anointed.
Although God laughs in heaven, He speaks to His opponents first before taking any action. God could easily wipe out His opponents, but He doesn't; He rebukes them first. In other words, He rebukes them first, Psalm 2:5, and by rebuking them, He shows them mercy, Psalm 86:15 / Ephesians 2:4-5.
God wants those who oppose Him to know that He has installed a King, a King who is greater than all those earthly kings and rulers, Psalm 2:2. God's King is installed on Zion, His holy mountain, Psalm 2:6, that is, Jerusalem.
God anointed kings in Israel and placed them on the throne in Jerusalem, and while they reigned on the throne, they represented God's authority on earth among the Israelites.

When we turn to the New Testament, we see that Jesus has now been given the authority of this reign, Daniel 7:13-14 / Ephesians 1:20-24. Jesus is now reigning in heaven with all authority over all nations, Matthew 28:18.

'I will proclaim the LORD's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." Psalm 2:7-9

The Messianic King now speaks. He proclaims His decree, Psalm 2:7, which is the promise given to David, the father of the dynasty, through Nathan the prophet, 2 Samuel 7:4-17.
There's no doubt that these words refer to Jesus, the Messiah, Psalm 2:7, because God Himself declared it from heaven that Jesus was His Son, Matthew 3:17 / Matthew 17:5 / Mark 1:11 / Mark 9:7 / Luke 3:22 / Luke 9:35 / 2 Peter 1:17.
The fulfilment of these words has been applied to the resurrection of Jesus, Acts 13:33, the superiority of Jesus over angels, Hebrews 1:5, and the high priesthood of Jesus, Hebrews 5:5.
The word, 'become', Psalm 2:7, is the word KJV word, 'begotten' and this is the only time this word is used in the Old Testament in reference to the Lord. It's important to remind ourselves that Jesus wasn't created; He is the Creator, Colossians 1:16-17.

The psalmist is describing the relationship between two beings; he's saying that the Father and the Son are of the same nature and being. When a subject king was crowned, the reigning king of all the territory became the father of the subject king. The subject king, or regional king, owed all his allegiance to the king of the entire empire.

Notice the Lord's anointed will be given to the nations as an inheritance and the ends of the earth will be His possession, Psalm 2:8. Jesus, the Lord's Anointed, will rule over all nations and all judgment is committed to Him, John 5:22 / Matthew 28:18 / Revelation 11:15. Zechariah also prophesied concerning the universal rule of Jesus, Zechariah 9:9-10.
Jesus has got so much power over all the nations, He literally smashes them to pieces as if they were pieces of pottery, Psalm 2:9 / Isaiah 11:4 / Revelation 2:27 / Revelation 12:5 / Revelation 19:15.
This is a reference to Judgment Day when God will bring about the destruction of all the wicked, Zephaniah 1:3 / Revelation 19:11-21. Jesus is going to conquer all these nations through the authority of His word, John 12:48, and anyone who tries to resist His rulership will suffer destruction when He returns for the final time, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.

'Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss his son, or he will be angry, and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.' Psalm 2:10-12

God has shown these rebellious nations mercy, He has given them fair warning, and so, now the psalmist encourages the kings of the earth to give up their efforts in trying to defy the Lord. If they are wise, Psalm 2:10, they would know that everything they do against the Lord is a waste of time, and the outcomes aren't going to be good for them.
The psalmist gives them a way out of avoiding destruction; they simply need to serve the Lord, fear the Lord, and celebrate the Lord, Psalm 2:11. This is all about total submission to the Lord; they need to totally surrender to Him and His Anointed.
Fear and trembling, Psalm 2:11, are always the results when we consider God's power. Fear and trembling bring about obedience to Him. If people submit to God, they can celebrate, but they will also maintain enough respect towards God that they will still tremble.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'The kings, rulers and judges of mankind should indeed be the spiritual leaders of the people, fearing God and showing by their example that allegiance and service which all men owe to their Creator. However, as this Psalm indicates, it is precisely this class of men who all too often have led the rebellion against God and His Christ. It is the conceit and egotism of men which have frequently led them to excessive folly, as for example, when Herod Agrippa I arranged to have himself proclaimed as 'a god' at Caesarea Philippi, as mentioned in Acts 12.'
Notice the kings are rulers are also asked to 'kiss the son', Psalm 2:12. This again is all about submission, 1 Samuel 10:1 / 1 Kings 19:18 / Job 31:27 / Hosea 13:2. It's the idea of a very important person, receiving a humble kiss from someone who is inferior.
If the kings and rulers don't listen to the warnings, then all they can expect is sudden destruction, Psalm 2:12. The psalmist says if they totally submit to God's will, then they will be truly blessed, 1 Peter 5:6. They will be blessed with the refuge which comes from being in His hand, Psalm 2:12 / Psalm 1:1.

CONCLUSION

We all have choices to make in life; we can choose to be blessed, or we can choose to be broken. We can choose to serve ourselves and serve those things which are so dear to us, like our jobs and hobbies, or we can choose to serve God, Joshua 24:15 / Matthew 6:24.
It's pointless trying to fight against God because we can never win, but God, in His mercy, gives people time to repent, 2 Peter 3:9. He wants to bless us, John 10:10 / Ephesians 1:3, but He has also given us fair warning about the consequences if we don't submit to His will, 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is the first psalm of lament, and it's also the first time the phrase 'Psalm of David' is used as a title. The word 'psalm', which is the Hebrew word 'mizmor', is used fifty-seven times in reference to different psalms. However, it's never used actually in the text of the psalms.

There are no fewer than seventy-three of the Psalms which, in their headings, have the particular Hebrew words which mean 'from David' or 'concerning David.'

HEADING

'A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

When David got news about how Israel was now going to follow Absalom, he once again went on the run as a fugitive. Although we're not told why he ran away, it's possible that he was simply submitting to God's earlier judgment upon him, 2 Samuel 12:10-12.
The historical setting of this psalm was when David quickly fled from the insurrection of his son Absalom, 2 Samuel 15:13-14. In the psalm, we find his heart and feelings being poured out to the Lord.

'LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him."
Psalm 3:1-2

What David does here is what every good Christian should always do when they find themselves in times of trouble. David's troubles drew Him towards God, unlike many today who withdraw from God in times of trouble.

It's clear that David is under a great deal of stress; he fears for his life, which is understandable when we think that his very own son, Absalom, turned against him in rebellion.

Absalom wasn't the only one who turned against David, hence why he had many foes against him, Psalm 3:1 / 2 Samuel 15:13. When Absalom gained many followers, they all began to deceive themselves into thinking that God wouldn't help him, Psalm 3:2.
They obviously thought that God had rejected David as king of Israel. Shimei is an example of someone who said that God was against David, and he thought that David was getting what he deserved, 2 Samuel 16:8.
It's obvious that David is struggling to deal with the idea that God Himself might actually be against him and if He was, then that would mean that God wouldn't help him.

You may notice at the end of verse two that some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates what his enemies are doing and saying.

'But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain.' Psalm 3:3-4

David's thoughts of the possibility that his enemies were right concerning God not helping him are put to rest after pausing for his next breath. David feared for his life; he was under a great deal of stress, but he still trusted God.

Notice he calls God a 'shield', Psalm 3:3. This is a metaphor which means that God would protect him from all the attacks of his enemies, Ephesians 6:16. His enemies could say and think whatever they liked concerning God's relationship with David, but as far as David is concerned, God was a shield. He was David's shield, and He would protect him.
God was also David's glory, Psalm 3:3. It's important to note that David didn't glory in himself or anything else; it was God who was his glory. It was God who was responsible for lifting David's head, Psalm 3:3. In other words, God gave him relief from his distress, and God would remove his troubles.
David's confidence in God is also seen in that He calls out to God for help and God answers his prayer, Psalm 3:4. In other words, God heard his cries concerning his son Absalom, who was revolting against him, took over Jerusalem, and forced David out of Jerusalem. God delivered him from the hands of his son.
David was fully aware that Absalom wasn't the one sitting on the holy mountain, that is, Jerusalem; it was God Himself who sat on the throne, and God would answer his prayer, Jonah 2:7.
You may notice that at the end of verse four, some translations have the word 'selah'. As mentioned above, no one really knows what this word means; it's likely that it means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. Once again, we can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates God answering his prayers.

'I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side.' Psalm 3:5-6

Despite David being in lots of danger, and probably being afraid to fall asleep in case his enemies attack him whilst he's sleeping, Psalm 3:5, he continues to trust God, and it's his faith in God that enables him to lie down and sleep in peace, Lamentations 3:22-23 / Luke 8:22-25.
His faith also made it possible for him not to fear men, Ecclesiastes 12:13 / Matthew 10:28. He knew God was his shield, he knew God would sustain him, and he knew God would protect him from Absalom and his followers, 2

Samuel 15-16. His trust in God was so great that he wasn't afraid of any of his enemies, Isaiah 22:7, regardless of the number of enemies, Psalm 3:6 / Romans 8:31.

> 'Arise, LORD! Deliver me, my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked. From the LORD comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.' Psalm 3:7-8

The word 'arise', Psalm 3:7, is a military word, which is used to call God to defend His people and lead them to victory, Numbers 10:35. David has full confidence that God will deliver him from the hands of Absalom, Psalm 3:7 / Jonah 2:9 / Mark 11:24.
Notice the phrase, 'break the teeth of the wicked', Psalm 3:7. This is a metaphor, which speaks of the absolute defeat of the enemy, Psalm 58:6. In other words, David doesn't just want God to protect him, He wants God to give him the victory. He also unselfishly thinks of others here, as he asks God to bless His people, Psalm 3:8.
You may notice that at the end of verse eight, some translations have the word 'selah'. As mentioned above, no one really knows what this word means; it's likely that it means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. Once again, we can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates what God is going to do to his enemies.

CONCLUSION

If we learn anything from this psalm of David, it's simply this: he didn't allow what others thought about him or what they thought God thought about him from trusting in his God, Deuteronomy 31:6 / Hebrews 13:5. As Christians, it's important not to take our eyes off the Perfecter and Author of our faith, Hebrews 12:2.
How many Christians struggle to sleep at night because they have so many anxieties going through their mind? David slept well because He cast all of his anxieties unto God; he knew that God cared for him, Matthew 6:25-24 / 1 Peter 5:7.
It's incredible to think that even though David had many enemies and his own son turned against him and forced him from Jerusalem, he was still thinking of others. He could have easily thrown himself a pity party, but he didn't; he trusted God and asked God to bless others, Luke 23:34 / Philippians 2:4.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

David's world was often full of trouble with enemies all around. He must have felt extremely lonely at times as people tried to hunt him down like a dog to kill him.

Nevertheless, David pours his heart out to God and tells Him about those who are trying to slander his name and reputation. While doing so, he finds peace and refuge in God.

HEADING

‘For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of David.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music and was to be sung with the use of stringed instruments. Some commentators believe that the ‘director of music’ is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
Henry, in his commentary, says the following.

‘All of the singing was done by the choristers, not by the people, but the New Testament appoints all Christians to sing, Ephesians 5:19 / Colossians 3:16.’

‘Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer. How long will you people turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?’ Psalm 4:1-2

When we read David’s opening words, we can’t help but feel that he’s desperate for God’s attention. He’s desperate because of the present situation he finds himself in, Isaiah 64:7.
In his distress, he cries out to his righteous God, Psalm 4:1, the very God who made him righteous. He desires relief from those who worked against God and were bringing distress to his life, Psalm 4:1.
He asks God to show him mercy and to hear his prayer, Psalm 4:1. Asking the question ‘How long?’ Psalm 4:2, is a question that most Christians have on their lips.
How long will it be before the Lord returns? How long will it be before our enemy, Satan, is finally banished forever? How long will it be until God brings an end to all the ungodliness which is happening in the world? Revelation 6:10-11. And God’s answer is that He will deal with it.
When we read through this psalm, we would be forgiven for thinking that this is all about David’s safety, but as we go through, we soon discover it’s actually about saving his reputation.

There’s nothing new about people trying to tear down a person’s reputation, even Jesus Himself went through this, Mark 3:22. People will often try to destroy someone’s reputation, especially if they do great things for the glory of God; they turn those great things and God’s glory into shame.
The people who turn David’s glory into shame and the people who love delusions and false gods, Psalm 4:2, are those who have exchanged the truth for a lie and worshipped the created instead of the Creator, Romans 1:25 / 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.
You may notice at the end of verse two, some translations have the word ‘selah’. Although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can imagine David pausing for a breath as he reflects upon his current situation and his reputation.

‘Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him. Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.’ Psalm 4:3-4

It's the Lord Himself who sets people apart, Psalm 4:3, that is, sacrifices them. David is well aware that He, His faithful servant, and other godly people have been set apart for God. David knew that he and other godly people were set apart for God.
David knows because he has been sanctified by God and for God, that his prayers will not fall on deaf ears, Psalm 4:3. God hears the prayers of the sanctified.
As Christians today, we too have been sanctified, 1 Corinthians 1:2 / Hebrews 10:10, and we should know that our prayers don't fall on deaf ears; God hears our prayers, Jeremiah 29:12-13 / 1 Peter 3:12 / 1 John 5:14-15.
Notice he writes, 'tremble and do not sin', Psalm 4:4. The Septuagint translates this phrase as 'be angry and do not sin.' This text is quoted by Paul in Ephesians 4:26.
In the context of the psalm, David was surrounded by ungodliness, and he had lots of reason to be angry, but that anger didn't give him the right to sin. Remember, anger in and of itself isn't sinful, is what we do with that anger which may lead to sin.

When we meditate upon God's Word, our minds become filled with godly things and the anger is quickly gone, Philippians 4:8. After a long day of stress, there's nothing better than laying in our beds to have some quiet time to reflect upon God's Word, Psalm 4:4 / Psalms 63:6. The best remedy for anger is meditation, searching our hearts and simply being silent, Psalm 4:4.

> 'Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the LORD. Many, LORD, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?" Let the light of your face shine on us. Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.' Psalm 4:5-8

When the righteous offer their sacrifices to God, this demonstrates their trust in God, Psalm 4:5 / Romans 12:1-2 / 1 Peter 2:5. It's through this offering that one reaps the blessing of God, and although the unrighteous are sceptical concerning the way of righteousness, David asks that God prove to them His favour of the righteous by displaying Himself through the righteous.
David asks, 'Who will bring us prosperity?' Psalm 4:6. Some translations have the word 'good'. It's clear that even the righteous may have doubts at times and wonder if God will show them any good, especially if they have one disappointment after another.
However, David trusts that God will show him good, Psalm 4:6 / Numbers 6:24-26. He asks God to 'fill his heart with joy', Psalm 4:7, because the heart is the centre of the human spirit. It didn't matter to David whether there was a bumper crop of new grain and new wine, Psalm 4:7.
The righteous are filled with joy because they focus on the inner man in times of distress and as a result, they can sleep in peace, Psalm 4:8 / Lamentations 3:22-23 / Luke 8:22-25.
Most people in the world sleep at peace and are filled with joy when they have lots of money, and everything is going well; however, David could be filled with joy despite what happens or doesn't happen. He can sleep well because his safety is from the Lord, not from circumstances or even his feelings, Philippians 4:10-13.

CONCLUSION

Prayer is so vital for the Christian, Matthew 7:7-8 / Ephesians 6:18 / 1 John 5:14, and there may be times when we doubt if God will ever answer those prayers. The Scriptures teach us clearly that our prayers will be answered. However, there are some things which will prevent God from answering our prayers, Psalm 17:1 / Proverbs 28:9 / Matthew 6:7 / Matthew 17:20-21 / John 15:7 / James 1:6 / James 5:16 / 1 Peter 3:7.

When we face challenges in life and become angry, maybe it's time to lie on our beds and simply meditate upon God's Word. It's then we can remind ourselves of who God is, who we are as His children.

We remind ourselves of what He has done for us in the past, Psalm 77:11-12 / Psalm 143:5 /Psalm 77:12. As a result, we will sleep well every evening, knowing that God is indeed our strength and our refuge, Psalm 18:2 / Psalm 46:1-3 / Isaiah 25:4.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

This psalm shows David coming to the Lord in the morning, where he receives the strength and joy he needs to make it through the day against many enemies. This psalm is also called a 'Morning Prayer' because of what he writes in Psalm 5:3.
Although we don't know the circumstances under which David wrote this psalm, there's nothing better than to start your day in prayer, especially if we're being threatened somehow by our enemies.

HEADING

'For the director of music. For pipes. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music and was to be sung with the use of pipes. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

'Listen to my words, LORD, consider my lament. Hear my cry for help, my King, and my God, for to you I pray. In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.' Psalm 5:1-3

David knew that God reigned over all things as king in heaven, and so, he expressed his desire that his prayers be heard. Notice the four things we learn from David's prayer.

1. David used words and sentences to pray.

David says, 'listen to my words', Psalm 5:1. Although there are times when we lament in silence, our prayers need to be prayed using words and sentences, Psalm 51:7 / Psalm 51:10-12.

2. David's prayer was personal.

David uses the words, 'my words', 'my lament', 'my cry', 'my voice', 'my King', 'my God', and 'my requests', Psalm 5:1-3. This is a very personal prayer, and when we pray, we too should make it very personal, Matthew 6:9-13.

3. David prayed regularly.

David prayed 'in the morning', Psalm 5:3, which gives us the idea that he prayed every morning. Prayer was part of his morning routine, Daniel 6:10-28.

4. David was expecting his prayer to be answered.

David was 'waiting expectantly', Psalm 5:3. In other words, he was waiting on God to answer his prayer. It's one thing to pray to God, but it's another thing to expect Him to answer, Matthew 21:22 / James 1:6.

David teaches us what we should do every morning, before we start our busy schedule for the day, we should pray to God, and after we've prayed and go about our busy day, we should expect God to answer our prayer.

'For you are not a God who is pleased with wickedness; with you, evil people are not welcome. The arrogant cannot stand in your presence. You hate all who do wrong; you destroy those who tell lies. The bloodthirsty and deceitful you, LORD, detest. But I, by your great love, can come into your house; in reverence I bow down toward your holy temple.' Psalm 5:4-7

As we saw in the first few verses, David's prayer was very personal, and that's because our relationship with God is very personal. The more time we spend in prayer to God and studying His Word, the closer we draw to Him. The more we get to know Him, what He loves and what He hates.

Here, David tells us that because God can't tolerate the way of the wicked, He will turn from them, Psalm 5:4. The reason God turns away from them is simply that they have no desire for God's presence in their lives, Psalm 5:5. As a result of their wickedness, they will be destroyed because they have turned away from God, Psalm 5:6.

Those who do wrong and tell lies, those who are bloodthirsty and deceitful, have no place in the presence of God. God hates their sinfulness, Psalm 5:6 / 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 / Galatians 5:19-21 / Ephesians 5:3-5 / Revelation 22:15. It's very clear from these passages that God's wickedness, although we must stress that God hates the sin they are involved in and not the sinner, John 8:10-11 / Jude 1:22–23 / Revelation 2:6.

David contrasts himself with the wicked, not arrogantly, because he says he can be in the presence of God only because of God's 'great love', Psalm 5:7. Make no mistake about it, David never took God for granted; he knew he was very privileged to worship God.

Wherever David was, he would bow down in worship toward the tabernacle of God, Psalm 5:7 / Daniel 6:10. We must note that the word 'temple', Psalm 5:7, used here, can also be translated as the word 'tabernacle', 1 Samuel 1:9 / 1 Samuel 3:3, which would make a lot more sense because as we know the temple hadn't been built yet, 1 Kings 5-7. In bowing down, David was demonstrating humility, and in facing the tabernacle, he was presenting himself to what represented God.

'Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies—make your way straight before me. Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with malice. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongues they tell lies. Declare them guilty, O God! Let their intrigues be their downfall. Banish them for their many sins, for they have rebelled against you.' Psalm 5:8-10

David desires to be led in the right ways of God, Psalm 5:8. This shows us how much he had come to depend upon God in all areas of his life. He's fully aware that it's only God who could help him stay away from the ways of the wicked, Psalm 5:8.

In contrast to what David desired to be, the wicked came forward with an odour of death, Psalm 5:9 / Numbers 19:11 / Romans 3:13. David focuses on what the wicked say as evidence of their wickedness; their speech was filled with deceit, Matthew 12:34.

What we have recorded here in this psalm is the first time where we find David calling upon God to judge the wicked, Psalm 5:10 / Luke 19:27 / Revelation 6:10. All too often, it's the wicked who fall into the trap of their own deception, 2 Timothy 3:13. While they devise schemes for their own benefit, they fall victim to their own devices.

'But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you. Surely, LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favour as with a shield.' Psalm 5:11-12

David tells us that it's the righteous who recognise that God is working in their lives and are the ones who will be glad, Psalm 5:11. Even when the righteous fall upon hard times, they can still rejoice in knowing that God is still their refuge, James 1:2-3.

The joy the righteous experience is for everyone who 'loves the Name,' Psalm 5:11, of the Lord and serves him wholeheartedly, Numbers 32:12 / Psalm 119:80 / Ephesians 6:7.

David has no doubts that God will bless the righteous; he has no doubts that God will surround them with His favour, 1 Samuel 23:26, acting as a shield, Psalm 5:12. Oh, how blessed we are to be looked upon with God's favour, His grace truly is amazing, John 1:16 / Ephesians 2:8-9.

CONCLUSION

David started every day with a prayer, and we know that he prayed at other times too, but in the New Testament, Paul tells us to pray continually, 1 Thessalonians 5:17. When we have our own private prayer time, how personal do we make it?

When we pray to God, He already knows what we're going to say, Psalm 139:4 / Matthew 6:8. God is our Father, and He longs to hear from us, but we don't pray to Him for His benefit but for our benefit.

When we pray, we're reminded of not only who He is but also that we can't live without Him or do anything without Him and His guidance, protection, and grace.

David recognised just how blessed he was to be in the presence of God to worship Him. Worship, for some, has become a time of entertainment; it's all about what they can get out of it, Matthew 15:8-9. Our worship should be directed at God, not people, Deuteronomy 12:8.

We get so used to worshipping God that we often take our worshipping of God for granted, Hebrews 10:25, but it's only because of God's favour that we are privileged to come together to worship Him and pray to Him, Hebrews 4:16.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is the first psalm in which the writer expresses his repentance, Psalm 6 / Psalm 32 / Psalm 38 / Psalm 41 / Psalm 102 / Psalm 130 / Psalm 143. Although we're not told which particular sin David is repenting of, David here is anguishing over the pain and sorrow which came about because of his sin.

HEADING

'For the director of music. With stringed instruments. According to Sheminith. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
It was to be sung with the use of stringed instruments. It was to be sung 'according to sheminith', which means according to the set to the eighth. This is a reference to some specific tune, much like song leaders do today when they ask the congregation to turn their hymn books to a certain hymn number.

'LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am faint; heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony. My soul is in deep anguish. How long, LORD, how long? Turn, LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love. Among the dead, no one proclaims your name. Who praises you from the grave?' Psalm 6:1-5

As we mentioned in the introduction, we don't know what particular sin David had committed, but he certainly felt that God was rebuking him, hence why he asks God to lighten his discipline, Psalm 6:1. Like so many people today, they don't see the greater good which God is trying to achieve in our lives when He disciplines His people, Hebrews 12:7.
David is feeling weak, and his bones are in agony, Psalm 6:2, and his soul is also deeply troubled, Psalm 6:3. When we read the Psalms, we notice that the word 'soul' is used to refer to the totality of human existence, including the life, conscience, and personal character of the individual, 1 Thessalonians 5:23.
David cries out to God amidst his anguish and asks God twice, 'How long?' Psalm 6:3. It's clear that David was feeling the pressure of being disciplined by God. He asks God to 'return and deliver him', Psalm 6:4. He wasn't asking because he knew he was righteous, but because God is a merciful God.
The very fact that David asks God to return to him tells us that at this point, David felt alone and far away from God. Because he appeals to God's unfailing love, Psalm 6:4, this tells us of his repentance; he knows that he doesn't deserve any mercy, but he knows how much he needs it.
De Hoff says the following in his commentary.

'David did not cry for justice; he cried for mercy. I once participated in a funeral with a splendid young minister who kept saying, 'The deceased is in the hands of a just God.' I suggested to him that if he ever had a part in preaching my funeral, I would appreciate it if he would say that 'I am in the hands of a merciful God.' It is mercy and not justice that all of us need.'

It's clear that David is in a lot of anguish and pain because of his sickness and his fear of death. He was weak because of his predicament, and he lamented over the fact that his body was withering away because of his sickness.

We must note that God doesn't always inflict people with illness because of their sin, but there are times when He chooses to do so, 1 Corinthians 11:30 / James 5:15.
David says that 'among the dead no one proclaims your name. Who praises you from the grave,' Psalm 6:5. David is basically saying, if he died from his illness, he wouldn't be able to give glory to God for God's healing hand.
Perhaps David asked God to heal him so that his recovery from his illness would be evidence of God's grace in his life. We must remember that in the Old Testament, there was little hope beyond the grave, Job 19:25 / Ecclesiastes 9:5. It wasn't until Jesus came along that thoughts of eternal life and immortality came to light, 2 Timothy 2:10.

'I am worn out from my groaning. All night long, I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes. Away from me, all you who do evil, for the LORD has heard my weeping. The LORD has heard my cry for mercy; the LORD accepts my prayer. All my enemies will be overwhelmed with shame and anguish; they will turn back and suddenly be put to shame.' Psalm 6:6-10

David's illness was so bad that it just wore him out, Psalm 6:6, to the point where he thought he would be better off being dead. Notice that because of God's discipline, he expressed how he was feeling in three different ways.
1. David felt God was angry with him, Psalm 6:1-2.
2. David couldn't feel God's presence, Psalm 6:3-5.
3. David couldn't sleep, Psalm 6:6-10.
These three things are the very things which will come upon unrepentant sinners, Matthew 7:23 / Luke 13:27. He was in so much pain that he cried and cried so much that he drenched his bed with his tears, Psalm 6:6 / 2 Corinthians 7:10.
His eyes were growing weaker and weaker because of a lack of sleep. His eyes are failing because of his enemies, Psalm 6:7, that is, he felt his enemies would take advantage of him being seriously ill.
Because David felt that death was just around the corner, he felt that his enemies wouldn't have any mercy upon him. In his anguish, David tells his enemies, all those who do evil, to get away from him, Psalm 6:8, but he also cries out to God, who heard his prayers, Psalm 6:9.
Even though David's enemies wanted David to die, he rejoiced in his recovery from his illness and gave all the glory and credit to God for doing so. Notice how David uses words in the future tense; he says, 'will be' and 'will turn' are future tense, Psalm 6:10.
He had total confidence that God would not only hear his prayer but answer it. The anguish and pain he was in will be nothing compared to what God will do to his enemies, Psalm 6:10.

CONCLUSION

We all face loneliness at times, especially when we're seriously ill, living alone with an illness or in an isolated ward in a hospital, which can often make us feel that everyone has abandoned us or even God Himself is far from us.

When we go through times of testing, we often feel weak and vulnerable. However, we must never forget that God is always with us, no matter what we go through in life, Isaiah 41:10 / Matthew 28:20 / Hebrews 13:5-6.
Life is an interesting journey, to say the least, and as most people will experience, old age creeps upon us, our bodies don't function like they once did, our parents have passed away, and some of the old friends we grew up with have all gone before us.

We've worked hard all our lives and achieved much, made some long-lasting friendships and possibly a few enemies along the way. Our children have now all grown up and have children of their own, and the thought of death enters our minds with each passing month.

This may all sound doom and gloom, but the thought of dying shouldn't be a fearful thought for the Christian. When was the last time you read the Lord's promise concerning death?

A promise that's so clear and unmistakable that we're tempted to suspect that it means something different from what it plainly says, 'Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death,' John 8:51.
Think about that verse for a moment, and think about what that short verse means, because when we finally understand what the Lord means here, all fear of death will be gone. And we too, with Paul, could say and finally understand his words, 'Where, O death, is your sting?' 1 Corinthians 15:51.

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is a lament of David, possibly when he was fleeing from Saul, Psalm 34 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 56 / Psalm 57 / Psalm 59 / Psalm 142. Some commentators believe that 'this Psalm was once two Psalms and that they have been welded together.
The first five verses and the last six have the story of an innocent man, slandered, persecuted, and pursued with hatred, and in Psalms 7:6-11 personified Israel asks for justice at God's hands, and begs him to summon all nations to the great assize, the Final Judgment, that they may attest the Divine Sentence that declares Israel innocent.'
Some believe that 'the first of these is one of eight passages traditionally associated with David's flight from the wrath of King Saul. The other seven are, are the psalms mentioned above.'

HEADING

'A shiggaion of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush, a Benjamite'.

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

A shiggaion is a lyrical poem composed under strong mental emotion, a song of impassioned imagination accompanied with suitable music; a dithyrambic ode, Habakkuk 3:1.
We know that Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin, and the mention of Cush as a member of that tribe supports the theory that David was falsely accused of treason against Saul, 1 Samuel 24:9, and of plotting against him by members of Saul's tribe. We also know that David was brutally slandered by Doeg, 1 Samuel 22:18-19, and that Saul vigorously pursued David with the purpose of killing him.

'LORD my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me, or they will tear me apart like a lion and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me. LORD my God, if I have done this and there is guilt on my hands—if I have repaid my ally with evil or without cause have robbed my foe—then let my enemy pursue and overtake me; let him trample my life to the ground and make me sleep in the dust. Arise, LORD, in your anger; rise up against the rage of my enemies. Awake, my God; decree justice. Let the assembled peoples gather around you, while you sit enthroned over them on high. Let the LORD judge the peoples. Vindicate me, LORD, according to my righteousness, according to my integrity, O Most High. Bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure—you, the righteous God who probes minds and hearts. My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart.' Psalm 7:1-10

David here sees God as his refuge, his safe haven and places his faith in God to deliver him from his enemies, Psalm 7:1. David was fearful for his life which he depicts as a lion ready to rip him apart, Psalm 7:2. This could either be a reference to king Saul or Cush who was pursuing him, 2 Samuel 16:5-23 / 2 Samuel 20:1-25.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 7:3-5.
'Notice the triple 'if' in Psalms 7:3-5, KJV. This format was typical of what was called The Oath of Clearance, which is mentioned in 1 Kings 8:31-32. When one was accused, he could go to the temple and there take a solemn oath after the pattern noted here, asking that God would receive his affirmation as righteous and true, including a curse upon his own head in case his oath was false. This oath was supposed to be taken in the Temple and administered by the priests, but it was sometimes taken elsewhere. Job is supposed to have had this Oath of Clearance in mind in the words of Job 31:5-40.'
Because David uses the word 'if' may suggest that these were the things he was being accused of by Cush. Because David uses the words 'if I have done this', Psalm 7:3, which also suggests that he may be confessing some unknown sin that he may have committed that justified his fleeing from Saul.
It's also possible that he thought God was disciplining him for something he wasn't aware of. If he had done something that was worthy of the discipline he was suffering, then he would have felt that he deserved to be disciplined.

David says to God, if he has repaid his ally with evil or without cause has robbed his foe, then let his enemy pursue and overtake him, let him trample his life to the ground and make him sleep in the dust, Psalm 7:4-5 / Acts 25:11.
When David fled from Saul, he didn't retaliate with the evil he had at the hands of Saul. He could have easily murdered Saul, but he chose not to, 1 Samuel 24:1-22 / 1 Samuel 26:1-25.
You may notice at the end of verse five that some translations have the word 'selah'. Although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can imagine David pausing for a breath as he reflects upon his current situation and his reputation.

David wants God to wake up and act upon his enemies and decree justice, Psalm 7:6 / Psalms 3:7. He says let the assembled peoples gather around God, while He sits enthroned over them on high, Psalm 7:7.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 7:7.
'The meaning is that such an act would inspire confidence in him as a just and holy God, and that, as the result, his people would gather round him to express their gratitude, and to render him praise. In other words, every act of justice on the part of God, all his interpositions to defend his people, and to maintain the principles of righteousness and truth, tend to inspire confidence in him, and to increase the number of his friends.'

David was happy to let God judge the people, and he was pretty confident in his own righteousness, but not arrogant, and so he asked God to judge him and discipline him if it was appropriate, Psalm 7:8. If he were found righteous, however, then he called on the just Judge to render judgment upon the wicked.
Notice it is God who 'probes the hearts and minds', Psalm 7:9. In other words, God is dealing with people's emotions and their consciences, Psalm 4:7 / Psalms 26:2 / Psalms 139:13 / Jeremiah 11:20 / Jeremiah 17:10 / Jeremiah 20:12 / Revelation 2:23.
David once again calls God his 'shield', Psalm 7:10, that is, protector and defender, Psalms 3:3 / Psalms 5:12. He knew full well that he couldn't stand against his enemies alone; he needed God to defend him. David claimed to be right before God, Psalm 7:10, but not arrogantly, and because of this, God is going to deal justly in his present situation.

'God is a righteous judge, a God who displays his wrath every day. If he does not relent, he will sharpen his sword; he will bend and string his bow. He has prepared his deadly weapons; he makes ready his flaming arrows. Whoever is pregnant with evil conceives trouble and gives birth to disillusionment. Whoever digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit they have made. The trouble they cause recoils on them; their violence comes down on their own heads. I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD Most High.' Psalm 7:11-17

David knows that God is a righteous judge, Psalm 7:11; he knew that God would do what is right, Genesis 18:22-25. God is just in His judgments concerning the righteous and the unrighteous, hence why He pours out His wrath on the wicked who refuse to repent and blesses those who are obedient to Him, Psalm 7:11.
People can't have it both ways. He can't justly pour out blessings on the righteous if He doesn't bring just judgment on the wicked. The mention of a 'sharpened sword and a bent bow', Psalm 7:12, tells us that God is prepared and ready to judge the wicked, Deuteronomy 32:41 / Romans 13:4.
The words 'flaming arrows', Psalm 7:13, are used as a metaphor for a warrior who has his arrow points dipped in tar and is ready to shoot fire toward the defences of the enemy.
The words, 'conceived with evil and giving birth to disillusionment', Psalm 7:14, are simply used to tell us about the source of sin, which comes from within, James 1:14-15.
The sinner gives birth to sin as a mother gives birth to children, from within. They dig a hole and fall into it, Psalm 7:15 / Esther 7:10 / Matthew 15:14; they are deceived and go on to deceive others, 2 Timothy 3:13.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 7:15.
'The allusion here is undoubtedly to a method of hunting wild beasts which was common in ancient times. It consists of digging a pitfall, and covering it over with brush and grass so as to deceive the animals, and then enclosing them and driving them into it, Isaiah 24:17.'
Notice that the wicked 'recoil', Psalm 7:16, that is, they will reap the consequences of their sin, Psalms 9:15 / Psalms 35:8 / Psalms 37:15. All too often, the wicked appear to get away with their crimes and slip through the cracks of the world justice system.
However, they may get away with their wickedness in this life, but they won't get away with it on judgment day, because God's justice system doesn't have any cracks in it, Matthew 25:31-46 / Hebrews 9:27 / Revelation 21:8.
David begins this psalm with doom and gloom, but ends it with a very high tone. He acknowledges God's righteousness and he 'will sing praises of the name of the LORD Most High,' Psalm 7:17, that is, Yahweh, Genesis

14:17-24 / Luke 8:18 / Matthew 8:29 / Acts 7:48. While the wicked go from bad to worse, David commits himself to the Lord, which indicates he totally trusts that God's judgments will be true and just.

CONCLUSION

Although David spoke of his own righteousness, he wasn't being self-righteous. Self-righteousness can be a problem for many people, especially religious people, as they often measure their own righteousness against others, Luke 7:36-50. It's all too easy to look at the faults of others instead of looking into the mirror, Matthew 7:1-5.
Instead of measuring our righteousness with other people, maybe we should simply remember that all our righteous acts mean nothing to God, Isaiah 64:6. Maybe we should remember that the righteousness we do have only comes because of and through what Christ has done, Romans 3:9-18.
There is a well-known saying which is very appropriate in dealing with the Lord's judgment day. It states, 'Justice must not only be done; it must be seen to be done'.

When 'the books' are opened before God, Revelation 20:12-15, it will not be because He needs to be reminded of what men have done in their lives, or because He needs to weigh up the evidence, for or against them.
It will be in order that every individual may know and understand clearly why God's verdict is just, and why the sentence is deserved. No one who is banished eternally from God's presence will be left in any doubt as to the reason. No one will be able to say, 'I don't deserve this!', or 'I don't understand why I am being treated in this way!' Justice will truly be 'seen' to be done.

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find David being in awe at God's incredible handiwork of creation, Romans 1:20, whilst reflecting upon just how small and significant mankind really is compared to Him. Despite mankind being so small, God has honoured mankind above all His creation.

HEADING

'For the director of music. According to Gittith. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
It was to be sung 'according to gittith', which is a musical instrument. Some commentaries suggest that this instrument would have been used by the people of Gath or sung to the tune of Gath. Others suggest it was used at the festivities of the vintage, Psalm 81 / Psalm 84.

'LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants, you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.' Psalm 8:1-2

Notice how David uses the covenant name of God, that is, 'Yahweh', and he uses the position of LORD to His people, that is, 'Lord', Psalm 8:1. David considers how awesome God is, which can be clearly seen in creation, not only on the Earth but throughout the universe, Psalm 8:1.
Everything within creation points to a Designer and a Creator, and anyone who takes a moment to look at the wonders of creation but still denies the existence of God is a fool, Psalm 14:1.
David says that God's awesome power can be seen in small children and babies, Psalm 8:2 / 1 Corinthians 1:27. I'm sure you remember that Jesus Himself quoted these words to the chief priests and teachers of the law when they were indignant at the children who were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' Matthew 21:15-16.
God displays His strength in the most unlikely places sometimes. He uses what the world would call small and weak. He uses children and babies because it actually silences the enemy, Psalm 8:2, just like Jesus silenced the chief priests and teachers of the law who were His enemies.

'When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?' Psalm 8:3-4

When David considers the universe and considers mankind, he's reminded of how small mankind really is by comparison. When we look up in the evening sky and we see the brilliance of the moon and the millions of stars, all of which He has set in place, Psalm 8:3, we're reminded of how much we need God.
The word 'mankind', Psalm 8:4, used here, speaks about the fragility of human beings; it speaks of our weaknesses and limitations. David wonders why God is mindful of mankind and why He cares for them, Psalm 8:4.
The existence of mankind on earth alone exemplifies God's consideration for man. Man's very existence is evidence of the fact that he is the most important of all things that God created. It was only after creating man that God says is was 'very good', Genesis 1:31.
Some translations have the words, 'the son of man that You visit him?' The words 'son of man' simply tell us that a son of a person is a person, and what a wonderful thought to think that God has really visited us, Luke 1:78.

'You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!' Psalm 8:5-9

We must note that the Septuagint translates the Hebrew word 'angels' as 'Elohim'. This can be translated as angels or even men, Exodus 21:6 / Exodus 22:8-9 / Psalm 82:1 / Psalm 97:7 / Psalm 138:1.
The word 'angels' is the correct translation and is endorsed by the Holy Spirit when He quoted this verse in Hebrews 2:7. Since angels are spiritual beings, the translation would be justified by the context, Colossians 1:16.

The writer of Hebrews quotes from Psalm 8, in Hebrews 2:5-9, and a difficult question arises with this quotation. Is the author referring to people, or is he referring exclusively to the Son?
First, the word 'man', in Hebrews 2:6, is a translation of the Greek word 'anthropos', which means 'human beings'; it has no reference to gender. 'Son of man' is the same thing; the son of a person is a person.
This psalm praises the Lord for His glorious creation, Psalm 8:3-4. Now, carefully look at Psalm 8:5-8, and notice that the psalmist is talking about humans. God has made humans a little lower than the heavenly beings, Psalm 8:5. God has crowned humans with glory and honour, Psalm 8:5 / 1 Corinthians 6:3 / Revelation 20:5.
Further, God has given humans dominion over the works of God's hands, and all things are under the feet of humans, Psalm 8:6 / 1 Corinthians 15:27. This praise reflects the teaching in Genesis 1:28-30 / Genesis 9:2, where God gave dominion to humans over every created thing.
Now, some think that this psalm about humanity is being altered by the writer of Hebrews and is now applied to Jesus as the Son of man. But I don't think that's right, and let me show you why.

Back to Hebrews 2:5-9, the writer is borrowing from Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 to remind the audience that God has placed humans on the earth to rule over the creation, and all things are subject to humans.
Hebrews 2:8 wraps up by pointing out that we cannot even begin to comprehend all that this point entails. We do not fully see all that God has placed under our feet. We are so short-sighted and so unable to comprehend the great dominion that God has given us on this earth.
Everything under our feet reflects that the whole created world is in subjection to humans. But there is something that we do see, according to Hebrews 2:9, in fact, it is 'a someone', but 'we do see Jesus'. He also became a human for a little while.
This is the thrust of the argument: the Son is superior because He became human, John 1:1 / John 1:14. If the quotation in Psalm 8 is referring to Jesus, then Hebrews 2:9 does not make sense.
What makes sense is to use the psalmist's argument about the dominion of humans over the created world and then point out that the Son became human. Therefore, the Son also has dominion; we see Jesus, and we can see His dominion because He was crowned with glory and honour after tasting death for everyone. We have victory, deliverance, and dominion because of Jesus.

Now, this ties back to Hebrews 2:5, because the author is speaking about the 'world to come', that is, the Messianic kingdom. We cannot begin to fully see the dominion and rule we have.
In fact, the writer has already pointed out that angels were created, at least for one purpose, and that is to serve those of us who are inheriting salvation, Hebrews 1:14.
We cannot see that, and we cannot see the inner workings of the spiritual realm and our place in that, but we do see Jesus. Jesus was made human, and He was crowned with glory and honour; we do see that.

Notice that David says that God created the 'paths of the seas', Psalm 8:8. In 1853, a man named Maury discovered that the waters, the whales, and even the winds have paths over or through the seas, and by tracing these, Maury also found the best paths for ships. Although he discovered them back in 1853, God through David tells us that these paths were created by God.
David closes his psalm with that magnificent exclamation with which it began, 'LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!' Psalm 8:9 / Psalm 8:1.

CONCLUSION

A man named A. W. Dicus invented the indicator for our cars; he was also a scientist and a hymn writer. One of his most famous hymns is called 'Beyond the azure blue'. In the first and third stanzas, he writes the following.

There is, beyond the azure blue
A God, concealed from human sight
He tinted skies with heav'nly hue
And framed the worlds with His great might
Secure is life from mortal mind
God holds the germ within His hand
Though men may search, they cannot find
For God alone does understand

The evolutionists go out of their way to deny the existence of God but can't give a reasonable explanation of where mankind came from or where mankind is heading, Genesis 1:1 / Genesis 1:26-27 / 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 / John 17:3 / 1 John 5:13. Many others simply deny His existence despite His existence being plainly shown to them, Romans 1:18-32.

When we reflect upon the words of A. W. Dicus and this psalm of David, we are just left in awe, as the questions of where we came from and why we are here are truly answered, 1 Corinthians 2:8 / Hebrews 11:3.

God made us because He loves us, Psalm 136:5-9 / 1 John 4:8. God made us for life within loving relationships, Genesis 2:18-23 / Genesis 5:1-21 / John 3:14. God made us to give us honour and dignity. Chesterton, looking at modern man, says the following.

'Whatever else is true about man, he isn't what he was intended to be.'

God made us to give us life, joy and peace with him and with one another, Deuteronomy 30:15 / Deuteronomy 30:20 / Lamentations 3:33 / John 3:17 / John 17:3.

We were created to enjoy love-filled lives with God and one another. We are not just complex scum, and we aren't simply sophisticated animals. We've been made in the image of God to enjoy fellowship with Him.

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION

This psalm and the next one appear to belong together. This psalm deals with the majesty of God, and the next psalm deals with the unbelief that existed among God's people.

HEADING

'For the director of music. To the tune of "The Death of the Son." A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
It was to be sung to the tune of 'Death of the Son'. There are a few ideas as to what the heading means.

1. Some believe that David wrote this Psalm to God Himself to a popularly known tune in his day.

2. Some believe that 'Muth Labben', which is the Hebrew heading, was an instrument upon which the song was played.

3. Some associate the title with the phrase 'The Death of the Son' and apply that title as the ancient Chaldee version does. 'Concerning the death of the Champion who went out between the camps,' referring to Goliath.

4. Some believe that what is meant is that once God has indeed already condemned David's enemies, Psalms 9:4, their ultimate complete overthrow and destruction are considered as already done, such being the certainty of anything that God promises.
Rawlinson, in his commentary, says the following.

'David's victory over Ammon and Syria, 2 Samuel 10:6-14, which was followed by a renewed invasion by the same nations at a later time, 2 Samuel 10:16, is more likely to have drawn forth this composition.'

'I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High. My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you. For you have upheld my right and my cause, sitting enthroned as the righteous judge. You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever. Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies, you have uprooted their cities; even the memory of them has perished.' Psalm 9:1-6

David gives thanks to God, Psalm 9:1, and reflects on the past. He marvels at God's works, which He had done in his life, Psalm 9:1. David has confidence in the future because of what God has done in the past, Psalm 106:7 / Psalm 71:17 / Psalm 106:22 / Psalm 119:18.
He will be glad and rejoice in you, and he will sing the praises of your name, which David calls God, 'O most High', Psalm 9:2 / Genesis 14:19-20 / Psalm 7:17. Notice the words in Psalm 9:3 are past tense.
It appears that God has already revealed to him that he will be victorious over his enemies in the future. This is the reason why David could give thanks and praise to God; God has already passed judgment on his enemies, and so he has no reason to doubt God and His promise.

God is a righteous judge, Psalm 9:4 / Genesis 18:25, and He has 'blotted out their name for ever,' Psalm 9:5. In Old Testament times, the preservation of their names was very important, and the preservation of a family name continued the inheritance of an Israelite family, as well as guaranteed the posterity of the family throughout history. Here, David says that the name, Psalm 9:5, that is, the prosperity of the wicked, will be removed from history. He has full confidence that God will totally remove his enemies, and any memory of them will be removed, Psalm 9:6.

'The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity. The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. Sing the praises of the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done. For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.' Psalm 9:7-12

We can't help but notice how many times David mentioned God's Name, that is 'LORD', Psalm 9:7 / Psalm 9:9-11. This tells us how intimately he knows God and how intimately God knows him, Luke 6:46. Knowing God's Name is one thing, but knowing God on personal terms is another.

Yahweh is eternal and so, He reigns forever and has established His throne for judgment, Psalm 9:7 / Psalms 9:4. Because God is a just God and makes just judgments without prejudice, Psalm 9:8, then the righteous have a place of refuge in His care, Psalm 9:9. We must never forget that when we go through difficult times, God will justly deliver us, Psalm 37:28 / Acts 17:31.

The Hebrew word 'misgab' is used for 'refuge', Psalm 9:9, literally translated as 'high place'. During the days of Israel, high places were introduced by the Israelites as a place to go and worship their false gods.

However, David appears to be speaking metaphorically and says the high place is signifying a place where people can go for protection. Psalm 9:9. Knowing God's name also involves having a close personal relationship, in total obedience to Him, Psalm 9:10.

It's those who are obedient to His will and have committed their lives to Him who will never be forsaken, Psalm 9:10 / Deuteronomy 31:8 / Joshua 1:5 / Hebrews 13:5.

David encourages us to sing praises to the One enthroned in Zion, Psalm 9:11, which isn't literally, of course. Notice that David says that God 'who avenges blood remembers', Psalm 9:12. This tells us that God demands an account of every life which has been slain, Genesis 4:9 / Genesis 9:6 / Numbers 35:33-34 / 2 Kings 9:26.

Notice also that God doesn't ignore the cries of the afflicted, Psalm 9:12 / Psalm 10:14 / Psalm 140:12-13 / Luke 7:13. God sees, God cares, and God will take action.

'LORD, see how my enemies persecute me! Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death, that I may declare your praises in the gates of Daughter Zion, and there rejoice in your salvation.' Psalm 9:13-14

David wants to praise God with peace of mind, and so he pleads with God for deliverance from his persecutors, Psalm 9:13. He wants to be lifted up from the gates of death, Psalm 9:13. Death is often pictured as a fortified city with gates that open only inward, Matthew 16:18.

Notice that there are two gates mentioned here, the gates of death and the gates of Daughter Zion, Psalm 9:13-14. The gates of the daughter of Zion are a symbolic representation of the Lord's church, as in Hebrews 12:22.

Coffman, in his commentary, gives the following contrasts.

'The gates of death open for all men, while the gates of Zion open only for the saved. The gates of death open regardless of our will, while the gates of Zion open only by our choice. The gates of death are dark with terror, while the gates of Zion are bright with hope and joy.'

'The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. The LORD is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. The wicked go down to the realm of the dead, all the nations that forget God. But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish.' Psalm 9:15-18

As he wrote in Psalm 7:15-16, David reminds us that unbelievers will fall into the very same pit they dug for others, Psalm 9:15. Those who dig holes, set nets to trap others, Psalm 9:15. In other words, those who devise evil against others are caught in their own traps, Galatians 6:7.

Watkinson, in his commentary, says the following.

'The pit of human misery and ruin is dug by man, not by God.'

God is known as a just God, and He will deal justly with the wicked, Psalm 9:16.

You may notice at the end of verse sixteen, some translations have the word 'selah'. Although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said, Psalm 92:3. We can imagine David pausing for a breath as he reflects upon the outcome of the wicked.
The realm of the dead, Psalm 9:17, is Sheol, that is, the grave, and here, David says those who are wicked who try to ensnare the righteous will be ensnared by death, Psalm 9:16-17.
There are, in fact, three Biblical words used to speak about the realm of the dead, the meanings of which are often confused because people tend to use them very loosely. Two of the words in the New Testament are Greek words. The Third word is an Old Testament Hebrew word.

For example, in the New Testament, we have the following.

1. 'Gehenna', which occurs twelve times, and, in the Authorised Version, is always translated 'hell'.

2. 'Hades', which occurs ten times, and which is also always translated as 'hell'.

3. The third word is the word 'Sheol', found in the Old Testament, and which sometimes is erroneously said to be the word that corresponds to 'Gehenna'.

We can clearly see the confusion that has been created about the meaning of this word 'Sheol', when you understand that, in the Authorised Version, out of the sixty-five instances it occurs, thirty-one times it has been translated 'hell' and thirty-four times it has been translated 'the grave'!

Now, although the word 'Sheol' literally means 'The Place of the Dead', you don't need much intelligence to recognise that 'Hell' and the 'Grave' aren't the same place! When a body is placed in the grave, it hasn't been consigned to 'Hell'!

But there is a history behind this inconsistent rendering of the word 'Sheol'. Whilst the translators of the Authorised Version believed 'Hell' to be the place of punishment for the wicked, they withdrew from the idea of saying that good people also go to 'Sheol', and so in passages that related to the death of good people, they decided to translate 'Sheol' as 'the grave'!

However, in Hebrew theology and in Old Testament teaching, 'Sheol' is described as the place to which all the dead go, both good and bad. It's defined as 'the place of departed souls'.

In the account of King Saul's visit to the medium at Endor, the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel is recorded as saying to Saul, 'Tomorrow, you and your sons shall be with me.' 1 Samuel 28:19. Even the Oxford Dictionary is close to the truth as far as the meaning of the word is concerned. It says that 'Sheol' is 'The abode of the dead'. Furthermore, in the Old Testament, 'Sheol' is described as a gloomy place, in which an individual is farther away from God than he was during his lifetime. We are told that 'the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything,' Ecclesiastes 9:5, and, according to Psalm 115:17, 'The dead do not praise Yahweh, nor any who go down into silence.'
David proceeds to remind us again that 'God will never forget the needy, the hope of the afflicted will never perish', Psalm 9:18 / Psalm 7:15-16. Justice comes to the poor, not because of their poverty, but because they have been exploited by the wicked, Luke 16:19-31. God has always cared for the needy and made provision for them even in Old Testament times, Deuteronomy 24:21.

'Arise, LORD, do not let mortals triumph; let the nations be judged in your presence. Strike them with terror, LORD; let the nations know they are only mortal.' Psalm 9:19-20

David asks God to 'arise', Psalm 9:19, which is a military word used for getting ready to do battle. David has absolute confidence that God will judge the wicked, Psalm 9:19, and he hopes that through God's judgment the nations around would learn that they are not gods, but they are mere mortals, Psalm 9:20.

You may notice at the end of verse twenty, some translations have the word, 'selah'. Although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said, Psalm 92:3. We can imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates the judgment of God on all the nations. As mentioned in the introduction of this psalm, the next psalm follows from this one, as it focuses on the unbelief that existed among God's people.

CONCLUSION

David was confident about what God would do in the future because of what God had done in the past. There are times when we face trials, and we question if God will deliver us from them. It's usually during these difficult times that our faith is stretched and we become spiritually low.

I know there are times, it's not a good idea to look back, Genesis 19:26 / Luke 9:61-62, but there are times when we should. God knows that one of our greatest weaknesses is forgetfulness, hence why He remembers people about who He is and what He has done in the past over and over again.
'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,' Exodus 3:15 / Matthew 22:32 / Acts 7:32. 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt', Deuteronomy 7:8 / Exodus 12:12-14 / Exodus 20:2 / Psalm 81:10.
Even in the New Testament, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in order that we don't forget who He is and what He has done. He said we were to partake of the Supper in remembrance of Him, Luke 22:19-20 / 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. It's also worth noting that when we partake of the Supper, we proclaim the Lord's death until He returns, 1 Corinthians 11:26. In other words, when we look back at what Jesus had done on the cross, this gives us the confidence to face the future when He returns.
Whenever we find ourselves in times of doubt or trouble, these are not the times to throw ourselves a pity party; those are the times we need to remind ourselves of all the other times God has delivered us in the past, 1 Corinthians 10:13 / Hebrews 4:15 / 2 Timothy 4:18.
When we remember what God has done in our lives in the past, we too will have the confidence to know that He will help us with anything we may face in the future.

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION

Although there is no heading for this psalm, most people attribute it to David because it is arranged in the midst of several psalms that are specifically credited to David, Psalms 3-9 / Psalms 11-32.
This psalm and the previous one appear to belong together. The previous psalm dealt with the majesty of God, and this psalm deals with the unbelief that existed among God's people.

David begins this psalm by describing the character and the behaviour of the wicked and ends the psalm with complete confidence that God will deliver the righteous.

‘Why, LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? In his arrogance, the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts about the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD. In his pride, the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts, there is no room for God. His ways are always prosperous; your laws are rejected by him; he sneers at all his enemies. He says to himself, “Nothing will ever shake me.” He swears, “No one will ever do me harm.” Psalm 10:1-6

David begins by describing the way we often feel in times of trouble, Psalm 9:9, he wonders why God is ‘far off’, why does God hide Himself in times of trouble, Psalm 10:1.
It’s easy to think that God has moved far away from us during difficult times but the truth is God hasn’t gone anyway, Job 13:24 / Psalm 46:1, it’s usually us who have moved from Him.
David once again speaks of how the wicked target the weak but fall into their own scheming traps, Psalm 10:2 / Psalm 9:15. While the wicked prey upon the weak, they arrogantly boast Psalm 10:3, and as a result, they won’t submit to God and His will, Psalm 10:4 / Matthew 6:19-24 / Colossians 3:5.
Notice the words which David uses to describe the wicked, ‘arrogant’, ‘boastful’ and ‘proud’, Psalm 10:2-4. God hates these characteristics. He especially hates pride, Proverbs 6:17. It’s because of pride that the wicked oppress the weak, and it’s because of pride that they refuse to submit to God and His will.
They live their lives as though there is no God at all, Psalm 10:4. This is a perfect description of atheism, Psalm 14:1 / Psalm 53:1. They look for security in materialism, they think their wealth will keep them from harm, Psalm 10:5, and as a result, they think they are unmovable, Psalm 10:6.

‘His mouth is full of lies and threats; trouble and evil are under his tongue. He lies in wait near the villages; from ambush, he murders the innocent. His eyes watch in secret for his victims; like a lion in cover, he lies in wait. He lies in wait to catch the helpless; he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net. His victims are crushed, they collapse; they fall under his strength. He says to himself, “God will never notice; he covers his face and never sees.” Psalm 10:7-11

David now goes on to describe the behaviour and actions of the wicked. He says they continually lie, they continually plan evil, Psalm 10:7. They hang around in hiding places waiting to catch the helpless, and they murder innocent people, Psalm 10:8.
In the days of the prophet Hosea, he describes people who are exactly like this, Hosea 4:2 / Hosea 6:9. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul quotes these words to describe the wicked in his days, Romans 3:14.
They are described as a lion waiting to catch the helpless and drag them off in a net, Psalm 10:9. The Hebrew word for ‘helpless’ is ‘aniy’ and this word is only found in this psalm, Psalm 10:8 / Psalm 10:10 / Psalm 10:14.
These atheists really believe they can carry on oppressing the weak and helpless in society because they don’t think God notices or turns a blind eye to them Psalm 10:10-11.
God hasn’t forgotten the weak and helpless. He sees everything the wicked are doing, and they will eventually pay the consequences for their wickedness, Ecclesiastes 12:14 / Hebrews 9:27 / Revelation 6:14.

‘Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless. Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, “He won’t call me to account”? But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless. Break the arm of the wicked man; call the evildoer to account for his wickedness that would not otherwise be found out.’ Psalm 10:12-15

David, once again, as in the previous psalm, asks God to ‘arise’ and take action against the wicked, Psalm 10:12 / Psalm 3:7 / Psalm 9:19. We look around at the sinful actions of people in the world today and like David, we wonder how long they will get away with their wickedness, Psalm 10:13 / Revelation 6:10.
The wicked believe that they won’t be held accountable for their actions, but David here reminds us that God will take action, Psalm 10:14. They may not pay the consequences for their sins in their lifetime, but they will certainly pay for their wickedness on Judgment Day, Matthew 12:36 / Romans 14:12 / Revelation 20:11-15.

God sees everything which is going on in the world, Psalm 10:14, and He is deeply concerned for the helpless in our society, Psalm 82:3-4 / Isaiah 1:17 / James 1:27.
David pours his heart out and asks Him to 'break the arm of the wicked', Psalm 10:15. He wants God to judge the wicked now, so that the helpless and vulnerable in society can get some relief from the wicked who are oppressing them.

'The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land. You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.' Psalm 10:16-18

After pouring his heart out to God on behalf of the helpless in society, it appears that God has heard his cries and answered his prayers. David pronounces that 'the LORD is King', Psalm 10:16, which was always His rightful position, Exodus 15:18 / 1 Samuel 8:7-9 / Daniel 7:14 / Zechariah 14:9 / Revelation 11:15.
Although David began this psalm on a negative note, asking where God was, he ends the psalm on a positive note, knowing that God's justice will be served concerning the wicked who were oppressing the vulnerable in society, Psalm 10:17-18. These wicked men and mere mortals, Psalm 10:18 / Psalm 9:19, and God will ensure that they never harm the helpless again, Psalm 10:18.

CONCLUSION

When we think about atheists, Psalm 14:1 / Psalms 53:1, especially those who are always attacking people's faith, we can't help but stop and think that they must have more faith than most Christians do.
When we think about the universe, we think about our planet and all the incredible animals which live on it. When we think about human beings, their bodies, the emotions we feel, our consciences and our intelligence, etc, we wonder how anyone can deny the existence of God.

While God gives us a purpose for living and dying, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, and Jesus offers us hope for this life and the next, John 3:16 / John 10:10, the atheist offers us nothing; they offer no hope for this life or the next to come. The atheist, H. J. Blackham, said the greatest objection to atheism is this: 'It's too bad to be true!' How true his words are, Romans 1:18-25.

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION

This psalm tells us about how our faith can produce courage, especially when we are being betrayed by those around us. It's our faith which carries us through all our great trials in life, and it's our faith that brings about our victory over our enemies.

This psalm, along with Psalm 3 / Psalm 7 / Psalm 9 / Psalm 14 / Psalm 17, has been called 'Psalms of Persecution' by some.
Rhodes, in his commentary, says the following.

'Psalm 11 is one of the gems of the Psalter classified as affirmations of faith in spite of the danger to himself, in spite of the advice of friends to flee, and in spite of the seeming hopelessness of the cause'.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music and was written by David. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

'In the LORD I take refuge. How then can you say to me: "Flee like a bird to your mountain. For look, the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart. When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Psalm 11:1-3

The background to these verses may well be during the final days of David in Saul's court, 1 Samuel 21-23. By this time, Saul had become a law unto himself; he wanted to kill David, and he falsely accused David of trying to take over his reign, 1 Samuel 24:9.
David says God is his refuge, Psalm 11:1, but because there was no legal court system in place for David to defend his case, he is advised to 'flee to the mountain', Psalm 11:1.
The reason he was to flee to the mountain was simple: people are ready to kill him. In other words, the advice given to David to flee may have been well-intended advice, but it certainly wasn't God's advice.

I guess we must remember that the advice we give others may sound good at the time and sound right to us, but it may turn out to be the wrong advice, Job 15:17 / Matthew 16:22-23 / 1 Thessalonians 4:11 / 1 Timothy 5:13.
David says, The wicked are ready with bows, ready to fire their arrows secretly at the upright in heart, Psalm 11:2.
When the foundations are being destroyed, he asks, What can the righteous do? Psalm 11:3.
Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 11:3.
'If Saul, who is the vicegerent of God, has cast aside his fear, and now regards neither truth nor justice, a righteous man has no security for his life.'

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'All of these, Psalm 11:1-3, except the opening declaration of faith in the Lord, may be regarded as the words of David's well-meaning, but erroneous advisers.'

'The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes everyone on earth; his eyes examine them. The LORD examines the righteous, but the wicked, those who love violence, he hates with a passion. On the wicked, he will rain fiery coals and burning sulphur; a scorching wind will be their lot. For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face.' Psalm 11:4-7

The second half of the psalm tells us about David's unfailing trust and confidence in God. He knows that God is in His holy temple, Psalm 11:4. Remember, the temple wasn't built in David's lifetime, so this is a reference to heaven, God's eternal dwelling place, Psalm 11:4.

God's eyes examine everything; he judges all the affairs of man, Psalm 11:4. David knows that the Lord continues to reign over all things, even though justice on earth has been ousted by the unjust.

The righteous are tested, Psalm 11:5, in order to prove their faithfulness and because He tests the righteous. This is actually a condemnation of the wicked, Psalm 11:5.

The mention of fiery coals and burning sulphur, Psalm 11:6, takes our minds back to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 19:24. These words are also used figuratively to speak about the future judgment, Luke 17:29 / Revelation 9:17 / Revelation 14:10 / Revelation 19:20 / Revelation 20:10 / Revelation 21:8.

While the NIV uses the words, 'a scorching wind will be their lot', Psalm 11:6, the KJV uses the words, 'a horrible tempest shall be the portion of their cup'.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'This shall be what they shall drink, Isaiah 51:17. The idea is that the Lord holds out to them a cup for them to drink, a cup containing a deadly mixture. The allusion is to the mode of administering punishment by a poisonous draught, not an infrequent mode of punishment in ancient times. The idea in the whole verse is that the wicked would be destroyed, and that, therefore, there was nothing ultimately to be apprehended from them. God would protect his own friends and would destroy all those who sought their hurt. In these circumstances, the righteous should confide in him as their protector, and not 'flee'.'

Because the Lord is righteous, He sees the righteous, and because the righteous live according to His will, they see the righteousness of God, Psalm 11:7. David walked righteously before God; therefore, he walked in the love of God, Jude 21. God's love is everywhere, and nothing can separate us from His love, Romans 5:8, although we certainly separate ourselves from his love, Luke 15:11-18.

Notice that they will also 'see His face', Psalm 11:7. Obviously, God doesn't have a physical face, John 4:24. David is expressing that they will be granted the opportunity to be in the presence of their King, Numbers 6:26 / 2 Kings 25:19 / Esther 1:14 / Psalm 17:15 / Matthew 5:8.

I'm sure that you would have noticed that David speaks God's Name, that is 'LORD', five times throughout this psalm, Psalm 11:1 / Psalm 11:4 / Psalm 11:5 / Psalm 11:7. This tells us that David was absolutely certain that it is only God Himself who has the answers to all of mankind's problems, doubts, dangers, and fears.

CONCLUSION

David was advised to 'flee' from danger, Psalm 11:1, which at first glance appears to be good advice. As Christians, we shouldn't flee from anyone, not even the devil himself, James 4:7. We must trust that God will look after us, whatever situation we face, Luke 21:16-18.

When we put our faith in God and not in ourselves, when facing trials and temptations, James 1:2-4, then our faith will be rewarded with a great victory over our enemies, Romans 8:31-39. Not only that, but if we continue to have faith in God until the day we leave this earth, then our faith will be rewarded with eternal life, 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION

This psalm tells us about David calling out to God for help, whilst living in a very ungodly society. David asks God to condemn the wicked and is confident that God will deliver him from all the ungodliness around him. As we go through this psalm, we see that David grieves because the ungodly appear to be flourishing.

HEADING

'For the director of music. According to Sheminith. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music and was written by David. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
It was to be sung 'according to sheminith', which means according to the set to the eighth. This is a reference to some specific tune, much like song leaders do today when they ask the congregation to turn their hymn books to a certain hymn number.

'Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore; those who are loyal have vanished from the human race. Everyone lies to their neighbour; they flatter with their lips but harbour deception in their hearts. May the LORD silence all flattering lips and every boastful tongue—those who say, "By our tongues we will prevail; our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?" Psalm 12:1-4

We get a sense of David's loneliness, and as far as he is concerned, there is no one who is faithful to the Lord; those who are loyal have vanished from the human race, Psalm 12:1 / 1 Kings 18:22 / Jeremiah 7:25-28.
David here describes what an ungodly society looks like, it's full of hypocrites and liars, Psalm 12:2. Loving your neighbour doesn't exist anymore, and those who are righteous have become burdened. Flattery is used to manipulate others, and so David asks God to silence their flattering tongues to help the righteous, Psalm 12:3 / Daniel 11:32.
This is a description of people who love to talk a lot, and they use their words to rule over the innocent, Matthew 6:7.
Quite simply, they are hypocritical liars who never speak the truth, Ephesians 4:15 / Revelation 21:8.
Their attitude is seen in their words, 'Who will lord over us?', Psalm 12:4 / 1 Corinthians 6:20. This tells us just how bad the society in which David lived was. It was offensive, and it was lawless, and so God promises to step in and remove them from society, Psalm 12:4.

'Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise," says the LORD. "I will protect them from those who malign them." And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times. You, LORD, will keep the needy safe and will protect us forever from the wicked, who freely strut about when what is vile is honoured by the human race.' Psalm 12:5-8

God is going to deliver those who are vulnerable in society, Psalm 12:5, but the vulnerable need to be patient. The reason they need to be patient is that the vulnerable may think that God has forgotten about them and turned His back on them. It appeared as though the wicked were reigning, but now God says it's time for Him to arise and protect the righteous, Psalm 12:5 / Matthew 10:30-31.

Notice the contrast of God's words with those hypocritical liars David mentioned earlier, Psalm 12:2-4. Their words were empty, flattering, and full of lies, and so no one could trust them.

The Lord's words, however, are flawless and could be trusted, Psalm 12:6. All his words were true and faithful and there in safety in relying on the promises of God.

Silver is purified in a crucible, Psalm 12:6. The word 'crucible' implies a workshop and gold is refined seven times, which is done by using fire. The number 'seven' in the Scriptures means completeness or perfection. In other words, the process is repeated seven times, Psalm 12:6, until the silver is totally pure, which tells us that the Lord's words are completely pure, Psalm 119:151 / Luke 20:21 / 2 Timothy 3:16 / Revelation 21:5.

God promises to the needy safe and protect us forever from the wicked, Psalm 12:7, and David says that vile men are honoured by society, Psalm 12:8. This is the reason why the wicked prevail in society. When society has corrupt leaders, then society itself will be corrupt.

CONCLUSION

The world we live in today is much like the world David describes in this psalm. There are people who use empty words, Ephesians 5:6. They use flattery to get their own way, Proverbs 29:5-6, and they continually tell lies, Proverbs 12:22.

As Christians, we must shine amidst the darkness, Matthew 5:14-16 / Ephesians 5:8. We must not only let the world know that we are different, but we must also let them see that we are different, Philippians 2:14-15. We must let the world know that Jesus is the answer if we want to live in a godly society, John 6:68.

It's difficult to trust anything anyone says these days, but we can trust God and His Word, 1 Corinthians 2:13 / 2 Peter 1:21 / 2 Timothy 3:16-17. His Word is good and pure and has been tested many times over the years, and people have tried to ban it, but still, it prevails.

Many people lost their lives in order for us to have God's Word today, but we must use it and proclaim it wherever we go; otherwise, the society we live in today will be far worse than the society which David describes in this psalm, Proverbs 29:18.

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION

According to some commentators, this psalm reflects the time when David fled from Saul because he was trying to kill him, 1 Samuel 27:1. In the psalm, David expresses his anguish but has full confidence that God will deliver him. He begins by being discouraged but finishes with joy and encouragement.

HEADING

‘For the director of music. A psalm of David.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

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3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music and was written by David. Some commentators believe that the ‘director of music’ is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

‘How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the LORD’s praise, for he has been good to me.’ Psalm 13:1-6

David begins by asking God four questions concerning the increase of the ungodly, Psalm 13:1-2. To David, it appeared that evil was prevailing over the righteous and as a result, it appeared that the vast majority in society had turned against him.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The reasons for the psalmist’s distress are not far to seek. 1. God is the source of all happiness. 2. He is the source of all wisdom. 3. He is the source of all strength, and 4. He is the source of life itself. Because the psalmist feels separated from God, he has, 1. Sorrow, 2. Feels the need of counsel, Psalms 13:2, 3. Is weak before his enemy, Psalms 13:2, and 4. Has a fear of death itself, Psalms 13:3.’
He asks God to give light to his eyes, Psalm 13:3. In other words, he wanted to see things more clearly, Ephesians 1:17-19. He wanted God to deliver him, Numbers 14:15-16.
He cried out to God to deliver him whilst he was alive and before he died, Psalm 13:4 / Ephesians 5:14. David felt all of these things, but he also realised that God will never forget His people, Psalm 13:5 / Isaiah 49:14-16.
David began the psalm by asking God four questions which tell us he wasn’t sure if God was listening to him but because he didn’t give praying to God, John 15:7, he ends his psalm with words of love, and joy and salvation, Psalm 13:5. As we see in many of the psalms, the word ‘salvation’, Psalm 13:5, is used to refer to God’s deliverance from death.
David fully trusted that God would deliver him from the hands of Saul, who wanted so badly to kill him, 1 Samuel 15:10-30 / 1 Samuel 19:1-24. Because he has confidence that God will deliver him, he will sing the LORD’s praise, for he has been good to me, Psalm 13:6.

CONCLUSION

David questioned God, and we may wonder if it's ever right to do so, but here we see that when David was in great anguish about all the evil around him, it was in his anguish that he questioned Him. He was wondering 'how long' this evil was going to go on, which is a perfectly human reaction.

The key to this is patience, especially in times of trials; we must be patient with God and trust that He will deliver us from the evil around us. Even though everyone around us appears to be against us, God will deliver us when the time is right, Revelation 6:10.
When we go through trials we don't see things clearly, we must ask God to 'give light to our eyes', and then just like David we will be able to see things for what they really are more clearly, Psalm 119:105 / John 8:32.
When we see clearly, the result is never more anguish, but more trust, more joy and more confidence that God will deliver us from those who are against us, Romans 8:28-31.

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION

This psalm demonstrates the foolishness of the wicked when compared to the faith of the righteous. This psalm is basically the same as Psalm 53; the difference is that the word 'Elohim', that is, Lord, is used in this psalm, whilst the word 'Yahweh', that is, God, is used in Psalm 14, in reference to Deity.
Many believe this is a Messianic psalm because a lot of the words recorded here by David are also written in Psalm 53. The first few verses of this psalm are also quoted by the apostle Paul, Romans 3:10-12.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of David.'

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4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music and was written by David. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

'The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.' Psalm 14:1-3

The word for 'fool', Psalm 14:1, in Hebrew is the word, 'nabal', which refers to those who are morally perverted in their thinking, those who have closed their minds to the existence of God and His will, 1 Samuel 25:25.
By saying that 'there is no God', Psalm 14:1, they are denying accountability and rejecting God's moral laws, 1 Samuel 27:1 / John 3:20 / John 12:48 / Romans 14:12. These are the characteristics of a fool, they are completely blind, and they don't see or understand God's truths, Matthew 13:13 / 2 Corinthians 4:4.
Their hearts are foolish because of darkness, and their reasoning is useless, Romans 1:21. As a result of all these things, they have become fools, Romans 1:22, and God washes His hands with them, Romans 1:22 / Romans 1:26 / Romans 1: 28.
David says they have all turned away and become corrupt, Psalm 14:1 / Hosea 4:18. In Psalm 53:2, David repeats these words, and in Romans 3:10-18, Paul quotes these verses. Man's ignorance does not result from a lack of opportunity.
Man's natural tendency is to seek his own interest. His only hope, though, is to seek after God, Psalm 14:2. Today, not many seek after God to know and do His will. If some seek God at all, it is only to obtain some selfish blessing.
'Turning away', Psalm 14:3, is a word which means basically, 'to turn out of the way, to go in the wrong direction.' They have all 'gone in the wrong direction' so far as faith and obedience are concerned.
'Become corrupt', Psalm 14:3, means they had a transition from a state of value to a useless, worthless state. 'There is no one who is good', Psalm 14:3, means there were none who followed God's law perfectly, who never sinned, Romans 3:10.
Fools often wish that God would just leave everyone alone, Genesis 11:5; however, the righteous recognise their need for God, Acts 17:28 / Matthew 5:45. God recognises the righteous because of their good works, but those who don't do any good are ungodly because their faith is dead, James 2:17-26.

'Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on the LORD. But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous. You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge. Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores his people, let Jacob rejoice, and Israel be glad!' Psalm 14:4-7

David asks a question here which is often asked by people: Do evil people know anything? Psalm 14:4. The answer is yes, they do, but they swapped their knowledge of God for a lie, Romans 1:21.
These evildoers don't look out for their neighbours; they simply devour them, Psalm 14:4 / Leviticus 19:18 / Mark 12:31. As it is in many countries today, when a country is controlled by corrupt politicians, then the society they rule over is overwhelmed with fear, Psalm 14:5.
The good news is that those who are oppressed have God with them as their refuge, Psalm 14:5-6 / Psalm 46:1. The bad news is that the oppressed will be ridiculed by the wicked, Psalm 14:6 / John 15:20 / 2 Timothy 3:12.
Notice how David speaks of the Messiah, he says 'salvation would come out of Zion' Psalm 14:7. Jesus was to come out of Zion, the dwelling place of God, Psalm 2:6 / Psalm 110:2 / Isaiah 2:3 / Isaiah 59:20. Jesus came out of Judea, from among the Jews, Romans 11:26. Jesus certainly was a Jew and salvation to all came through Him, Romans 9:4 / Matthew 13:17.
Addis, in his commentary, says the following.

'Here is the Messianic hope. The Psalmist anticipates a time when Yahweh will 'bring back the captivity' of His people. This expression need mean no more than a radical change for the better in the state of the people. 'Restore the fortune' would be an adequate translation.'

In other words, God's people will be restored after they have suffered, Psalm 14:7 / Job 42:10 / Ezekiel 16:53 / Hosea 6:11 / Amos 6:14. Restoring God's people isn't speaking about God's people coming out of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, as some suggest.

It's referring to a time when God's people are restored to prosperity after being disciplined by God for their sin, Matthew 21:37. It was Jesus who would deliver us from our biggest captives, which are sin and the devil, Luke 1:68-75 / Luke 4:18 / Ephesians 4:8. David uses the names of Jacob and Israel here, Psalm 14:7, to refer to the people of God, Isaiah 2:3 / Isaiah 41:21 / Isaiah 10:21 / Isaiah 14:1 / Amos 7:2.

CONCLUSION

When life is good, most of the world only thinks about the here and now, and they forget that everything around them is temporary. The rich man in Jesus' parable had no interest in the things of God while life was good, and he thought he could focus on spiritual things later. As a result, Jesus calls him a fool, Luke 12:16-21.
We may be surrounded by fools who say, 'there is no God', but as someone once said, 'there will be no atheists on Judgment Day', Philippians 2:9-11 / Romans 14:11. It truly was a day of gladness and joy when Christ to the world, Luke 2:10, and it certainly will be a day of gladness and joy when Christ returns, Philippians 3:20-21.

CHAPTER 15

INTRODUCTION

We don't know the background to this psalm; some believe it is related to the ark of the covenant being brought to Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6:1-19, and others believe that it was a psalm that was used in worship.
The psalm was also possibly used to prepare worshipers when they came to the sanctuary of God to offer their sacrifices, or to serve as priests when they were assigned temple duty.

HEADING

'A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This heading simply tells us it was written by David.

'LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain?' The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart.' Psalm 15:1-2

Notice that David begins by asking two questions, 'Who may dwell in your sacred tent?' Who may live on your holy mountain?' Psalm 15:1. The 'sacred tent', Psalm 15:1, is a reference to the tabernacle, which represented the presence of God.
The 'holy mountain', Psalm 15:1, is a reference to Jerusalem, which was built on Mount Zion, the place where God's people lived. In other words, David is asking, What kind of a person can live and have fellowship with God?
But there's a deeper question being asked here: What's the point of your existence? David is asking the most important question of all: What is the point of living a life without God? Or we could ask, why would anyone want to live a life with God continually being present in it?

We will never know what a person is really like unless we spend some good quality time with them, because when we spend time with others, we soon get to know them, and we soon discover what's really going on inside of them.

We soon discover what they really think about others and what they actually believe concerning the Bible. We soon discover if they are preaching one thing but practising another.

In other words, if we're claiming that God is with us and God is influencing our lives, then our families, our friends, our work colleagues, and neighbours should see that influence in our lives.

David tells us there are three things which identify us as having fellowship with God. He says if you want the world to know God is dwelling in you, then you must be 'blameless', 'righteous' and 'truthful', Psalm 15:2.
Remember, to be blameless doesn't mean sinless. When Paul is arguing with the legalizers in Philippi, he tells them he was blameless, Philippians 3:6; however, he was blameless in the sense that he did everything he had to do to be right with God according to the Law.
The law of Moses demanded that a person had to offer the appropriate sacrifice to be right with God, but now, under the law of Christ, a person needs to be baptised and confess their sins to God.

When a person is blameless and right with God, then everything they say should come from a 'pure heart', Psalm 15:2. If anyone wants to have fellowship with God, then the way we live, the way we walk, and the way we talk should show the world that we belong to God.
And the only way to achieve that is by putting into practice what the Hebrew writer tells us to do in Hebrews 12:1-2.
The only way to achieve that is by putting into practice what Paul told the Colossians to do: set our hearts and minds on things above, Colossians 3:1-2. The only way to live, walk and talk a blameless, righteous, and truthful life is by putting into practice what David says next.

'Whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbour, and casts no slur on others; who despises a vile person but honours those who fear the LORD; who keeps an oath even when it hurts and does not change their mind; who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent. Whoever does these things will never be shaken.' Psalm 15:3-5

Notice, David says if we want to have fellowship with God, then we must be careful how we relate to others around us, Psalm 15:3. In other words, the focus of the Psalm isn't so much on what our attitude towards God is like, but the focus is on how we treat those around us.
David tells us that if anyone wants to have fellowship with God, then they should treat people with dignity and respect. Slanderers, Psalm 15:3, are those people who love nothing more than to speak about others, in an effort to make themselves feel good by comparing themselves to others.
We may not be able to stop others from gossiping about us, but as a Christian, gossiping shouldn't even be in our vocabulary, Proverbs 10:18. There's nothing positive about gossiping; it always tears people down, instead of building them up.

All gossip does is harm people because it's a sinful attempt to discredit someone's values, actions, or motives. David says there are two types of people we like to gossip about: those who are our 'neighbours' and those we call our 'friends', Psalm 15:3 / Proverbs 11:13.
Gossiping is never acceptable in God's eyes; it doesn't matter who it is, and it doesn't matter who is doing the gossiping. It doesn't matter who is thinking about gossiping or actually doing the gossiping; it's all sinful, and it will prevent anyone from having fellowship with God.

Ask yourself the following questions, and if you fail to answer these questions, then my advice to you is to keep silent and say nothing. My advice to you is to think first before you say anything.

T. Is it True? Proverbs 18:2.
H. Is it Helpful? Ecclesiastes 10:12.
I. Is it Inspiring? Ephesians 4:29.
N. Is it Necessary? Proverbs 10:19.
K. Is it Kind? Proverbs 15:4.
If we want to have fellowship with God, gossiping should have no place in our lives. The Christian shouldn't want to harm anyone; the Christian shouldn't want to try to disgrace anyone else.

David continues and tells us that people who are in fellowship with God, 'don't find any value in associating with those who are despised but want to be around God's people', Psalm 15:4.
Don't misunderstand what David is saying here. It would be a big mistake to suggest that he's telling us to stay away from anyone who isn't a Christian. He's saying that our interaction with others should be limited if their values, beliefs, and actions are inconsistent with our Christian principles.

David is saying that we shouldn't try to follow anyone's example if they are not followers of God, but the example we are to follow is found in those who fear God and follow God's ways.

He continues and tells us that anyone who wants to have fellowship with God must be willing to 'help those around them without changing their minds', Psalm 15:4.
When we promise to take care of anyone's needs, we need to fulfil that promise, no matter how much it hurts. It may become very inconvenient for us, it may cost us money, and we may need to change our plans to fulfil that promise.

David says, if we want to have fellowship with God, we mustn't only be concerned about people's needs, but we must meet those people's needs. We can't tell people we're going to help them, and then later change our minds. Otherwise, people think Christians are no different from anyone else.

David continues and tells us that anyone who wants to have fellowship with God must be willing 'to financially help others without adding interest,' Psalm 15:5. In the Old Testament, God makes it clear that if someone is in desperate need of money, then no interest should be charged, Exodus 22:25.
Imagine someone comes to you for a loan because they are under great financial stress. What good does it do if you put them under even more financial stress by adding interest?

Lending people money is Biblically acceptable, especially among God's people. I'm not encouraging Christians to start borrowing money from each other, but what I am saying is that there are times when we all come under financial stress. A person can lose their job and struggle to pay their electricity bill. A sudden death in the family may come and they can't afford the funeral bills.

The church should always be willing to help without adding any extra pressure to interest repayments. Anyone who wants to have fellowship with God must be willing to help others out financially without looking to gain anything extra back for themselves.

David continues and says anyone who wants to have fellowship with God mustn't 'take bribes or give false testimony against someone else,' Psalm 15:5. Now a bribe is all about perverting justice by trying to win someone's favour over someone else, Exodus 23:7-8 / Deuteronomy 16:19 / Deuteronomy 27:25.
Bribery isn't always about the passing of money from one hand to another; it comes in all shapes and forms. Anyone who wants to have fellowship with God must be very careful not to accept bribes, whatever form it comes in, in order to discredit the innocent.

David finishes by telling us that 'Whoever does these things will never be shaken,' Psalm 15:5. In other words, not only do we have fellowship with God, but God promises to hold us up.
The world wants to drag us down, the world wants to accuse us of all kinds of things and bring us to our knees, but God says if you're in fellowship with Him, and you're treating those around you with dignity and respect, then it doesn't matter what the world thinks, He'll hold you up. It's God who gives us the strength to stay on our feet; it's God who holds us up even when we can't hold ourselves up any longer, Isaiah 41:10.

CONCLUSION

Humans were made in God's image, Genesis 1:27, and that means we have the capacity for fellowship with our Creator. God walked with man in the garden, Genesis 3:8, and wanted people to live in His presence, Genesis 4:16. It's an incredible thought to think that He wants to have a close relationship with us, and it's a real privilege to be in fellowship not only with God but with the Son and the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 1:9 / 2 Corinthians 13:14 / 1 John 1:3.
All this was only possible because Christ died on the cross and shed His blood for us, Romans 5:10. However, as David says, there are terms and conditions to that fellowship we enjoy with Him. We can't live our lives continually sinning or doing our own thing and still claim to have fellowship with Him, 1 John 1:6.
The words of Elisha Albright Hoffman, who wrote the hymn, 'Leaning on the Everlasting Arms', are an appropriate finish to the study.

'What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine.
O, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
O, how bright the path grows from day to day.
What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
I have peace, complete with my Lord so near.'

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm that speaks about the prosperity of the godly, but it is also Messianic in nature. Psalm 16:10 is quoted by the apostles Peter and Paul in Acts 2:25-28 / Acts 2:31 / Acts 13:35 in reference to Christ.

HEADING

‘A miktam of David.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This heading simply tells us it was a ‘miktam’ written by David. The word ‘miktam’ means golden, hence why it’s often referred to as the ‘golden psalm’. However, there are others who believe that the word ‘miktam’ may have some musical meaning.

Still, others believe that the word means to cover. When we look at other psalms with the same heading, Psalms 56-60, they all appear to be written in times of distress, which leads some to believe that the word ‘miktam’ has the idea of covering the lips in the sense of secrecy. In other words, these are silent or secret psalms which were whispered during times of distress.

‘Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.” I say of the holy people who are in the land, “They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.” Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips.’ Psalm 16:1-4

David begins this psalm by reminding us how much he trusted in God as his refuge, Psalm 16:1. He speaks to the ‘LORD’, Psalm 16:2, that is ‘Yahweh’, the personal reference to God that was used in Israel and then he calls him ‘Lord’, Psalm 16:2, that is ‘Adonai’, which refers to master or ruler.
David recognises the value of God in his life by saying ‘apart from Him he has no good thing’, Psalm 16:2. He acknowledges that it is God who gives him the power to do good, and the good that he does will be remembered by God; the good that he does is not in vain, Psalm 16:3 / 1 Corinthians 15:58.
David was fully aware that those who run after other gods will suffer over and over again, Psalm 16:4. In contrast to those who offer sacrifice to other gods, David refused to follow the pagan practices of idolatry; he refused to offer drink offerings of blood and even speak the names of their idols, Psalm 16:4.
He knows that trying to live his life to please God Himself wasn’t an easy experience, 2 Timothy 3:12; he faced many difficulties but remained faithful to God. Every human being faces the same choice: we either choose to run after other gods or we choose to follow God Himself, Joshua 24:15 / John 6:66-69.

‘LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.’ Psalm 16:5-8

When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, each of the tribes of Israel were given a portion of land by lot, Joshua 13:7 / Joshua 14:2. The Levites, however, weren’t given any land, their portion was the Lord Himself, Numbers 18:20.

Just as God met the needs of Israel in the land, so God will meet the needs of all those whose portion is with the Lord, Psalm 16:5 / Lamentations 3:24. David here, says that his portion or lot is the Lord Himself, and was confident that God would maintain what He had first given to him, Psalm 16:5 / 1 Samuel 26:19.

The boundary lines, Psalm 16:6, are a metaphor and find their meaning in the borders that defined the portion of land that was allotted to each tribe in the Promised Land, Joshua 18:10. One's spiritual portion that was in the Lord was pleasant, it's a spiritual heritage that can be given to generations to come.

He recognises that it's God who counsels him, and he says his heart instructs him, Psalm 16:7 / Psalm 127:1-2. Very often when we reflect upon God and His Word in silence, our conscience reminds us to keep walking in God's ways, Job 23:10-12 / Psalm 1:1-2 / Romans 12:1-2.

David's focus was on God and God alone, Psalm 16:8 / Hebrews 12:2. He has absolute confidence that God was at his 'right hand', Psalm 16:8. The person who stood at the right hand of a king, was the person who defended the subjects of the kingdom, Psalm 110:1 / Matthew 22:44 / Acts 2:33 / Acts 7:55 / Colossians 3:1.

'Therefore, my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.' Psalm 16:9-11

Because the Lord was at David's right hand, defending him, he could rejoice, even in death, Psalm 16:9. In the Old Testament, thoughts of eternal life and resurrection were not really understood, Psalm 6:5 / Psalm 7:5 / Psalm 30:12 / Psalm 57:8 / Psalm 88:11, which didn't become clear until Christ came, 2 Timothy 1:10.

The 'faithful one', Psalm 16:10, or 'holy One' as some translations have it, is an obvious reference to Christ, Mark 1:24 / Luke 4:34 / Acts 3:14. The fulfilment of these words is better understood from Peter's quotation of them in Acts 2:25-28, when he speaks of the resurrection of Christ. After His crucifixion and burial, Jesus' body didn't see decay, but he rose from the grave, Acts 13:34-37.

The phrase, 'realm of the dead,' which, if you remember, is the grave, the place where the 'body' ends up. Notice it was 'Jesus' body', Acts 13:34-37, which went to the grave, not His soul.

It's obvious that Peter is using David's psalm to show that Christ's 'body' did not decay, Psalm 16:10. In other words, Jesus wasn't like David, 'who died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day,' Acts 2:29. Jesus 'body' wasn't in the grave long enough for it to begin to decay.

I love the way David ends this psalm. He can be full of joy because of the presence of God in life, Psalm 16:11. He knows God will guide him, not only in this life but in the life to come. At God's right hand, he will enjoy eternal pleasures, Psalm 16:11.

CONCLUSION

Living in the presence of God eternally has many appeals for the Christian, Revelation 14:13. In heaven, we will be happy, and we will find a state of blissfulness. Matthew 5:3 / John 13:17. This is one of the reasons Christians are Christians in the first place, Titus 2:13.

This happiness is accompanied by 'rest' from 'labour', which signifies we will no longer work to the point of being worn out. There will be a wonderful reward in heaven, but only for those who remain faithful unto death or until Christ returns to take us home, Hebrews 4:11.

On a personal level, the main attraction for me is that I won't be able to hurt Him anymore with my sin, and more importantly, I will be in the presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not only will I be with them, but I'll be with His angels and those other faithful Christians and those Old Testament faithful.

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION

Although we can't be certain, many people believe that the background to this psalm is found when David and his companions were in real danger as they were fleeing from Saul, 1 Samuel 23:25-26. David knows that Saul is a real threat, and so, he asks God to deliver him from the hands of his enemies.

HEADING

'A prayer of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This heading simply tells us it was a prayer of David.

'Hear me, LORD, my plea is just; listen to my cry. Hear my prayer—it does not rise from deceitful lips. Let my vindication come from you; may your eyes see what is right. Though you probe my heart, though you examine me at night and test me, you will find that I have planned no evil; my mouth has not transgressed. Though people tried to bribe me, I have kept myself from the ways of the violent through what your lips have commanded. My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not stumbled.' Psalm 17:1-5

In his prayer, David asks God to hear his plea because he had been unjustly accused by Saul of trying to take over his throne, Psalm 17:1 / 1 Samuel 24:9. He asks God for vindication and justice as he received no just judgment from Saul, Psalm 17:2.

David was never interested in taking Saul's throne, he never hungered for power and he certainly didn't plan any evil, Psalm 17:3 / 1 Samuel 25:25-42. He also asks God to give him a thorough examination, Psalm 17:3-4 / Psalm 139:23-24, which demonstrates his confidence in God.

David had walked in God's paths, Psalm 17:5, which means he had followed God's instructions, which gave him the confidence to know he had never stumbled from the ways of God, Psalm 17:5.

'I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. Show me the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings from the wicked who are out to destroy me, from my mortal enemies who surround me. They close up their callous hearts, and their mouths speak with arrogance. They have tracked me down; they now surround me, with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground. They are like a lion hungry for prey, like a fierce lion crouching in cover.' Psalm 17:6-12

Here we get a glimpse of David's relationship with God. It was so strong he had absolute confidence that God would hear his prayer, Psalm 17:6. Because of the despair, he was going through, he asks God to show him 'the wonders of His great love', Psalm 17:7.

In other words, he wanted a demonstration of God's grace, he wanted God to save him and his companions from the hand of Saul, who wanted to kill them, Psalm 17:7.

Notice he asks God to keep him as 'the apple of his eye', Psalm 17:8. This is a term of endearment, referring to someone very. It also refers to the pupil of the eye, which was the most delicate part of the eye which needed protection, Deuteronomy 32:10 / Proverbs 7:2 / Zechariah 2:8.

He asks God to hide him from the wicked 'in the shadow of His wings', Psalm 17:8. This is a metaphor which symbolises protection from danger, Ruth 2:12 / Psalm 36:7 / Psalm 57:1 / Psalm 61:4 / Psalm 63:7 / Luke 13:34.

David's enemies had callous hearts, Psalm 17:10. In other words, their hearts were hard and they ignored the needs of others around them. All Saul and his followers were interested in was power and positions of power, and as a result, they became corrupt.

Remember, David was very familiar with lions, 1 Samuel 17:33-37, hence why he speaks of Saul and his men as a lion. He obviously feels like he's being hunted down like a dog by Saul and his men, Psalm 17:11-12. He describes them as lions, who lurk around ready to ambush their prey, Psalm 17:12 / Psalm 10:8-10. The lion only has one thing on its mind, and that's to kill.

'Rise up, LORD, confront them, bring them down; with your sword rescue me from the wicked. By your hand save me from such people, LORD, from those of this world whose reward is in this life. May what you have stored up for the wicked fill their bellies; may their children gorge themselves on it, and may there be leftovers for their little ones. As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.'
Psalm 17:13-15

David ends his prayer by asking God to 'rise up', Psalm 17:13 / Psalm 3:7, and bring judgment on his oppressors. He asked God to intervene by His own hand, that is, His 'sword', and save him from the wicked, Psalm 17:13. Notice that David wants God to save him, Psalm 17:14, but he doesn't want God to destroy the wicked.

David appears to contrast the material prosperity of the worldly with the spiritual satisfaction of those who follow God, Luke 16:25. He says the wicked are worldly, earthly people, who don't have a future beyond this life, Psalm 17:14.

However, they have enough food to fill themselves, and their children and still have leftovers to feed their babies, Psalm 17:14. In other words, they may be wicked but God still blesses them, Job 21:7 / Job 21:11 / Matthew 5:45.

He knows he will be vindicated by God and is confident he will see God's face, Psalm 17:15. Remember, God doesn't have a physical face, John 4:24. David is simply saying that he will be in the presence of God, Psalm 105:4 / Numbers 12:8 / 2 Chronicles 7:14.

The words, 'when I awake', Psalm 17:15, imply that David believed in a bodily resurrection. In the Old Testament, thoughts of eternal life and resurrection were not really understood, Psalm 6:5 / Psalm 7:5 / Psalm 30:12 / Psalm 57:8 / Psalm 88:11, which didn't become clear until Christ came, 2 Timothy 1:10.

Here, David implies that when he does awake, he will be satisfied with seeing His likeness, Psalm 17:15. What David prayed for here is the goal of every Christian, that is, to be conformed into the image of God, as it was perfectly displayed in His Son, Jesus, Romans 8:29.

CONCLUSION

As we get older and our bodies deteriorate, Ecclesiastes 11:10 / Ecclesiastes 11:3-7, we often have to go to the doctor and ask them to give us a thorough examination. We do this so that the doctor can highlight any areas of our lives that we need to change in order to keep our bodies healthy.
Many people don't like going to the doctor for fear of the doctor finding something which is life-threatening. However, if the doctor does find something which is life-threatening, they reassure us that any procedures which may be needed will be for our long-term benefit.

When was the last time we asked God to give us a thorough examination of our spiritual lives? David asked God to 'probe his heart, examine him and test him,' Psalm 17:3.
Most people struggle with sin in their lives, but if we ask God to give us a thorough examination, He can highlight the sin in our lives which needs to be removed, Colossians 3:5-9. We need to pray for God to show us our sins, we then need to repent of them, and change our ways, Psalm 139:23-24.

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is the fourth-longest psalm we find within the book, Psalm 78 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 119, which are longer. It's a psalm of victory which run similar to the events in 2 Samuel 22. In this psalm, David tells us of his troubles to be delivered from King Saul, but he gives thanks to God for delivering him from Saul's hands.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of David, the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and the hand of Saul. He said:'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This heading tells us a lot about the background to the psalm. As you can see, it's longer than all the other headings; the only heading which is longer is found in Psalm 60.
Some believe that it was written for God, and God Himself is the director of music. The heading tells us that David is a servant of the Lord, and he tells us what the background to the psalm is.

It was written either straight after Saul's death, 1 Samuel 31 / 2 Samuel 1, or the time leading up to David's enthronement as king, 2 Samuel 2-5. The heading also tells us that David was delivered from his enemies and the hand of Saul.

'I love you, LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies. The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress, I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple, he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.' Psalm 18:1-6

David begins this psalm by declaring his love for God, and he uses eight metaphors to describe his relationship with God, Psalm 18:1-2. God is his strength, 2 Samuel 22:3. He is his rock, 2 Samuel 23:2-3 / 2 Samuel 22:47. He is his fortress, 2 Samuel 22:2.

He is his deliverer, 2 Samuel 22:2. He is his refuge, 2 Samuel 22:3 / 2 Samuel 22:31 / 2 Samuel 22:33. He is his shield, 2 Samuel 22:3 / Psalm 33:20. He is his horn, 1 Samuel 2:10 / 2 Samuel 22:3. He is his stronghold, 2 Samuel 22:33-34.

David clearly put the security of his life in God's hands and he was confident that God would save him from the hands of his enemies, Psalm 18:3 / 1 Samuel 27:1. David is obviously fearing for his life, Psalm 18:4-5 / 2 Samuel 22:5, and so, in his distress, he cries out to God for help, Jonah 2:2, and is confident that God heard his prayer, Psalm 18:6.

We must note that the word 'temple', Psalm 18:6, used here, can also be translated as the word 'tabernacle', Exodus 25:9 / Exodus 25:40 / 1 Samuel 1:9 / 1 Samuel 3:3, which would make a lot more sense because, as we know, the temple hadn't been built yet, 2 Samuel 5:6-10 / 1 Kings 5-7.

'The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—the dark rain clouds of the sky. Out of the brightness of his presence, clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning. The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy, with great bolts of lightning, he routed them. The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, LORD, at the blast of breath from your nostrils.' Psalm 18:7-15

David again describes God's deliverance using metaphors of natural phenomena, Psalm 18:7-15. They are used to demonstrate that God is taking action, Exodus 19:16-18 / Judges 5:4-5 / Job 38:1 / Isaiah 29:6 / Zephaniah 1:2.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 18:7-9.

'The sudden burst of the storm is the Divine answer to the sufferer's prayer. For similar manifestations, compare Psalms 68:7-8 / Psalms 77:14-20 / Amos 9:5 / Micah 1:3 / Habakkuk 3:4, but here the colours are more vivid, and the language more intense. Now the thunder-cloud forms smoke, as it were, from the nostrils of God, Psalms 74:1 / Deuteronomy 29:20. The dark masses of rain-cloud are now gathered, and bend to the earth under the majestic tread of God, Nahum 1:3, 'and the clouds are the dust of his feet, Psalms 144:5.'

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 18:10.

'Cherubim are most familiar to readers of Scripture as symbolic figures appearing in the furniture and decoration of the tabernacle and the Temple. They also appear in Ezekiel's vision of the mystic chariot as the bearers of God's throne, Ezekiel 1 / Ezekiel 10. Here, the cherub seems to be a personification of the storm cloud, as the parallel idea in the next clause shows.'

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 18:11.

‘God is represented as dwelling in the thick darkness, Deuteronomy 4:11 / Psalms 97:2. This representation in the place before us is peculiarly proper, as thick heavy clouds deeply charged, and with lowering aspects, are always the forerunners and attendants of a tempest, and greatly heighten the horrors of the appearance and the representation of them, spread about the Almighty as a tent, is truly grand and poetic. The vapours strongly condensed into clouds, which, by the stroke of the lightning, are about to be precipitated in torrents of rain.’

Gill, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 18:12.

‘The lightning that came out of the thick clouds, which may denote, either the coming of Christ to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, which was swift and sudden, clear and manifest; or the spreading of the Gospel in the Gentile world, in which Christ, the brightness of his Father’s glory, appeared to the illumination of many, Matthew 24:27, and both may be intended.’

Benson, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 10:13-14.

‘The preceding verse mentioned the lightning with its effects; this gives us the report of the thunder, and the increasing storm of hail and fire that attended it. Yea, he sent out his arrows Namely, lightnings, as it is expressed in the next clause and scattered them Namely, mine enemies, which is sufficiently understood from Psalms 18:3 / Psalms 18:17, and from the whole context.’

Trapp, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 18:15.

‘The force of this terrible tempest is further set forth by the effect of it, a dreadful concussion of the universe; not without an allusion to the drying up of the Red Sea and of Jordan before Israel, which deliverances stood for archetypes, or chief patterns, to all posterity.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This highly imaginative section suggests to this writer nothing quite so vividly as it does the final judgment of mankind. The Theophany, the coming of God Himself, the mighty earthquake, the mountains being moved, Revelation 6:12-15, the great hail, Revelation 16:21, the darkness, Revelation 6:12, the death of the wicked, as indicated by God’s arrows, the salvation of the righteous, mentioned a little later, all of these things are undoubtedly characteristic of the Final Judgment on the Great Day of God’s wrath, Revelation 6:17.’

David is greatly encouraged because he knows God has the power to control everything, and he knows God has the power to deliver him from his enemies.

‘He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.’ Psalm 18:16-19

David thought he was going to drown in the tragedies that were upon him, but he gives credit to God for rescuing him from the deep waters of his tragedies, Psalm 18:16. He also acknowledges that his enemies were way too strong for him and his army, Psalm 18:17, hence why he relied on the Lord’s strength to deliver him.

In the day of his disaster, Psalm 18:18, that is, the time when he was a fugitive and felt at his weakest, his enemies went to attack him, but it was then, that the Lord gave him the support he needed, Psalm 18:18. God was obviously pleased with David’s humble and godly character, 1 Samuel 13:14 / Acts 13:22, and so He rescued him, Psalm 18:19.

‘The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands, he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I am not guilty of turning from my God. All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin. The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.’ Psalm 18:20-24

Because David was righteous and his hands were cleansed, Psalm 18:20, which refers to forgiveness, Romans 3:25 / Colossians 1:28 / 1 John 1:7, he was rewarded, Psalm 18:20.
He had kept the ways of God, he didn't ignore the will of God, Psalm 18:22-23, which speaks about his obedience to God and as a result, he was rewarded by God by being delivered from the hand of Saul.
David says he was 'blameless', Psalm 18:23. Remember, to be blameless doesn't mean sinless. When Paul is arguing with the legalizers in Philippi, he tells them he was blameless, Philippians 3:6; however, he was blameless in the sense that he did everything he had to do to be right with God according to the Law.
The law of Moses demanded that a person had to offer the appropriate sacrifice to be right with God, but now, under the law of Christ, a person needs to be baptised and confess their sins to God.

Notice that David deliberately 'kept himself from sin', Psalm 18:23. This tells us that sin is a choice, Genesis 2:16 / Genesis 4:7, and David, because he had free will, deliberately chose to stay away from sin, 2 Timothy 2:21.
Because of this, God rewarded him by delivering him from the hands of Saul, Psalm 18:24.

'To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the devious you show yourself shrewd. You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty. You, LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light. With your help, I can advance against a troop; with my God, I can scale a wall.' Psalm 18:25-29

David reminds us of God's mercies, Psalm 18:25. God will show mercy to those who have shown mercy to others, Matthew 7:2 / James 2:13. He will forgive those who forgive others, Psalm 18:25 / Matthew 5:7 / Matthew 6:14-15 / Matthew 18:23-25.
It's only those who have a pure heart who can really understand just how pure God Himself is, Psalm 18:26 / Matthew 5:8 / 1 John 3:3. A devious person is a perverse person, Psalm 18:26 / Leviticus 26:23-24 / Proverbs 3:32 / Job 5:12.
Perhaps the greatest illustration of this was how God used the shrewd Laban to educate the devious Jacob, Genesis 27-28. God will bring down the proud, Luke 18:14 / James 4:6 / 1 Peter 5:5.
Those who are humble will be saved by God, Psalm 18:27. The humble are those in society who have little or no power, Psalm 10:2 / Psalm 22:24 / Psalm 35:10 / Psalm 68:10.
David says the Lord keeps his 'lamp burning', Psalm 18:28, which means his obedience to God would be a light to those who walked in darkness, John 1:5 / John 8:12 / 1 John 1:5-7 / Matthew 5:14-16 / Philippians 2:14-15.
In the context here, this implies that God was going to make it known through David that He was working through him so that he would become the king of Israel. David was confident that with God's help, he would be victorious over his enemies, Psalm 18:29.

'As for God, his way is perfect: The LORD's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights. He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You make your saving help my shield, and your right hand sustains me; your help has made me great. You provide a broad path for my feet, so that my ankles do not give way. I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet. You armed me with strength for battle; you humbled my adversaries before me. You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—to the LORD, but he did not answer. I beat them as fine as windblown dust; I trampled them like mud in the streets. You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me the head of nations. People I did not know now serve me, foreigners cower before me; as soon as they hear of me, they obey me. They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.' Psalm 18:30-45

David declares God's ways are perfect, and this is proven through His flawless word, Psalm 18:30 / 2 Timothy 3:16-17 / Hebrews 4:12. He says that God's conduct is like His nature, it's absolutely pure, and He is a shield to all those who take refuge in Him, Psalm 18:30, that is, He protects them, Proverbs 30:5.
Notice he asks, 'For who is God, besides the LORD? Psalm 18:31. David knows full well who the One and only True Living God is compared to all those false gods of the Philistines, the Moabites and the Edomites.
David again uses metaphors of war to describe how he could never be king of Israel without God's help, Psalm 18:32-39 / Revelation 6:16. The very fact that he became king of Israel was proof that God was working in and through him.
David was well aware that if he was to become king of Israel, it would involve more than just removing Saul as king; he would also have to remove all of his enemies.

It is God who arms David with strength and kept his way secure, Psalm 18:32. It was God who made David's feet as swift as the feet of a deer and it was God who caused him to stand on the heights, Psalm 18:33. It was the God of heaven who took David as a shepherd boy, Psalm 18:34, and made him the king of Israel, 2 Samuel 2-5.
It was God who saved him because God became his shield, and it was because of God's strength that David was sustained, and it was God's help that made him great, Psalm 18:35. It was God who provided a broad path for his feet, so that his ankles didn't give way, Psalm 18:36.
Because of God, he pursued his enemies and overtook them and he didn't turn back until they were destroyed, Psalm 18:37. Because of God he crushed them so that they could not rise and they fell beneath his feet, Psalm 18:38.
He did all these things because it was God who gave him the strength to fight and it was God who humbled his adversaries before him, Psalm 18:39. He was so militarily dominant over those who opposed him that God extended his influence to nations that were not of Israel, and his conquest was so forceful that his enemies turned their backs and ran away from him, Psalm 18:40.
They cried out for help, but no one helped them, Psalm 18:41, and David completely destroyed them, Psalm 18:42.
David became the 'head of the nations', and people served him, Psalm 18:43, and even foreigners cowered and obeyed him, Psalm 18:44.
David became so powerful that his enemies lost heart and came trembling from their strongholds, Psalm 18:45. His military strength was so great that the surrounding nations were intimidated by the army of Israel, and as a result, no nation attempted to attack Israel, and so, during the reign of Solomon, David's son, peace prevailed.

'The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, my Saviour! He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me, who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from a violent man you rescued me. Therefore, I will praise you, LORD, among the nations; I will sing the praises of your name. He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing love to his anointed, to David and to his descendants forever.' Psalm 18:46-50

David now declares that 'the Lord lives', Psalm 18:46. He has no hesitation in giving God all the glory He deserves for what He has done and is doing in David's life. This is one reason why he is described as 'a man after God's own heart', 1 Samuel 13:14 / Acts 13:22.
David now goes on to praise God, Psalm 18:46-49. The apostle Paul quotes these words in Romans 15:8-12, as the first of four Old Testament prophecies demonstrating that the work of Jesus Christ wasn't only for the Jewish people, but for the Gentiles also.
Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 18:47.
'The way that I took was after his own heart; therefore, he sustained me in it, and did me justice over my enemies. He keeps down the spirits of the disaffected and weakens their hands. They are subdued, and they continue under me; and this is the Lord's doing.'

God saved David from His enemies and exalted Him above his foes, even from a violent man, probably a reference to Saul. God rescued him, Psalm 18:48. As a result of everything God did for him, David will praise the LORD, among the nations and sing the praises of His name, Psalm 18:49.

Notice also he says that God shows unfailing love to his 'anointed', Psalm 18:50. This again tells us of the Messianic nature of this psalm, it reflects God's covenant with David and his descendants, 2 Samuel 7:12-16.

This also looks forward beyond the time of David to the throne of David's Greater Son; this is a Messianic prophecy, parallel with Psalm 2:8. It was during the end of David's reign as king of Israel when he overpowered the enemies of Israel.

God promised David, Psalm 18:50, that from his seed, one would arise who would build God's house, that is, the church, Matthew 16:18, and His Kingdom should be established and that the throne of it would endure forever, Daniel 2:44.

CONCLUSION

David had no hesitation in giving God all the glory for everything He had done and was doing in his life. When we come into God's presence, there is simply no room for boasting about what we have done, 1 Corinthians 1:31 / 1 Corinthians 4:7 / 1 Corinthians 1:29. We must remember that we were created for His glory, not our own, Isaiah 42:8 / Isaiah 43:7.

Even Jesus Himself reminds us in His prayer that it's God's kingdom, it's God's power, and all the glory is His, Matthew 6:13. As Christians, we too must give God all the credit for everything He has done, is doing and will do in our lives in the future, James 1:17.

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION

For many people, this psalm is one of the greatest psalms ever written. David begins by declaring God's authority through the wonders of God's creation and finishes with God's authority as revealed within His Word.

HEADING

'For the director of music. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This is a psalm of David, and some believe that it was written for God and God Himself is the director of music; others believe him to be a leader of choirs or musicians in David's time, such as Heman the Singer or Asaph, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 2 Chronicles 16:17 / 2 Chronicles 25:6.

'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day, they pour forth speech; night after night, they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens, God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.' Psalm 19:1-6

David begins this psalm by declaring that the heavens, Genesis 1:1 / Job 38:7, declare the glory of God, Psalm 19:1. He tells us that the created universe stands as a continual witness of the existence of God, Romans 1:20.
Most people at some point in their lives look up into the sky at night and wonder where all this comes from, Genesis 1:6-7. And anyone who is honest with themselves will come to only one conclusion: they came into existence by God, Genesis 1:1-25 / Romans 10:18.
When we look at the skies above us, we are left with no doubts that the way the universe was designed demands there must be a Designer. The very design of the universe proclaims the existence of a Designer.

When we watch the news, they often tell us that more and more planets and universes have been discovered; however, the more they find, the more God's work is being proclaimed.

Notice day after day they speak, but yet they have no speech, words or sound, their voice goes into all the earth, to the ends of the earth, Psalm 19:2-4. This obviously isn't literal, but they are used as a metaphor to remind us that words are not always needed to declare God's glory.
All people can understand the language of the heavens, though they may not be able to understand the language of each other. In Romans 10:18, the apostle Paul used the words in Psalm 19:4, to describe the spread of the Gospel and thus shows they had heard it, Colossians 1:23.
Because God created the earth and everyone on it, He wants everyone to have a chance to hear and obey the Gospel, 2 Peter 3:9. Despite the wonders of creation, many refuse to believe that God exists, but they really have no excuse for believing such, Romans 1:20-21.
In creation, God established limits or boundaries for that which was created in order to establish order in the universe, Acts 17:26. Although He established the boundaries of the sun, Psalm 19:4, its radiant influence is felt throughout its dwelling, that is, a tent, the nighttime sky, Genesis 1:16-18 / Habakkuk 3:11.
The sun comes out of its tent every day to cross the heavens and returns to its tent at night. This is the same sun which shines on the righteous as well as the unrighteous, Matthew 5:45. In other words, God's glory is seen and felt throughout the earth by everyone.
David uses two metaphors to describe how the sun is a servant used for God's purposes. He describes the sun as a bridegroom living in a chamber which God provided, and as a champion running a course assigned to him, Psalm 19:5 / 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. The sun covers the whole sky, and its warmth is felt by everyone, Psalm 19:6.

'The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.' Psalm 19:7-10

While creation speaks of God's glory and existence and demonstrates the order of the universe, it's His Word which brings order to those He created, Genesis 1:26-31 / Genesis 2:21-23. David uses seven statements here to define the law of God, Psalm 1:2.

1. The law of God is perfect, Psalm 19:7.

The law of God is complete for the refreshing of the soul, John 17:17 / 1 Peter 1:23 / 2 Peter 1:3.

2. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, Psalm 19:7.

The word of God is a trusted witness of God's will among men, Genesis 42:20, and because it can be trusted, we can be assured that it is a true guide for us to live by. Even the uneducated can trust it to tell us the way of salvation, Psalm 119:89 / Proverbs 1:22.

3. The statutes of the Lord are right, Psalm 19:7-8.

The commands and directions of God are the trusted and true expressions of the will of God for us, Psalms 119:172. They are right because obedience to them brings joy and peace of mind, Luke 1:6.

4. The commands of the Lord are radiant, Psalm 19:8.

God's commandments enlighten us to the truth, and they bring light to darkness, 1 John 1:7 / 2 Peter 3:16.

5. The fear of the Lord is pure, Psalm 19:9.

The fear of the Lord produces within us a pure relationship with Him as we demonstrate our faith through expressions of kindness to others, James 1:27. The word 'fear' means reverent awe, Jonah 1:10, and it always keeps us close to God and makes it possible for us to live with Him forever, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.

6. The decrees of the Lord are firm and right, Psalm 19:9.

God's truth is absolute, and obedience to His truth produces right living before God, John 4:24.

7. The decrees of the Lord are valuable and sweet, Psalm 19:10.

What value can anyone put on the Word of God? David says it's worth more than gold, much pure gold, Psalm 19:10. In other words, no amount of money or wealth would take his attention away from the Word of God; it's simply too precious, Psalm 119:127 / Proverbs 8:19 / Isaiah 13:12 / Lamentations 4:2 / Psalm 21:3.

David sees God's Word as sweeter and more pleasant to eat than honey, even sweeter than the honeycomb, Psalm 19:10. In other words, the truth of God is more grateful to the heart, or finds more pleasure to the soul, than that which is esteemed as the highest luxury to the palate.

'By them, your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from wilful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock, and my Redeemer.' Psalm 19:11-14

God's Word warns us of the consequences of disobedience, Psalm 19:11 / Leviticus 15:31 / Ezekiel 3:18 / Romans 6:23. But as a result of those warnings, we also learn that there are rewards for being obedient to His Word, Psalm 19:11 / John 3:16 / Mark 16:16. These rewards will only be found when we desire His Word more than gold and honey.

It's only through God's revealed Word can we truly understand our errors and ask for forgiveness Psalm 19:12, and learn how to live a life which pleases God, Psalm 51:6-7 / Hosea 14:2.

'Wilful sins', Psalm 19:13, are sins which are committed deliberately, Hebrews 10:26-31, or they may be sins where people think that God will excuse them because of His grace, Romans 6:1-14 / 1 John 3:6-9.

God has given us everything we need to live lives which are 'blameless', Psalm 19:13. Remember, to be blameless doesn't mean sinless. When Paul is arguing with the legalizers in Philippi, he tells them he was blameless, Philippians 3:6; however, he was blameless in the sense that he did everything he had to do to be right with God according to the Law. The same idea applies to innocence, Job 1:1 / Job 4:7.

The law of Moses demanded that a person had to offer the appropriate sacrifice to be right with God, but now, under the law of Christ, a person needs to be baptised and confess their sins to God, Acts 2:38 / 1 John 1:9-10.
David says not only must our speech testify that we are controlled by God's Word, but our thoughts must also be controlled by the Word of God, Psalm 19:14. The reason for this is to bring glory to God, to speak and think more like Him, and to be pleasing in His sight, Galatians 1:10.
David ends his psalm by reminding us that it is God who is his Rock, that is, his strength, Psalm 19:14 / Psalm 18:2, and his Redeemer, Psalm 19:14, that is, his rescuer from sin and death, Job 19:25 / Isaiah 41:14 / Romans 3:24 / 1 Corinthians 6:20.

CONCLUSION

How do you communicate with someone who can't see? We use braille, don't we? How do you communicate with someone who is deaf? We use sign language, don't we?

God knows that the world is filled with people who are deaf and blind, which are the two main ways of communication, so how was He going to let all those who are spiritually blind and deaf know He exists?

Well, He did that in two ways, and the first way was by 'creating a 'braille pad' for the spiritually blind'. A braille pad which is so huge that even the blindest of the blind couldn't miss what's been written, Romans 1:20. Since the beginning of time, God has made Himself known to mankind through creation, Romans 1:18-32.
It's been well documented that when a person loses one of their senses, the other senses heighten. If someone loses their eyesight, it's been proven that their sense of hearing and feeling increases.

Spiritually blind people can feel the beauty of the flowers in the ground and hear the glorious singing of birds in the air. And they can know that God is indeed an awesome God, who is powerful enough to create even the smallest things in creation. Paul says that anyone with a drop of spiritual common sense will know that there is a Designer.

The second way which God uses to show people He exists is by using 'sign language for the spiritually deaf', Psalm 19:1-4. We noted that God communicates, but He doesn't speak; He communicates but doesn't use words, He communicates, but He doesn't use sound. And yet creation itself speaks so loudly about its Creator, it's God's sign language to the spiritually deaf of the world, that He exists.
I'm sure you've noticed over the past few years that some people are now moving away from the theory of evolution and turning to the universe for the answers to life and where we came from.

The latest theory is that we must have come from aliens who populated the Earth millions of years ago. It appears that they will go to any length to keep the existence of God out of the picture.

But those who want to remain spiritually deaf tell us that evolution is just so wonderful, it's incredible how the universe has evolved over the years. But for those people who are really listening to what the universe is really declaring, we can't help but conclude that God is so wonderful, it's incredible how powerful He is.

When we look up into the universe, we find that God speaks to us; when we look at our planet, we find that God speaks to us. Every blade of grass, every human being, and every new planet discovered tells us something about our God. His creation shouts out to us all and tells us something about His invisible qualities, His eternal power, and His divine nature.

Some people have eyes, but they can't see; some people have ears, but they don't understand what creation is saying to them. The attitude of some people today is still very much like the attitude of the people in Jesus' day, Matthew 13:13.

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is a prayer of David when he was about to go into a great battle with his enemies. Many believe the background to this prayer was when David was about to go into battle with the Arameans, 2 Samuel 10:1-16.
In this psalm, the people ask God to give them the victory. It's closely related to Psalm 21, where we find that God gave him the victory, and he gives thanks to God for it.

HEADING

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'May the LORD answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the LORD grant all your requests.' Psalm 20:1-5

These verses tell us that they were spoken to the king by the Levites during the time of offering, Genesis 22:8 / Genesis 22:14. This was a real prayer of faith, which demonstrated their confidence in God, Psalm 5:11/ Psalm 9:10 / Psalm 44:5 / Psalm 54:1 / Exodus 23:21.
The prayer begins by asking God to answer David in his time of distress, Psalm 20:1 / Acts 14:22 / 2 Timothy 3:12.
They also pray that the name of the God of Jacob protects him, Psalm 20:1. The God of Jacob, or the God of Israel, would be synonymous terms, and either would denote that he was the Protector of the nation, Isaiah 44:2.
They ask God to send help from the sanctuary, Psalm 20:3, which is the tabernacle, Exodus 28:43 / Exodus 29:30 / Exodus 35:19 / Exodus 39:1. This is where the ark of the covenant was kept, 2 Samuel 6:12-19.

They also ask for support from Zion, Psalm 20:2, that is, Jerusalem, which was the place where God was worshipped, and the place where the tabernacle was set up, Psalm 2:6.
You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the people pausing for a breath as they contemplate whether God will accept their offerings and sacrifices.

At that moment, the people would have raised their voices in encouragement and prayed that those sacrifices and offerings might be accepted and that he might find the deliverance which he had desired, Psalm 20:4.
Since David was joining in with the required burnt offerings, the Levites called on God to bless David in order to bring his victory to the people, so that they won't be oppressed by their enemy.

The people ask that David's heart's desire be fulfilled, Psalm 20:4. At this time, David had only one desire, and that was to defend the people and defend his kingdom with God's help.
For obvious reasons, the people also ask that David's plans will succeed, Psalm 20:4. This is obviously because if David fails, they will become slaves to the Armenians, but if David wins, they will remain free.
The people demonstrate their faithfulness in God by proclaiming that they will rejoice over David's victory, they will lift up their banners, Psalm 20:5, which were military standards used in war, Numbers 1:52 / Numbers 2:2-3 / Numbers 2:10 / Numbers 2:18 / Numbers 2:25 / Numbers 10:14 / Numbers 10:25.
The people finish in total confidence that God will hear their prayer and the prayers of David Psalm 20:5.

'Now this I know: The LORD gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. LORD, give victory to the king! Answer us when we call!' Psalm 20:6-9

Not only did the people demonstrate great faith in God in their prayers, but here, David does the same. He is absolutely confident that God will give 'his anointed', that's David, the victory, Psalm 20:6.
He's confident that God will answer him from His 'heavenly sanctuary', Psalm 20:6, which is heaven itself, the dwelling place of God, 1 Chronicles 21:26 / 2 Chronicles 7:14 / Nehemiah 9:27-28 / Psalm 14:2 / Psalm 102:19. The 'right hand', Psalm 20:6, signifies power and strength, Exodus 15:6 / Judges 5:26 / Psalm 17:7 / Psalm 18:35.
While David's enemies put their trust in chariots and horses, as Nebuchadnezzar did, Daniel 4:25, David put his trust in the name of the Lord, Psalm 20:7 / 1 Samuel 17:45. We must remember that God didn't allow the Israelites to acquire a great number of horses for any reason, Deuteronomy 17:16.
Their confidence in God to give David the victory is seen in that they already see what's happening to the enemy, they are 'brought to their knees and fall', Psalm 20:8 / Psalm 72:9 / Psalm 78:31 / Isaiah 10:4 / Isaiah 65:12. While their enemies bow down to them, they will rise up and stand firm in the Lord's victory, Psalm 20:8.
They cry out one more time to the Lord and ask that He give David the victory, Psalm 20:9, and now they have to wait patiently to see if God will indeed hear their prayers. We know that the victory was given, as we shall see in the next Psalm, which is a thanksgiving prayer for that victory, 2 Samuel 10:17-19.

CONCLUSION

Before this great battle with the Arameans, all of God's people, including David, got together to ask God to help them in this terrible time of distress. They learned to trust in the Name of the Lord, instead of trusting in physical things such as chariots and horses, Psalm 20:7.

As Christians, it's important that we too get together regularly to pray, Acts 2:42, to ask God to help us to prepare for our spiritual battles. Physical weapons are of no use to the Christian in spiritual warfare; we have to fight according to the strength that God has given us, Ephesians 6:13-17.

We ought to do everything to stand firm; we have to be prepared before the swords start flying around. Paul isn't speaking about camouflage; he doesn't tell us to hide, so that the devil will not find us, but he tells us to use our armour and fight against the evil spiritual beings, Psalm 36:12 / Galatians 2:11 / James 4:7 / Revelation 6:17.

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION

In Psalm 20, we saw how the people asked God to give victory to David as he prepared to go into battle against the Arameans, 2 Samuel 10:1-16. In this psalm, we find that God gave him the victory, and he gives thanks to God for it, 2 Samuel 10:17-19.

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

David begins by reminding us of where his source of strength, Ephesians 6:10, and joy, Philippians 4:4, comes from, it's from God, Psalm 21:1. It was the Lord who gave David the victory over the Armenians, 2 Samuel 10:17-19, and as a result, he was filled with joy and gives thanks to God for that victory, Psalm 21:1.
David's desire was to lead his people into victory over their enemies, and the Lord answered his prayers and granted his heart's desire, Psalm 21:2.
You may notice at the end of verse two that some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the people pausing for a breath as they contemplate how God worked in and through David to bring about the victory, Psalm 20:3.
David could see that the goodness of God had come to meet him, and because David and the Levites prayed for the victory, Psalm 20:1-5, and God granted David the victory, a crown of victory was placed on the head of the victorious king, Psalm 21:3.
David asked for life, Psalm 61:5-6, and God rescued him and saved his life, Psalm 21:4. He asked for life, but God granted him even more; God gave him the assurance that his reign would be permanent and enduring, Psalm 21:4 / 2 Samuel 7:13 / 2 Samuel 7:16 / 1 Kings 1:31 / Nehemiah 2:3 / Psalm 18:50.
David acknowledges the glory, the splendour and majesty of God in his victory, Psalm 21:5. He clearly trusts God and His unending blessings, Psalm 21:6, and it would be God's unending blessings and His unfailing love which would preserve him and bless him in the future, Psalm 21:7.

'Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies; your right hand will seize your foes. When you appear for battle, you will burn them up as in a blazing furnace. The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath, and his fire will consume them. You will destroy their descendants from the earth, their posterity from mankind. Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed. You will make them turn their backs when you aim at them with drawn bow. Be exalted in your strength, LORD; we will sing and praise your might.' Psalm 21:8-13

Notice how David looks upon his enemies as God's enemies, Psalm 21:8. Anyone who is against God is our enemy and foe, especially the evil one, 1 Peter 5:8. Burning the enemies as in a 'blazing furnace', Psalm 21:9, is figurative language referring to the judgment of God, Malachi 4:1 / Luke 16:24 / Revelation 20:14.
The judgment would be so great that the posterity of the enemies would be destroyed, Psalm 21:9-10, which would mean these enemies would come to an end.
It's clear that the enemies of David and God had one motive, and that was to kill David, Psalm 21:11, but because the Lord was helping David, the enemy had no choice but to retreat, Psalm 21:12. David wants to know where his enemies are hiding, so he could finish them off.
Notice how David and the people exalt the Lord, Psalm 21:13. God had answered their prayers, Psalm 20:6-9, and David was given the victory over his enemies because of the Lord's strength. As a result, David and all the people give God all the glory and sing and praise God for His might, Psalm 21:13.

CONCLUSION

Back in Psalm 20, David and the Levites prayed earnestly that God would intervene and help David be victorious over the Armenian army, 2 Samuel 10:1-16. In this psalm, after the victory was granted, David and the Levites offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for helping David be victorious, 2 Samuel 10:17-19.
As we noted going through this psalm, we see that thanksgiving always includes joy, Psalm 95:2 / Psalm 97:12 / Psalm 107:22. When God delivers us from our times of trouble, it's always a time of joy.

We also saw that thanksgiving includes praise, Psalm 35:18 / Psalm 69:30 / Luke 17:15-16. When God does wonderful things in our lives, it's always a time to stop and praise Him for who He is.

CHAPTER 22

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 22-24 are Messianic Psalms. Psalm 22 focuses on the coming Saviour. Psalm 23 pictures the Saviour as a shepherd of the people. Psalm 24 proclaims the sovereignty of the Saviour. The Psalm can be divided into two sections, the first dealing with trials, Psalm 22:1-21, and the second with triumph over trials, Psalm 22:22-31.

HEADING

'For the director of music. To the tune of "The Doe of the Morning." A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This is a psalm of David, and some believe that it was written for God and God Himself is the director of music; others believe him to be a leader of choirs or musicians in David's time, such as Heman the Singer or Asaph, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 2 Chronicles 16:17 / 2 Chronicles 25:6.
No one knows what the tune of the doe of the morning relates to; some refer to it as a musical instrument used upon mournful occasions, but others say it was simply to be sung in the morning.

Psalm 22:1 are basically rhetorical questions, because after verse eighteen, the theme of the Psalm changes radically from death unto life. But to many standing around at the scene of the cross, especially those who weren't familiar with this Psalm, and their attention captivated by the horror of it all, it would certainly 'appear' as if God had forsaken this man who had claimed to be His Son, Matthew 27:46 / Mark 15:34.
Many today believe that these words of Jesus in Matthew 27:46 / Mark 15:34, clearly demonstrate that God actually turned His back on Jesus whilst He was on the cross, that God somehow, couldn't bring Himself to look at Jesus and so abandoned Him because of the sin He was carrying. Although this idea seems plausible to some, to understand what Jesus meant, we have to look to other Scriptures to see if this claim could actually be plausible.

GOD HAS ALWAYS LOOKED AT OUR SIN

To claim that God can't look at sin is foreign to the Scriptures; God has been looking at the sin of mankind since the fall of mankind in the garden and has been ever since. Even in the days of Noah, the Bible tells us that God SAW their sin, which implies He was looking at mankind's sin, Genesis 6:5-7 / Hebrews 4:13.
If God can't look at sin, then surely that would imply that He can't bring Himself to look at mankind today, because we're all sinners, Romans 3:23. There's a huge difference between God hating sin and not being able to look at it, in order to deal with it.

WHOSE SIN WAS HE CARRYING?

We also need to ask the question: whose sin was Jesus carrying? He was carrying OUR sin because He Himself was sinless. Jesus wasn't a sinner, and there's a huge difference between being a sinner and bearing the consequences of someone else's sin, 1 Peter 2:22 / Hebrews 4:15.
Jesus became sin for us, but He was still the perfect Son of God. 'Truly, this was a righteous man', Matthew 23:47.
Ask yourself this question: if you were a judge, and your own innocent son heroically stepped forward at a trial to take a criminal's punishment upon himself, would you be angry with him and reject him? Of course not.

JESUS WAS DOING THE FATHER'S WILL

Why would the Father turn His back on His Son if the Son pleased the Father in every way? When we think about the cross, it was God's plan to deal with sin once and for all; it was Jesus' ultimate act of obedience to the Father, Philippians 2:8 / Hebrews 5:7.
And surely if there was ever a time in the life of Christ when the Father would have said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased', it would have been at the cross.

We know that the Old Testament sacrifices to God were 'a sweet-smelling aroma'; how much more would God be pleased with Christ's selfless sacrifice? Ephesians 5:1-2.
We have to remember that everything Jesus did was in accordance with the will of the Father; this included Jesus' death on the cross, Luke 22:42 / Isaiah 53:9 / Acts 2:23.
The whole point of God coming in the flesh was to deal with our sin problem and fulfil Scripture; the whole point of Jesus having a body was for the purpose of the cross, Hebrews 10:5-10. Notice that phrase, 'a body you prepared for me', the cross was God's plan, even before Christ came into the world.
And so, when we look at the cross and Jesus' submission to the Father's will, we clearly see that Jesus was doing everything which pleased the Father with the body He provided for Jesus. So, why on earth would God turn His back on His Son, if His Son was pleasing the Father and doing the Father's will with the body He provided for Him?

JESUS STOPPED BEING GOD AT THE CROSS!

Now we know that Jesus was God in the flesh, as Philippians clearly tells us, Philippians 2:5-8. Some people, though, suggest that Jesus stopped being God when He was on the cross, just for that one moment.

And so, they ask, when Jesus was on the cross suffering for our sins, did Jesus stop being God? The answer is No. Was God the Father unable to look upon the judgment that fell upon God the Son? Of course not.

Clearly, Jesus never stopped being God, even when He died for the sins of mankind. Jesus didn't in any sense, to any degree, at any time, or for any reason surrender any bit of His deity, Colossians 2:9. Likewise, Jesus can't be separated from God the Father because He said, 'I and the Father are One,' John 10:30.
The biggest reason for this misunderstanding of Jesus' words on the cross is that people don't understand Psalm 22. When Jesus said, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Matthew 27:46 / Mark 15:34, He was quoting from Psalm 22, and therefore fulfilling Scripture prophecies concerning Himself.
The idea of God turning His back on Jesus on the cross would never have been on the mind of anyone who was present on that day. The problem today is that many people just take one verse and make it mean something which it was never meant to mean.

Now remember the Jews knew these Scriptures really well, and when anyone read out the first line of any Psalm, the Jews would recognise it and be able to recite the whole Psalm in their minds. This was the Jewish practice at the time of Jesus, and this is exactly what Jesus did here on the cross.

Psalms 22 has many references to the atoning death of Jesus Christ. To us today, the prophecies are profound and obvious. Likewise, those Jews watching Jesus on the cross being crucified saw the many parallels between the crucifixion and the fulfilment of prophecy. As Jesus was suffering, He was quoting the Jewish Scriptures from the cross.
Can you imagine the expression on the Jews' faces as they remembered the whole of the messianic prophecy as we find in Psalm 22, being fulfilled in front of their eyes?
And the climax would be Jesus' final words, 'It is finished.' John 19:30. Look at the last line of Psalms 22. 'He has done it!' Psalm 22:31. Jesus isn't saying that His father 'has forsaken Him' or His Father has 'turned away from Him', He's saying that He is the Messiah.
Read Psalm 22:1 again, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?' This doesn't say the Father rejected the Son. First of all, look at the context, look at the parallel verse, 'Why are you so far from saving me?' This is the issue, 'no help', the sufferer is asking why God doesn't save Him from His oppressors.
In other words, 'Why do you let my oppressors torment me?' The Father gives the Son over to suffering. Psalm 22:1 is the equivalent of Isaiah's statement, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise Him', Isaiah 53:10. In fact, the Psalm later says, 'you lay me in the dust of death', Psalm 22:15.
Secondly, it's a rhetorical question; the sufferer knows full well why God does this. Now you may well think, well, what's the point of asking it, then? He's simply expressing His distress because this is real suffering. He really doesn't want to go through it. He would rather God save him instantly out of it, Matthew 26:39.
Maybe the idea is that 'it feels like you have abandoned me' or 'it's really hard in my present circumstances to feel your closeness,' which is a very real human reaction, isn't it? And again, if God turned His back on His Son, why does the Psalm say otherwise? Does 'the Father turn His face away' according to Psalm 22:24? Not at all.
Now I don't know about you, but a lot of people I know can recite the whole of Psalm 23, but they couldn't tell you one verse from Psalm 68, Psalm 52, or Psalm 117. Why is that?
Well, simply because we don't know our Scriptures as the Jews did, we know Psalm 23 very well because we've heard it over and over again, but we don't hear the other Psalms as often.
The Jews would have known all of the Psalms and memorised them because they had been taught them over and over again from a very young age. The more you hear them, the more you'll remember
them.

Old Testament prophecy often had both a current and future application, and here we're concerned with the future application of what is written in Psalm 22. As we read it, we will see why Jesus said, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

Later, in John 19:30, He said, 'It is finished.' What we see is that Jesus quoted the very first verse in Psalm 22, and the very last verse, which, properly translated, should read, 'it is finished.'

Jesus, quoting the beginning and the ending of one of the most famous, most well-known, and most memorised sections of all of the Old Testament, one that vividly set forth what was taking place right in front of their eyes. No doubt for many of them who had ears to hear, the verses we are about to read flashed through their minds.

THE TEXT

'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?' Psalm 22:1

As we read on, we'll see that these are basically rhetorical questions, Psalm 22:1 / Matthew 27:46 / Mark 15:34, because after verse eighteen, the theme of the Psalm changes radically from death to life.

But to many standing around at the scene, especially those who weren't familiar with this Psalm, and their attention captivated by the horror of it all, it would certainly 'appear' as if God had forsaken this man who had claimed to be His Son.

'My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises. In you, our ancestors put their trust; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.' Psalm 22:2-5

Notice how David had cried out to God all day and night but had no answer, and as a result, they couldn't rest, Psalm 22:2. Jesus prayed often, and He cried out to God in the garden the night before the cross, Matthew 26:36-46.

'In the night', Psalm 22:2, in Hebrew means a twist away of the light, and Jesus cried out to God during these hours of darkness, Matthew 27:45. Despite no response from God, he knew where God was, He was enthroned as the Holy One, you are the one Israel praises, Psalm 22:3.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The phrase 'inhabiting the praises of Israel,' KJV, recalls the more usual 'thou that dwellest between the cherubim', 1 Samuel 4:4 / 2 Samuel 6:2 / Psalms 80:1 / Psalms 99:1. But the idea here is more spiritual. The ever-ascending praises of His people become a throne for the Divine King, and take the place of the outstretched wings of the cherubim. Perhaps there is a reminiscence of Exodus 15:11-12.'

To whom did Jesus come? Israel. To whom was this Psalm written? Israel. Look how he's reminding them of their spiritual heritage, Psalm 22:4, which included the Messiah. David says their ancestors cried out to God and were saved. They were saved because they trusted Him and weren't put to shame, Psalm 22:5.

'But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.' Psalm 22:6

The word 'worm', Psalm 22:6, here is very interesting. It is the Hebrew word 'tola', which isn't the ordinary word for worm. Rather, this was a worm from which crimson or scarlet dye was obtained. Why is this word used? Because Jesus was covered with blood, Revelation 19:13, and was the colour of scarlet dye, Isaiah 1:18.

'All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. 'He trusts in the LORD,' they say, 'let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.' Psalm 22:7-8

All who saw Jesus mocked Him, hurled insults at Him and shook their heads at Him, Psalm 22:7 / Luke 23:35. These verses should sound familiar to anyone who knows their Bible, as they were literally fulfilled in Jesus, Psalm 22:7-8. This very prophecy was unfolding right in front of their eyes, and Jesus was trying to call their attention to it, Matthew 27:39 / Matthew 27:41-43.

'Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast. From birth, I was cast on you; from my mother's womb, you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.' Psalm 22:9-11

David says, despite the insults of the previous verses, God brought him out of the womb and made him trust in Him, even at my mother's breast, Psalm 22:9. In other words, God has guided and defended him from his earliest infancy. In a sense, Psalm 22:10 is true of everyone, but of the child Jesus, this was especially true, Luke 1:31-33 / Luke 2:40 / Luke 2:49 / Luke 2:52, especially since He was the 'seed' of woman in fulfilment of the prophecies, Genesis 3:15 / Galatians 3:16 / Galatians 4:4.
We know that Jesus calls the Father God, and He can do this because He is a man and the Father became His God at his conception, Psalms 22:10 / Matthew 27:46 / Luke 22:42 / Mark 14:36 / John 5:18 / John 20:17 / Revelation 3:2 / Revelation 3:12.
Remember, Jesus became human, John 1:1 / John 1:14, and despite being God Himself, Philippians 2:8-11, He took on flesh, and then the Father became His God, Jeremiah 32:27.
The agony of death itself was approaching, the disciples 'deserted him and fled,' Mark 14:10, with the exception of John, and in the excruciating agony of that situation, Jesus again cried out for help, but there was no one to help Him, Psalm 22:11. We always need help from God, especially when troubles and trials are at hand.
The torture described here is clearly that of a crucifixion, a form of execution, which, as far as we can determine, had never at that time been used by any government.

Although it resembles the impaling of enemies upon stakes, as practised by the Assyrians, the practise of crucifixion was never developed until a later time by the Romans.

'Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.' Psalm 22:12

Who was Bashan? Psalm 22:12 / Numbers 21:33 / Deuteronomy 32:14 / Amos 4:1. And what does that mean? The bull is the emblem of brutal strength that gores and tramples down all before it. Bashan was the chief cattle-raising area of Israel, where the biggest, best, and strongest bulls came from.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'Bulls of Bashan were remarkable for their size, strength, and fierceness; and are introduced here to represent men who were fierce, savage and violent.'

Figuratively, this is referring to the religious 'top notches' of Israel. It was the Pharisees who had inspired, persuaded, and manipulated the Romans to pound the nails. As such, they were the ones responsible for Jesus' death, John 19:12-16.

'Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.' Psalm 22:13-15

Using metaphorical language, these verses clearly describe a person dying. The religious leaders were like roaring lions, 1 Peter 5:8, fiercely trying to bring about Christ's destruction, Psalm 22:13, because Jesus didn't fit their idea of Messiah. Jesus was poured out like water, Psalm 22:14.
Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The images in this verse are strongly descriptive of a person in the deepest distress, whose strength, courage, hope, and expectation of succour and relief had entirely failed. Our Lord’s sufferings were extreme, but I cannot think there is any sound theological sense in which these things can be spoken of Christ, either in his agony in the garden, or his death upon the cross.’

Notice David mentions ‘all my bones are out of joint’, Psalm 22:14. We say things like that today, don’t we? ‘Every bone in my body is tired.’ That doesn’t mean all two hundred and sixteen or however many there are. It’s a figure of speech.
The dropping of the pole of the cross into the hole would cause the arms to slip out of joint at the shoulder. In regard to Jesus, crucifixion dislocated a number of His bones, and no doubt it felt like all of them.

His heart, the most critical organ in his body, ‘turned to wax,’ Psalm 22:14. A ‘potsherd’ Psalm 22:15, was an old piece of pottery dried by the sun; Jesus’ strength had ebbed away.
His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth, from the cross he said, ‘I thirst,’ John 19:28. God laid him in the dust of death, Psalm 22:13, which means that Christ suffered the original curse and pains of death for every man, Genesis 3:19.

> ‘Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.’ Psalm 22:16-18

The Hebrew word for ‘dog’, Psalm 22:16, is ‘Kaleb’, and it’s a slang word in Hebrew for a male prostitute. When the Romans crucified someone, they formed a cordon of soldiers around the cross to keep the people away. And the Jews referred to uncircumcised people like the Romans as ‘dogs’, Matthew 15:21-28 / Mark 7:24-30.
They pierce my hands and my feet, Psalm 22:16, is a clear reference to the crucifixion of Jesus, Isaiah 53:5 / Matthew 8:17 / John 20:24-31 / 1 Peter 2:24. ‘All my bones are on display,’ Psalm 22:17, is another figure of speech meaning that in His many beatings and floggings, Jesus’ skin had been thrashed to the bone. People spat on Him, taunted Him, and gloated over Him, Psalm 22:17 / Matthew 26:67-68.
‘They divide my garments among and cast lots for my clothing,’ Psalm 22:18. This couldn’t more clearly describe what later happened at Golgotha in fulfilment of this prophecy, Matthew 37:35 / John 19:23-24. And it’s at this point that the thrust of Psalm 22 begins to shift from death to life.

> ‘But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me. Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs. Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.’ Psalm 22:19-21

Because Jesus was human, John 1:1 / John 1:14, He prayed to God to be near Him in His suffering, Psalm 22:19. The Messiah calls upon His God, Yahweh, to save him. Psalm 22:20.
The mouth of the lions, Psalm 22:21, is a reference to the Jews and their father, the devil, John 8:44. The horns of the wild oxen, Psalm 22:22, is a reference to the place where wild beasts were bound to the horns of the altar, and so, Christ our sacrifice as the Lamb of God was nailed and bound to an altar, Psalm 118:22 / John 1:29.
How did God save Jesus? Not by taking Him off the cross, but by raising Him from the dead in accordance with other Old Testament prophecies, Psalm 16:10. On the Day of Pentecost, when Peter preached the first Gospel sermon, he boldly asserted that God had raised Jesus from the dead, Acts 2:24.
He then explained that God had performed this miraculous deed in fulfilment of David’s prophecy in Psalm 16. In fact, he quoted the words of David in detail as contained in Psalm 16:8-11.
Years later, Paul did the same thing when he spoke to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia, Acts 13:33-35. Like Peter, he declared that God had raised Jesus from the dead in fulfilment of Psalm 16:10.

‘I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly, I will praise you. You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honour him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!’ Psalm 22:22-23

Jesus was going to deliver a complete revelation concerning God’s mercy, love, and justice to His disciples, and He would announce to the Jewish people God’s merciful design in sending Him to be the Saviour of the world, Psalm 22:22.
He will also do this in the assembly, that is, the church, and for ages to come Christ’s words and teaching to the apostles will be proclaimed in praise to God, Psalm 22:22 / Hebrews 2: 11-12.
Those who fear are told to praise Him, Psalm 22:23. This is an encouragement to the remnant of the Jews, particularly, to profit by the preaching of the Gospel. Gentiles will fear, and Jews mentioned by name should ‘fear,’ Psalm 22:23 / Romans 3:1-2
How is the Messiah going to praise God in the future when it’s clear that He was to die? Only if God keeps His Word and raises him from the dead, Romans 8:11-13. And the next verse indicates that God hadn’t forsaken Him and would do just that!

‘For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.’ Psalm 22:24

Though the Jews had despised Jesus, God graciously received Jesus in His suffering to die and pay the debt of all sin, Psalm 22:24. By His humiliation and death on the cross, Jesus made atonement for the sins of the world, 1 John 2:2. Again, if God turned His back on His Son, why does the Psalm say otherwise?
Does ‘the Father turn His face away’ according to this verse? Psalm 22:24. Not at all. In this magnificent psalm, we see a vivid portrait of the death and resurrection of the man we now know as Jesus, the Messiah, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. This Psalm ends in triumph, and God will bless the world through Him.

‘From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you I will fulfil my vows. The poor will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will praise him—may your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations. All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—those who cannot keep themselves alive. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!’ Psalm 22:25-31

The proclamation of the prayer was to all the people, that is, the Jews and Gentiles in the Lord’s church, Psalm 22:25 / Galatians 3:28-29 / Ephesians 2:19-20. The proclamation was an exhortation to fear, praise and glorify God, Psalm 22:25.
In times of trouble, vows were made to God, Psalm 22:25, and when the day of deliverance came, the one delivered remembered what he had promised the Lord, and so, gave his thank offerings to the Lord.
Notice it is the poor who will eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the LORD will praise him, Psalm 22:26 / Matthew 5:3 / Matthew 5:5. The words ‘may your hearts live forever’, Psalm 22:26, are a reference to Jesus’ words in John 11:25-26.
Notice all the ends of the earth will remember and turn to God, Psalm 22:27. The Gospel will be preached everywhere and to everyone, Matthew 28:19-20 / Mark 16:20 / Romans 1:8 / Colossians 1:23. People from all nations will bow down and worship before Jesus, and through Him their praises will be offered to God, Psalm 22:27 / Psalm 19:4.
The dominion belongs to the LORD, Psalm 22:28 / Matthew 28:18-20, which means that the kingdom is the rule of Christ in the heart and lives of the saved, Colossians 3:15. After the victory over an enemy, Israel ate of the sacrifices that were made to the Lord, Leviticus 3:17 / Leviticus 7:16 / Numbers 15:3.

Notice the rich of the earth will feast and worship, and all who go down to the dust will kneel before him, those who cannot keep themselves alive, Psalm 22:29. This is another clear reference to what will happen when Jesus returns, Romans 14:11 / Philippians 2:9-10.

We are told that posterity will serve him, Psalm 22:20. Please note the KJV uses the word 'seed', instead of the word 'prosperity'. This is another reference to Christ from Genesis 3:15 and Galatians 3:16.

The future generations will be told about the Lord, Psalm 22:30, and they will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn, Psalm 22:31, which is an obvious reference to the proclamation of the Gospel, Romans 1:16-17 / Romans 3:21-26.

The last word of Psalm 22:31 should be translated a bit differently. In the KJV, you can see that the word 'it' is in italics, indicating that the translators added it. The pronoun 'he' isn't in the original text; it should be the word 'it,' so that the Psalm closes with the words, 'He has done it', Psalm 22:31, or 'for it is finished.'

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ knew that, and in the final agonising moments of His life had the presence of mind and the love for all men, including those who were killing Him, to once again hold forth to them the Word of Life. He quoted the very first verse and the very last verse of a section of Scripture that they knew very, very well.

With His dying breath, He affirmed one more time that He was who the Word of God said He was, the Messiah, the Son of the living God, the Redeemer of Israel and hope for all who would believe in Him in the future.

God didn't forsake His Son; God didn't turn His back on Him because He was sinless, perfect, He was carrying our sins, and God proved how pleased He was with His Son because three days and three nights later, He raised Him from the dead. Throughout His life, Jesus was fulfilling Scripture, even on the cross to prove who He was, the Messiah, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

CHAPTER 23

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 22-24 are Messianic Psalms. Psalm 22 focuses on the coming Saviour, and Psalm 24 proclaims the sovereignty of the Saviour. Psalm 23 pictures the Saviour as a shepherd of the people.

This psalm of David has often been called the 'Pearl of the Psalms.' It is probably one of the most quoted Scriptures in the Bible. Was it written by a young boy no more than fifteen years of age? How could a fifteen-year-old have such profound wisdom and knowledge?

Many believe he wrote it in his later years, recalling his days as a shepherd. As a boy, he would have been given the responsibility of looking after the family sheep, a job no one else wanted. It was a dirty job filled with many hours of loneliness.

HEADING

‘A psalm of David.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading here simply tells us that this is a psalm of David.

‘The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.’ Psalm 23:1-6

David knew that he could count on God to help him be a good shepherd because His LORD is his shepherd, Psalm 23:1. He no doubt spent many an hour both day and night alone with his sheep, but he was not really alone because he knew God was there with him. What a great feeling of security.
It isn’t always easy to put our complete trust in God, but David did as his responsibility was leading and taking care of his sheep all by himself, and it was a job he took seriously. He sought God’s help and strength to help him with his responsibilities.

This Psalm shows his confidence and trust in the Lord; his relationship with the Lord was intense. He didn’t fear taking on some wild animal, refusing to let him take one of his sheep. In order to save his sheep, he killed both a lion and a bear with his bare hands, 1 Samuel 17:34-36.
The whole Psalm shows the confidence and trust he had in the Lord. It’s his trust that amazes us; he had absolutely no fear of the giant who was probably three feet taller, 1 Samuel 17:36.
David had to constantly search for green pastures; sheep need green grass, Psalm 23:2, and they are constantly moved around from field to field to find grass. After grazing on the grass, they were fully content and quiet. They trusted their shepherd to take care of their need for green grass, Psalm 23:2.
After they finished eating, they would often lie down on the leftover grass. Sheep need water, Psalm 23:1, but don’t like the sound of rushing water; they prefer still or quiet water, such as a small stream or pool.
The shepherd was always careful to lead them to a brook or a quiet pool of water. Sheep, by nature, are gentle animals; they like serene surroundings. How could David be so satisfied with his job of looking after sheep? Nobody wanted to do this kind of work; often, it was turned over to hired workers. Have any of you ever reached the point where you resented your job?

David was content, he was satisfied looking after the sheep, he never felt alone, and he always felt that God was nearby. Many times, we get placed in this kind of situation.

Sheep are easily frightened, and so, the shepherd comforts them. The tone of his voice assures them that all is well and they have nothing to be afraid of. He leads them through places that are safe. Remember also that David could play the harp and probably sang to them, 1 Samuel 16:23.

David seems now to shift his thoughts to God. God does this for His name's sake, Psalm 23:3, by demonstrating he can always be trusted. We sometimes forget that were it not for God's providence, we might not be alive today.
We certainly would be lacking were it not for His guidance, Psalm 23:3. What God commands is best for us; it's for the honour of His name that He can always be trusted, and He leads us on the right paths.
The words from Psalm 23:4 are often used at funerals to speak of a person passing through this life into the next. This isn't what David had in mind; he's probably speaking about the various times he had to run and hide from King Saul, 1 Samuel 24:2-3.
The shepherd is careful in leading his sheep through places that are narrow or slippery. Sheep paths pass through rough and steep places sometimes. I know this personally from following a sheep path once; the shepherd is always nearby to give them assurance that they can pass through rough terrain safely.

The shepherd carries with him a rod and a staff, Psalm 23:4, and he keeps his rod in his belt to fight any vicious animal who might try to harm the sheep. The staff was used to correct the sheep if they strayed from the pathway; the sheep know their shepherd watches out for them.
Again, David seems to move his thoughts from his sheep to God, the faithful shepherd. A well-set table, feast, has been set for him, Psalm 23:5. Near East kings would prepare a banquet for the ones they favoured and sought to honour. In the case of God's people, by His provision for their needs, He openly manifests to the nations that they are His people.
There are enemies nearby who would find satisfaction in stopping the feast, but they can do nothing to prevent it Psalm 23:5. Satan resents God's people who enjoy God's blessings, and they probably resented the feast God had prepared.
This is the kind of oil, Psalm 23:5, that would be used to honour a guest of honour at a banquet. It's perfumed oil, which showed delight and hospitality. Mary poured this kind of oil on the head of Jesus, John 12:3.
Little did David know the time would soon come when Samuel would pour out a different kind of oil, the kind used when appointing someone king, on his head, appointing him to be the king of Israel, 1 Samuel 16:13.
Generally, shepherds were poor, but David said his cup was overflowing with God's blessings, Psalm 23:5. It was the custom of the Jews to honour a guest with a cup of wine, but the more you poured in, the more honoured you were; in David's case, it was overflowing.
While out in the fields with the sheep, David had very little that was of value, but he was rich in spiritual blessings. God doesn't hold back on his blessings to those who serve him faithfully, Psalm 23:6 / James 2:13 / 1 John 4:19.
We are amazed that David, at a young age, understood that his earthly home wasn't forever, but he would later dwell in the house of the Lord, Psalm 23:6. The love and grace of God would continue in heaven. Being in the house of God is the same as being in heaven with God eternally, 1 Timothy 3:15.

CONCLUSION

Kings were supposed to shepherd the people. The Shepherd King is the Messiah, Genesis 49:10. Notice the staff and rod are mentioned, Psalm 23:4, and Judah has the lion's sceptre and staff, Genesis 49:10.
In those days, the head, the staff, which stands for authority, was planted or placed between his feet whilst his legs were crossed. The rod stood for justice; Judah would become the King.

1. The Old Testament prophets spoke of the promise of a Shepherd, Isaiah 40:9-11 / Jeremiah 31:10 / Ezekiel 34:23.
2. The New Testament reveals that Jesus is that Shepherd, John 10:1-16 / 1 Peter 5:4 / Hebrews 13:20.

3. The motif of a shepherd is revealing. It pictures the blessings enjoyed by those who follow Jesus, and it should remind us of the duties we have as His sheep.

Jesus is the 'Good Shepherd', John 10:11-14; Jesus is the 'Great Shepherd', Hebrews 13:20-21, and Jesus is the 'Chief Shepherd', 1 Peter 5:4. He gave his life for us. He laid down His life for His sheep, as foretold in the Old Testament, Zechariah 13:7 / Matthew 26:31.
As Jesus told His disciples, He would do, John 10:11 / John 10:15. Thus, He is able to offer eternal life to His sheep, John 10:28 / 1 John 5:11-13. Offering security to those who continue to believe. Such that none can snatch them from the hand of God. Though one can fall from God's hand through neglect, Hebrews 3:12-15 / Revelation 2:10.
He now cares for us, having called us through the Gospel, John 10:3 / 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14. Having gathered us into His one-fold, even Gentiles, John 10:16 / Ephesians 2:11-22.
As our Good Shepherd, He knows us, John 10:14 / John 10:27 / 2 Timothy 2:19. He feeds us, Psalm 23:1-2 / John 10:9. He guides us, Psalm 23:3 / John 10:3-4. He cherishes us tenderly, Isaiah 40:11 / Ephesians 5:25-29.
He protects and preserves, Jeremiah 31:10 / John 10:28-29 / Jude 28-29. Wonderful are the blessings of Jesus our Shepherd! Such blessings are prefigured in that most beautiful of psalms, Psalms 23.

CHAPTER 24

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 22-24 are Messianic Psalms. Psalm 22 focuses on the coming Saviour. Psalm 23 pictures the Saviour as a shepherd of the people. Psalm 24 proclaims the sovereignty of the Saviour, and it points to the victory of Jesus over death, Colossians 2:15 / Hebrews 2:14-15, and His resurrection and reign over all things from heaven, Daniel 7:13-14 / Philippians 2:8-11 / Revelation 5:11-14 / Revelation 17:14.
The historical background of this psalm may possibly be when the ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem, to the tent that David had prepared for it, 2 Samuel 6:1-15.

HEADING

'Of David. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading here simply tells us that this is a psalm of David.

'The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters. Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Saviour. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.' Psalm 24:1-6

David sets out by reminding us that if we want to worship, we must understand the One whom we are worshipping. It is the Lord who created the earth and everything in it, Psalm 24:1 / Genesis 1:1-25, and it is the Lord who created mankind who live on His earth, Psalm 24:1 / Genesis 1:26-27.

It was God who created the seas and established their waters, Psalm 24:2 / Job 38:6 / Genesis 1:9-10. God through Christ sustains all things through the word of His power, Hebrews 1:3. Therefore, everything belongs to Him, Psalm 50:10-11.

The apostle Paul quotes these words twice in 1 Corinthians 10:26 and 1 Corinthians 10:28, to establish the principle that no food is in itself unclean, and that there is in fact nothing that actually belongs to the false gods the pagans made offerings to.

It is only those who are righteous, who can ascend His holy mountain and stand in His holy place, Psalm 24:3 / Psalm 1:5 / Psalm 15:1 / Romans 3:22. It is only those who have 'clean hands', Psalm 24:4, that is, those who are righteous, can worship God, Job 17:9 / Psalm 15:2 / Psalm 26:10 / Isaiah 1:15 / Isaiah 59:3 / Acts 2:23.

Anyone who worships God knowing they are guilty of doing something they shouldn't have done and still worship God are hypocrites and don't have a 'pure heart', Psalm 24:4.

People will only have a 'pure heart' when they realise how much forgiveness and mercy God has given them and in return show them to others, Luke 7:36-50 / Luke 18:9-14.

David reminds us that we cannot worship God and yet at the same time trust in idols and swear by false gods, Psalm 24:4 / Exodus 20:7 / Psalm 25:1 / Psalm 115:4-8 / Isaiah 41:24 / Matthew 12:34 / 1 Corinthians 8:6 / 1 John 2:15-17. God wants us to worship Him in Spirit and truth, John 4:23-24.

David knows the terms and conditions of the covenant with God, Psalm 24:5. If Israel obeys God, God will bless them; if they disobey God, He will punish them, Deuteronomy 27-28.

The blessings and vindication come from the Lord, Psalm 24:5, and the only righteousness that this world ever achieved was that which was produced by Jesus Christ our Lord, Psalm 24:4 / Romans 3:10 / 1 John 1:6.

God seeks those who really want to know Him, Psalm 24:6, totally depend upon Him and want to obtain His grace, Psalm 9:10 / Psalm 14:2 / Psalm 63:1 / Proverbs 8:17 / Matthew 6:33 / Matthew 7:7. God wants people to worship Him as Jacob did, Psalm 24:6 / Genesis 32:22-30 / Romans 9:6-8.

You may notice at the end of verse six, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates the awesomeness of God.

'Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty—he is the King of glory.' Psalm 24:7-10

In the historical setting, these verses relate to the time when the ark of the covenant was brought back to Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6:1-15. Notice how the gates and doors are personified, Psalm 24:7 / Psalm 24:9, which means the city of Jerusalem, those who live there, should reverently receive the ark of God.

The ark represented the presence of God, Exodus 25:17 / Exodus 25:20 / Exodus 25:22. David says that the 'Lord is mighty in battle', Psalm 24:8, which is a reference to the time when David brought the ark back to Jerusalem after defeating all his enemies; it was the Lord who made David victorious, Exodus 15:3.
The words of Psalm 24:8-9, are also prophetic, pointing to the time of Christ, they point to the time when Christ, the King, ascended into heaven after His death and resurrection, Acts 1:9-10 / Ephesians 1:20. The gate to heaven is now open, / Revelation 3:20, and we can draw near to Him and He draws near to us, James 4:8.
When Jesus entered Jerusalem, Matthew tells us that the city asked, 'Who is this?', Matthew 21:10. If they had known who He was, the response should have been, 'The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory!' Psalm 24:10 / Psalm 24:7-8 / Isaiah 1:9.
You may notice at the end of verse ten that some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

As mentioned above, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. Once again, we can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates this King of glory stooping down to receive men and even to be received by men.

CONCLUSION

David spoke of a time when King Jesus would come and ascend to heaven, and John, in his revelation, tells that Jesus declares that He is the One 'who is, and who was, and who is to come,' Revelation 1:8.
The Scriptures teach us over and over again that He will return, Matthew 24:30-31. The Lord will appear instantaneously, everywhere on the last day. Then the wicked will mourn, and the faithful will be taken to be with the Lord for eternity, Luke 21:27 / Matthew 24:30-31 / Mark 13:26-27.
The question is, are we ready for His final coming? The Lord has not left us 'in the dark' that He will appear suddenly, without warning, 1 Thessalonians 5:2 / 2 Peter 3:10 / Revelation 16:15.
So, by always being prepared, we will not be caught off guard, 1 Thessalonians 5:4. The Lord Jesus says, 'I am definitely coming suddenly.' Can we, with confidence and with joy, say, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus'? Revelation 22:20.

CHAPTER 25

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of wisdom that is compiled together with statements of truth. In the Hebrew text, each verse of this psalm begins with a letter of the twenty-two-letter Hebrew alphabet. This Psalm is the first Psalm which is written this way; the others are Psalm 34 / Psalm 37 / Psalm 111 / Psalm 112 / Psalm 119 / Psalm 145.
Commentators give many different reasons for some psalms being written in Hebrew alphabetical order, but I personally think it was written this way to make the learning of the psalm easy and easy to memorise.

HEADING

‘Of David.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading here simply tells us that this is of David.

‘In you, LORD my God, I put my trust. I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause. Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love, remember me, for you, LORD, are good.’ Psalm 25:1-7

Opposite to the person who trusts in idols and swears by false gods, Psalm 24:4, David puts his trust in God and therefore isn’t ashamed, Psalm 25:1 / Job 6:20 / Isaiah 30:5 / Jeremiah 8:9 / Jeremiah 14:3-4.
We must remember that the word ‘shame’, Psalm 25:2, doesn’t always mean embarrassment; here, Psalm 25:1, it carries with it the idea of being let down or disappointed, Romans 5:5 / Isaiah 49:23. In other words, David didn’t want to be disappointed in having God protect him.
David had many enemies, all of whom wanted to kill him, hence why he asks God not to let them triumph over him, Psalm 25:2. He didn’t want his enemies to be embarrassed; he prays that his enemies would suffer shame, in the sense of being let down or disappointed.
Notice he wants God to show him His ways, teach him His paths and guide Him in His truth, Psalm 25:4-5 / Deuteronomy 32:4. This tells us how close his relationship with God was, but still, he wants to get closer. He was really dependent upon God at all times, and he felt that dependence.
David experienced God’s grace and mercy many times in his life, and so, he prays that God would extend the same to those who reach out for His salvation, Psalm 25:6. He had received salvation from God so many times in the past that it made him want to wait upon the Lord all the more.
Most young people make silly mistakes and make some bad decisions. As a result, when they sin, they have to live with the consequences and the guilt of those sins. Here, David asks God not to remember the sins of his youth and his rebellious ways, Psalm 25:7 / Jeremiah 31:34 / Romans 3:25.

‘Good and upright is the LORD; therefore, he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant. For the sake of your name, LORD, forgive my iniquity, though it is great. Who, then, are those who fear the LORD? He will instruct them in the ways they should choose. They will spend their days in prosperity, and their descendants will inherit the land. The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare.’ Psalm 25:8-15

David knows that it is only the Lord who can and will instruct the obedient who have lost their way, Psalm 25:8 / Matthew 18:3. When we submit in humility to God, James 4:7, then He will teach us His way, the right

way, Psalm 25:9 / Psalm 139:24. Without total submission to the will of God, no one can expect to be led by God, Psalm 25:10 / Romans 12:1-2.

David seeks forgiveness for his great iniquity, Psalm 25:11, which is probably a reference to the adultery he committed with Bathsheba and the ordering of the killing of her husband Uriah, 2 Samuel 11:4-17. And note it was for the sake of the LORD'S name, Psalm 25:11, not for David's name.

When a person 'fears the Lord', Psalm 25:12, that is, revere Him and submit to Him and His will, then God will teach that person His covenant way, Psalm 25:12 / Psalm 5:7. In return, they will have peace of mind, and their posterity through their children will continue throughout generations, Psalm 25:13.

In other words, they will enjoy the benefits which come from being in a covenant relationship with God both materially, Psalm 25:13, and spiritually, Exodus 20:12 / Matthew 5:5. God made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, Exodus 19-24; He kept His part of the covenant, and He expects Israel to keep their part of the covenant.

The Hebrew phrase for 'the LORD confides', Psalm 25:14, is 'the secret of Yahweh,' which may here be translated by 'intimate circle', Genesis 18:17 / Job 19:19 / Job 29:4 / Proverbs 3:32 / John 15:13-15 / 1 John 1:3.

It is to those who have that close relationship with God that He makes his covenant known, Psalm 25:14 / 1 Corinthians 2:14. Those who are His friends are those who are faithful to Him, Genesis 17:9-10 / Exodus 19:5 / Deuteronomy 29:9 / Psalm 132:12.

David wanted to focus on nothing but God, Psalm 25:15 / Hebrews 12:1-2, and because he had submitted His life to God, he knew that it would be God who would guard him and free him from his enemies, Psalm 25:15 / Psalm 9:15-16 / Psalm 10:9.

'Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish. Look on my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins. See how numerous are my enemies and how fiercely they hate me! Guard my life and rescue me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, LORD, is in you. Deliver Israel, O God, from all their troubles!' Psalm 25:16-22

Throughout his life, David had at many times when he felt lonely, afflicted, and distressed, Psalm 25:16 / 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, but when he did, he turned to God in prayer and asked for help, Psalm 25:16. It's possible that he was still carrying some guilt over the sins he committed and so he asks God to take all the anguish caused by his sins away, Psalm 25:18.

David trusted God as his refuge, his place of safety and strength, and because he was being threatened by his enemies, he called upon God to guard his life and rescue him, Psalm 25:19-20.

David desires a perfect heart and upright life, Psalm 25:21, but perhaps the integrity and uprightness referred to are those righteous attributes of God, which faith rests upon as a guarantee that the Lord will not forfeit His word, Psalm 25:21.

Despite all the loneliness, affliction and distress David was going through, he prayed to God about it and still took the time to pray for others. He not only wants God to save him from his troubles, but he also prays that God will help Israel in their time of trouble, Psalm 25:22.

CONCLUSION

As this psalm was written in Hebrew alphabetical, probably because it made it easier to learn and easier to commit to memory, singing psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, Colossians 3:16 / Ephesians 5:19, is a really great way to remind ourselves of what the Scriptures teach, and it's certainly a great way to memorise the Scriptures.

There are parts of the psalm which are used in the song, 'Unto Thee O Lord', written by Charles F. Monroe.

'Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul
Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul
O my God, I trust in Thee
Let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me
Yeah, let none that wait on Thee be ashamed
Yeah, let none that wait on Thee be ashamed
O my God, I trust in Thee
Let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me
Show me Thy ways, Thy ways, O Lord
Teach me Thy paths, Thy paths, O Lord
O my God, I trust in Thee
Let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me
Remember not the sins of my youth
Remember not the sins of my youth
O my God, I trust in Thee
Let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me.'

David's trust was fully in God, and despite going through many difficulties, he walked closely with God as one would do with a friend, Amos 3:3. His desire was to get to know God even more, and so, the more time he spends learning God's ways, the closer he gets to his Saviour, 2 Peter 3:18.

CHAPTER 26

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, as David does in many of his psalms, he asks God to examine him and his behaviour. He affirms his innocence and feels confident that a divine inspection of his life would reveal his innocence.

HEADING

'Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading here, simply tells us that this is of David.

'Vindicate me, LORD, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the LORD and have not faltered. Test me, LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have

lived in reliance on your faithfulness. I do not sit with the deceitful, nor do I associate with hypocrites. I abhor the assembly of evildoers and refuse to sit with the wicked. I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, LORD, proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds.' Psalm 26:1-7

David begins by crying out to God and asks Him to vindicate him, because he was blameless, trusts God and didn't falter, Psalm 26:1. He asks God to give him a full examination of his life, his mind, and his heart, Psalm 26:2.
The word 'examine' means to prove or to test, which is usually related to metalwork in removing impurities. In other words, he asks God to determine if he was genuine or not, Jeremiah 9:7 / Zechariah 13:9. He wants God to examine his inner being.
His whole life had been focused very much upon God, Psalm 26:3 / Genesis 17:1 / Job 1:1 / Job 1:8 / Job 2:3 / Job 2:9, and he didn't live as the hypocrites do, Psalm 26:4 / James 1:6-7. David had been merciful to others while walking in the commandments of the Lord.
He had kept himself from the company of those who would turn him away from living after the ways of God, Psalm 1:1-3. He stayed away from hypocrites, Psalm 26:4, and refused to get involved in idolatry, Psalm 26:5 / 2 Kings 20:3 / Psalm 1:1 / 3 John 4, and stayed in good company.
He washed his hands in innocence, Psalm 26:6, which is symbolic of visibly proclaiming a person's innocence or relinquishing their responsibility, Exodus 30:17-21 / Deuteronomy 21:6-7 / Matthew 27:4 / Matthew 27:24.
Notice David goes about the Lord's altar, Psalm 26:6. This means he spent time around holy things. He's so grateful for what God has done in his life, he spends a lot of time surrounding himself with godly people and proclaiming God and speaking of His wonderful deeds, Psalm 26:7 / Psalm 22:22 / Psalm 66:16 / Psalm 145:5-6.

'LORD, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory dwells. Do not take away my soul along with sinners, my life with those who are bloodthirsty, in whose hands are wicked schemes, whose right hands are full of bribes. I lead a blameless life; deliver me and be merciful to me. My feet stand on level ground; in the great congregation I will praise the LORD.' Psalm 26:8-12

David tells us that he loves to be in God's house, it's in God's house where God was present, and all those who loved God would gather for worship, Psalm 26:8 / Psalm 23:6 / Psalm 27:4 / Psalm 84:1-2 / Psalm 84:4 / Psalm 84:10.
It's clear that David deliberately chose to be around those who love God, instead of the wicked, and because of this, he asks God not to take his soul away with the sinners, Psalm 26:9, that is, don't take his soul to death.
David refused to keep company with murderers, and he didn't deal with people unjustly or accept any bribes, Psalm 26:10 / Exodus 23:8 / Deuteronomy 10:17 / 2 Kings 16:8 / Psalm 5:6 / Proverbs 6:35.
Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning 'the wicked.'

'They are vain, irreligious persons, Psalm 26:4. They are deep, dark men, saying one thing, meaning something else, Psalm 26:4. They are malignant, doing everything for their own ends, Psalm 26:5. They regard neither God nor holy religion, Psalm 26:5. They are blood-thirsty murderers, 'men of blood', Psalm 26:9. They are traffickers in wickedness, Psalm 26:9. They are ready with their hands to execute the wicked schemes of their hearts, Psalm 26:10. They are lovers of bribes, perverting judgment for the sake of money, Psalm 26:10.'
David made a conscious decision to live a life of integrity, Psalm 26:11, and he says his 'feet stand on level ground', Psalm 26:12, which means he felt vindicated after a thorough examination of his integrity, Isaiah 40:4 / Isaiah 42:16. When God's people are gathered together, he will publicly praise the Lord, Psalm 26:12 / Psalm 22:22.

CONCLUSION

David deliberately chose not to spend any time with the wicked. The wicked are clearly seen as hypocrites; they are great actors, Matthew 23:27-28 / Luke 12:1 / Titus 1:16, and so, we must be careful not to spend time with them, or we could easily end up where they are doomed to end up, Matthew 24:51.

David deliberately chose to spend more time with God and godly people. Our spiritual walk with God begins at baptism when we surrender the control of ourselves to Christ, acknowledging His Lordship over our entire being, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

From the point of baptism, we start walking freely in the newness of life with God. What a great liberty! Genesis 5:22-24 / Genesis 17:7. Jesus told the hypocritical Pharisees and the teachers of the law that they had neglected the more important matters of the law, Matthew 23:23.

We should consider these important matters that hinge on justice, mercy and faithfulness, and they should be the guiding principles of our walk with God today and always, Micah 6:8 / Exodus 18:20.

CHAPTER 27

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find David praising God one minute and then pleading with God the next. In Psalm 27:1-6, he just praises God, but then in Psalm 27:7-14, we find him pleading with God.

Although we don't know the exact background to this psalm, we do know that David was constantly being hunted down by King Saul because he wanted him dead.

David ran for his life on many occasions and ended up hiding in caves and crevices in the mountains. He didn't know if he was going to be caught by Saul; he never knew if he was walking into an ambush when he was on the run, and he didn't know if today was going to be his last day. And so, we can imagine the anguish he was going through; he didn't know who to trust and who not to trust.

But what was it that kept David going? In his life of not knowing whether he would live or die, what did he focus on, and what was his number one priority? This psalm tells us that even though he's being hunted down like a dog, David's number one priority was to worship God.

HEADING

'Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

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3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading here simply tells us that this is of David.

'The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.' Psalm 27:1-2

Despite not knowing if he will see tomorrow or not, despite being hunted down like a dog by Saul and his army. Despite having all those fears and anxieties, David never lost sight of the truth. He knew that God was his light, salvation, and stronghold, Psalm 27:1-2, but he didn't just know it; he believed it and lived as he believed it. Knowing that God was his light, salvation and stronghold gave him the courage and confidence to face his fears. He knew and believed with all his heart that God and God alone could and would give him what he needed to face his fears and problems.

He knew and believed that he had the light of God's presence to help him face the darker issues of his life. He knew and believed that God was his salvation and would deliver him from his enemies.

He knew and believed that God was his stronghold, that God would strengthen him in his weak and fearful state. And make no mistake about it, David was afraid; he knew his enemies were out to 'devour' him, Psalm 27:2. In other words, he knew his enemies wanted to hunt him down and kill him.
When David finally defeated all his enemies, including Saul and his army, he wrote a song of praise in 2 Samuel 22. When David was surrounded by problems, he didn't focus on his dark problems; he focused on God, 2 Samuel 22:29. He didn't ask himself, like many of us do, 'What am I going to do?' He asked himself, 'What is God able to do?' David was under real pressure from his adversaries and enemies, but that pressure didn't stop him from believing the truth.

'Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.' Psalm 27:3-4

God was with him when things were going well, and God was still with him in times of stress. Notice how confident David is in knowing God was with him. He knew God delivered him in the past, and he knows God will deliver him from his current situation, Psalm 27:3.
If you ever want to know what David was really like, if you ever want to know what his heart's desire and lifelong ambition were, this verse tells us, Psalm 27:4. The one thing which mattered more to David than anything else was close fellowship with the Lord; he wanted to live with God constantly in his life, Psalm 27:4.
Luke tells us that Martha was distracted and focused on making some preparations for her guests, but Mary was focused on the one thing which really mattered, being with Jesus, Luke 10:28-42.
If we learn anything from David, it's simply this: when life gets tough, our problems should drive us towards God, not away from Him. When life gets tough, and we trust God, it's then that our faith in God will get stronger.

But our faith will only get stronger when we remember how time and time again, He has delivered us from our problems in the past. God is bigger than our problems, and it's during those difficult times in life that we need to remember that no problem is too big for God, Jeremiah 32:17.

'For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.' Psalm 27:5-6

If we ever want to know what a person is really like, just pay attention to how they react under pressure. If you were to take a sponge and soak it in water, you would soon discover that it doesn't take much pressure for that water to come out of it.

In the same way, if we ever want to know what's really going on inside someone, we can tell what fills them on the inside by what comes out of them under pressure.

David asks, Do you want to know what's really inside of me? Do you want to know what I really think? He says God will always give him the best shelter in the worst of situations, Psalm 27:5. He knew that God would give him the same gracious protection a host offered to their guests.
He knew that God would lift him 'up on a rock,' Psalm 27:5. In other words, he would put him in a place beyond the reach of his enemies. He knew what Paul would later write in his letter to the Romans, Romans 8:38-39.
As Christians, we often forget there's more than one purpose for our suffering; yes, they help us grow and mature as Christians, as James 1:2-4 tells us. But there's another purpose for our sufferings which we often forget. David says all his troubles led him to 'shouts of joy, singing and making music to the Lord', Psalm 27:6.
In other words, when we have confidence in God and trust Him to deliver us from our enemies, our heads will always be held high, Psalm 27:6 / 2 Corinthians 4:15.
When we have confidence in God and trust Him to protect us in our times of trouble, then the natural response will always be praise and thanksgiving, Psalm 27:6.
As we enter these final verses, you will notice that the mood of the Psalm changes. David has just finished praising God, but now he's going to start pleading with God.

'Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, 'Seek his face!' Your face, LORD, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Saviour.' Psalm 27:7-9

Have you ever had times when you feel as though God isn't listening to your prayers? David was the same; he's just finished praising God for all He's done for him, but now he feels as though God isn't listening to him, Psalm 27:7.
We can imagine David going through all these problems from his enemies, and his head is telling him, There's nothing God can do. We can hear him crying out, 'God, hear me, God, have mercy on me, God, answer me!' Psalm 27:7.
David is asking God, why are you hiding your face from me in my time of trouble? Psalm 27:8. How come I don't feel your presence right now? Psalm 27:9. His head is saying that God is angry with him and God has rejected and forsaken him, but his heart is telling him something different. God is his helper, and God is his Saviour, Psalm 27:9.

'Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me. Teach me your way, LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.' Psalm 27:10-12

Have you ever felt abandoned when someone you love dies? When David speaks about his parents forsaking him, he's speaking in terms of their death, Psalm 27:10. He knew that his parents loved him when they were alive, but he also knew that God would continue to love him, despite his parents' passing away, Psalm 27:10.
David knew that many people would forsake him and abandon him, but He also knew that God would never forsake him, Deuteronomy 31:6. That same promise He gave the Israelites is also the promise He gives to Christians, Matthew 28:20 / Hebrews 13:5.
God has made a promise that He will never leave us or forsake, no matter what life throws our way. No matter what we go through or will go through in this life, God is with us.

David asks God to teach him His ways and to lead him 'in a straight path,' Psalm 27:11, which basically means he wants God to help him live a life worthy of being God's child. Now, why would he ask God to help him in that area? Well, much like today, people are watching us; they are looking for us to fall.
David felt that his enemies were constantly watching him, just waiting for him to slip up. He says that his oppressors, his foes, and his false accusers, Psalm 27:11-12, had one agenda, and that was to kill him. Some people may not want to kill us physically, but some people certainly want to kill us spiritually, Matthew 7:15 / Philippians 3:2 / Philippians 3:18.

'I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.' Psalm 27:13

David says his oppressors, his foes and his false accusers can do and accuse him of whatever they want because he knows for sure that whilst he's alive, he will see God's goodness, Psalm 27:13.
He knows that he will see God's goodness not because of how powerful or smart he was. His confidence wasn't in his own abilities to outsmart his enemies; his confidence was in God's ability to protect and deliver him from his enemies.

Jeremiah tells us that when our confidence is in God, God will help us see past our present circumstances, and He will help us to look beyond our circumstances, Jeremiah 17:7-8. Can you imagine going through life without having any hope?
Hope is a really important part of life for everyone. Everyone needs hope, but to have the hope that David is speaking about here, we need total confidence in God to deliver us and help us through our problems. And David says, the only way to keep that hope alive is to wait patiently for the Lord.

'Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.' Psalm 27:14

David says to help keep our hope alive, we need to be strong, we need to take heart and wait for the Lord, Psalm 27:14. Our society doesn't like to wait on anything; everything needs to happen here and now.
When life gets tough, it's all too easy to lose heart, but waiting for God actually encourages us to be strong and not lose heart. Waiting for God actually helps us to continue to wait for God, 2 Peter 3:9.
We need to learn to be as patient with God as He is with us. We must trust God's timing and expect His intervention, especially when we're going through difficult times, Lamentations 3:19-26.

CONCLUSION

David faced persecution more than most, but he knew exactly what he needed to do during those difficult times; he sought the Lord. Anyone who wants to follow Christ will be persecuted, that's a promise, Matthew 5:10 / Luke 6:22 / 2 Timothy 3:12, but we too should also know exactly what to do during those difficult times.
God over and over again reminds us of what to do when we're going through difficult times: we have to call upon Him to help us, Psalm 50:15 / Jeremiah 33:3 / Isaiah 55:6.
We're down here stressing out with our problems, and God shouts out from heaven, 'Why don't you call on Me?' The Lord invites us to call on Him, to seek Him, especially in the midst of life's difficulties.

We should seek God's face so that we can face our problems. We should seek God's face when we're in danger or going through some trial or problem. Because it's only God who can give us the comfort, protection, perspective, guidance, and strength to go on.

We should seek God's face because when we do, we're submitting our lives to being totally dependent on the One who gives life. And when we stop focusing on our troubles and focus on God and the blessings which He pours upon us, even in our times of trouble. We will be able to say 'amen' to what a good friend of mine once said in a sermon, 'I'm way too blessed to be stressed'.

CHAPTER 28

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find David pleading with God for help from his enemies. Although we don't know the exact background to this psalm, some suggest it may be when David was fleeing during the revolt of Absalom, 2 Samuel 15:1-18:33.

HEADING

'Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading here simply tells us that this is of David.

'To you, LORD, I call; you are my Rock, do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you remain silent, I will be like those who go down to the pit. Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help, as I lift up my hands toward your Most Holy Place. Do not drag me away with the wicked, with those who do evil, who speak cordially with their neighbours but harbour malice in their hearts. Repay them for their deeds and for their evil work; repay them for what their hands have done and bring back on them what they deserve. Because they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD and what his hands have done, he will tear them down and never build them up again.' Psalm 28:1-5

As we go through this psalm, we can't help but notice that David is in a great deal of despair. He knows if the Lord doesn't answer his plea, then he would die at the hands of his enemies, that is, those who followed Absalom.

He calls God his 'Rock', Psalm 28:1 / Psalm 18:2. He says if God doesn't answer his plea he will be like those who go down to the 'pit' Psalm 28:1. The word 'pit' is often used as a metaphor for death and is often the equivalent of 'Sheol', Psalm 30:3 / Psalm 88:4 / Isaiah 38:18 / Isaiah 14:15 / Isaiah 14:19.
There are three Biblical words, the meanings of which are often confused because people tend to use them very loosely. Two of the words are New Testament Greek words, and the third is an Old Testament Hebrew word.

For instance, in the New Testament, we have these words.

1. ‘Gehenna’, which occurs twelve times, and, in the A.V., is always translated ‘hell’, and

2. ‘Hades’, which occurs ten times, and which is also always translated as ‘hell’.

3. The third word is the word ‘Sheol’, found in the Old Testament, and which sometimes is erroneously said to be the word that corresponds to ‘Gehenna’.

You clearly see the confusion that has been created about the meaning of this word when you understand that, in the A.V., out of the sixty-five instances it occurs, thirty-one times it has been translated ‘hell’ and thirty-four times it has been translated ‘the grave’!

Now, although the word ‘Sheol’ literally means ‘the Place of the Dead’, you don’t need much intelligence to recognise that Hell and the Grave are not the same place! When a body is placed in the grave, it has not been consigned to Hell!

But there is a history behind this inconsistent rendering of the word ‘Sheol’. Whilst the translators of the A.V. believed Hell to be the place of punishment for the wicked, they recoiled from the idea of saying that good people also go to Sheol, and so in passages that related to the death of good people, they decided to translate ‘Sheol’ as ‘the grave’!

David feared that if Absalom had taken the throne, then he would have been executed by him; hence why he cried out to God asking for urgent help, Psalm 28:2. He lifted up his hands, Psalm 28:2, which is symbolic of someone pouring their hearts out to God in desperation, Exodus 17:9-15 / 1 Timothy 2:8.
David poured out his heart to God towards the ‘Most Holy Place’, Psalm 28:2, which is a reference to the holy of holies, where God’s ark of the covenant was contained, Exodus 26:34 / 2 Chronicles 3:8 / 2 Chronicles 3:10 / Hebrews 9:3-14.
David knew his life was different from the wicked, hence, he asks God to treat him differently from them, Psalm 28:3 / Psalm 26:9. The wicked were those who joined forces with Absalom, and because they joined Absalom, they were now against God and His anointed, that is, David.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following about ‘the wicked’.

‘This is a fourfold plea that God will deal with the wicked as they deserve. The plea is that God will execute justice upon the wicked enemies. 1. According to their work. 2. According to their wickedness. 3. After the operation of their hands, and 4. According to what they deserve.’

David asks God to bring judgment against Absalom and his followers because what they were doing was evil, Psalm 28:4-5. God overthrew the rebels in order to spare the reign of His anointed, David. David’s prayer was answered. I’m sure that David had no idea that God would answer his prayer by killing his son, Absalom, without David’s consent, 2 Samuel 18:9-33. It’s important to note that although the wicked may forget God, God doesn’t forget them; they will receive what they deserve, Psalm 28:4-5 / Romans 1:20-21.

‘Praise be to the LORD, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him. The LORD is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed one. Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever.’ Psalm 28:6-9

David has absolute confidence that God heard his cries for mercy, Psalm 28:6. Notice that the words are written in the past tense as if the request had already been answered, Psalm 28:6 / Matthew 21:22 / Mark 11:24.

God certainly was his strength, Psalm 28:7 / Psalm 18:1, and shield, Psalm 28:7 / Psalm 3:3. It was God who gave him strength, Ephesians 6:10, and it was God who acted like a shield against his enemies, Ephesians 6:16.
No wonder David's heart leaps for joy and sings praises to God, Psalm 28:7. No wonder David, God's anointed, Psalm 28:8 / Psalm 2:2 / Psalm 20:6, just breaks into praise and praises God for delivering him, Psalm 22:25 / Psalm 41:13 / Psalm 72:18-19 / Psalm 89:52.
Notice also that David not only prayed for himself, but he also takes the time to pray for others who are going through difficult times, Psalm 28:9. He wants God to save His people, he wants God to bless His people, Deuteronomy 4:20 / Deuteronomy 9:26 / Deuteronomy 9:29, and He wants God to be their shepherd, Psalm 23:1, and carry His people, Isaiah 40:11 / Isaiah 63:9.

CONCLUSION

When David prayed to God, he prayed with confidence, knowing that God would answer his prayers. We, too, as Christians, should also pray with confidence, knowing that God will answer our prayers if they are in accordance with His will, 1 John 5:14. We should never doubt that He longs to hear from us, and we should never doubt that He will answer us, Luke 11:11-13 / Hebrews 4:16.
When we think about Elisha, he told King Ahab to prepare a feast because a mighty rainstorm was coming. Elisha then climbed to the top of Mount Carmel, where he fell to the ground and prayed, 1 Kings 17:1-6. Elisha knew the power of acting as if his prayer was already answered, and sure enough, a mighty rainstorm soon followed, James 1:6.

CHAPTER 29

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is a worship song to God who reveals Himself out of a great storm. It uses a lot of symbolism, so one must be careful not to take it literally. God isn't literally a storm, but He joins in with the existence of His created natural laws, and these laws are demonstrated by a storm. The 'heavenly beings' join in to give praise to their Creator.

HEADING

'A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading here simply tells us that this is a psalm of David.

'Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness.' Psalm 29:1-2

To 'ascribe', Psalm 29:1, means to give, and so everything in all creation should recognise God's glory and power. There are a few ideas concerning the identity of the 'heavenly beings', Psalm 29:1. Some translations use the words, 'mighty ones'. Some believe these are the mighty forces of nature, while others believe they are angels.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'In the plural form, the word means 'mighty ones, heroes, gods', Exodus 15:11 / Exodus 18:11 / Daniel 11:36. The phrase 'sons of the mighty' is used only here and in Psalm 89:6. The allusion is undoubtedly to the angels as being in an eminent sense the sons of God, or of the mighty ones, and they are referred to here under that appellation as being themselves endowed with power or strength, Psalm 103:20.'
A few commentators note that in Canaanite mythology, the council of their supreme god, whose name was El, was referred to as the 'sons of God', the sons of El. If that's true, David may have the storm god, Baal, in mind here.

And so, David would be calling on the so-called storm god to ascribe to the real God, Yahweh, who is the One who really has power over storms, to ascribe glory and strength to him.

Whoever or whatever these 'heavenly beings' or 'mighty ones' are, David calls them to praise the Lord for His power over storms. The phrase 'splendour of His holiness', Psalm 29:2, is found four times within the Scriptures, 1 Chronicles 16:29 / 2 Chronicles 20:21 / Psalm 29:2 / Psalm 96:9, and each time it's associated with worship or praise. When we reflect upon the splendour of His holiness, this should motivate us to worship Him in Spirit and truth according to His revelation and holiness, John 4:24.

'The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon leap like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning. The voice of the LORD shakes the desert; the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, "Glory!" Psalm 29:3-9

Here we read that the storm approaches and, after unleashing its power, it passes. The demonstration of the power of the storm gives evidence of the presence of God. But the metaphor of the storm communicates to man the power of the revelation of the Word of God, Hebrews 4:12.
The phrase, 'the voice of the Lord', appears seven times in these passages; they are metaphorically presented as the thunder, which reminds us of the seven thunders speaking in Revelation 10:3.
The voice of the seven thunders here is shown as follows. The voice of the Lord is over the waters, Psalms 29:3. The voice of the Lord is powerful, Psalms 29:4. The voice of the Lord is full of majesty, Psalms 29:4.
The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, Psalms 29:5. The voice of the Lord strikes the flames of fire, Psalms 29:7.
The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness, Psalms 29:8.
The voice of the Lord twists the hinds to oaks, Psalms 29:9. The voice of God through His word is so powerful that it breaks the cedars of Lebanon, 1 Kings 4:33 / 1 Kings 5:6 / Psalm 68:16 / Psalm 92:12 / Psalm 114:4 / Ezra 3:7. Just

think about a tornado ripping its way through a forest or totally destroying everything in its path, Psalm 29:6; that's how powerful the voice of God is.

Deuteronomy 3:9 tells us that Sirion, Psalm 29:6, is the Sidonian name for Mount Hermon, which was close to Lebanon, Ezekiel 27:5. It's the lightning that makes the mountains bound like the young ox, Psalm 29:6-7. The KJV uses the word 'unicorn', Psalm 22:21.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Of course, this language, as well as that which has already been noticed, Psalm 29:5, must be taken as denoting what 'appears' to the eye, and not as a scientific statement of the reality in the case. The rolling thunder not only shakes the cedars and makes the lofty trees on Lebanon and Sirion skip like a calf or a young unicorn, but it rends asunder or cleaves the clouds, and cuts out paths for the flames of fire.'

Kadesh, Psalm 29:8, was in the southern part of Palestine, and it was here where the spies entered Palestine, Numbers 13:17 / Numbers 13:26 / Numbers 14:40-45 / Numbers 21:1-3 / Deuteronomy 1:41-46 / Judges 1:7.

In Psalm 29:9, some translations use the words, 'the voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth.' This gives us the idea that the disturbance of the storms causes the deer to prematurely give birth.

Perhaps a better reading is, 'the oaks twist', especially as this agrees with the next sentence, and 'strips the forest bare'. As a result of all these things happening, everyone in the temple would just praise God, Psalm 29:9.

'The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever. The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.' Psalm 29:10-11

David says that the Lord is Master over the storm and reigns as King over His creation, Psalm 29:10 / Psalm 18:7-11 / Psalm 97:2. Because the Lord is King over His creations, He gives His people strength and peace, Psalm 29:11, suggesting that His people have nothing to fear from the storm.

In contrast to the storm that revealed the power of God, His power is able to bring peace to those who trust in Him, Psalm 29:11. The power of God may come as a destructive storm upon creation and upon those who rebel against God, but God's people can be confident that He will bless them with peace.

CONCLUSION

This psalm was sung as part of Israel's worship of God, and David beautifully illustrates how they listened to God's voice, even in nature. I often wonder if we really listen for God's voice when we sing songs of praise to Him in worship. Do the words of the songs move us and put our minds on heavenly things? Ephesians 5:19 / Colossians 3:16.

Sometimes I've heard some songs sung as if we were at a funeral service. We sometimes sing slow songs fast and fast songs slow. Songs like 'Oh happy day' and one line from that song says, 'Oh Happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away!'

If I were a visitor coming into our assemblies by the time we've finished singing that song, I would be questioning just how happy we were when we had our sins forgiven!

Another song is 'Marching to Zion', it's supposed to be a marching song, and sometimes we sing this song as if we're on a beautiful stroll along the beach. What about the song, 'I surrender all'? Do we really mean it when we sing, 'All to Jesus I surrender, all to him I freely give'?

What about the song, 'Count your blessings', one line from the last stanza says, 'Count your many blessings, angels will attend.' Do we really believe that angels will help us in our time of need? Do we even believe angels exist these days?

The list could go on, but the point is, if we really believed what we're singing, we would be more convinced about what we believe. And unless we truly put our hearts into the song and really mean what we're singing, then we're just paying lip service to the Lord, Hebrews 13:15.

CHAPTER 30

INTRODUCTION

This psalm of David speaks of him crying out passionately for deliverance from death. Some suggest it's speaking of deliverance from some serious illness, Isaiah 38:18-20; others suggest it's speaking about him coming close to death at the hand of his enemies.
David was continually being hunted down by King Saul and his army; even his son Absalom, time and time again, tried to take over his father's throne. So, David knows what life is all about; he knows what it means to be close to death. He understands what it's like to be in those places of despair, loneliness, and darkness. He understands what it means to feel hopeless and helpless.

HEADING

'A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple. Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading here simply tells us that this is a psalm or song of David for the dedication of the temple.

'I will exalt you, LORD, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me. LORD my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me. You, LORD, brought me up from the realm of the dead; you spared me from going down to the pit.' Psalm 30:1-4

I'm sure you've noticed by now that David never needs an excuse to worship God. Notice the first thing he does is exalt God, Psalm 30:1. Why? Why does he do that? When was the last time you reflected upon what God has done in your life? Can you remember what your life was like before you became a Christian?

You're out there working all kinds of hours of the day to make a living, when suddenly you realise there has to be more to life than work. You're out there partying with your friends, getting drunk and getting high on drugs, when suddenly you're overcome with thoughts of, Is this it? Is this what life is all about?

Now notice that David exalted God because God had exalted him, Psalm 30:1. He remembers the impact God has had in his life; he remembers the mess his life was in when he was in those dark, gloomy places.
He remembers what his life was like when his enemies just wanted to gloat over him, Psalm 30:1. And so, he cried out to God to help him, and 'God healed him', Psalm 30:2. He remembers what it was like when he thought he was about to go to 'the realm of the dead', Psalm 30:3.
The realm of the dead is Sheol, and there are, in fact, three Biblical words, the meanings of which are often confused because people tend to use them very loosely. Two of the words in the New Testament are Greek words. The Third word is an Old Testament Hebrew word.

For instance, in the New Testament, we have the following.

1. 'Gehenna', which occurs twelve times, and, in the Authorised Version, is always translated 'hell'.

2. 'Hades', which occurs ten times, and which is also always translated as 'hell'.

3. The third word is the word 'Sheol', found in the Old Testament, and which sometimes is erroneously said to be the word that corresponds to 'Gehenna'.

You clearly see the confusion that has been created about the meaning of this word when you understand that, in the Authorised Version, out of the sixty-five instances it occurs, thirty-one times it has been translated 'hell' and thirty-four times it has been translated 'the grave'!

Now, although the word 'Sheol' literally means 'The Place of the Dead', you don't need much intelligence to recognise that 'Hell' and the 'Grave' aren't the same places! When a body is placed in the grave, it hasn't been consigned to 'Hell'!

But there is a history behind this inconsistent rendering of the word 'Sheol'. Whilst the translators of the Authorised Version believed 'Hell' to be the place of punishment for the wicked, they withdrew from the idea of saying that good people also go to 'Sheol', and so in passages that related to the death of good people, they decided to translate 'Sheol' as 'the grave'!

However, in Hebrew theology and in Old Testament teaching, 'Sheol' is described as the place to which all the dead go, both good and bad. It's defined as 'the place of departed souls'.

In the account of King Saul's visit to the medium at Endor, the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel is recorded as saying to Saul, 'Tomorrow, you and your sons shall be with me'. 1 Samuel 28:19. Even the Oxford Dictionary is close to the truth as far as the meaning of the word is concerned. It says that 'Sheol' is 'The abode of the dead'.
Furthermore, in the Old Testament, 'Sheol' is described as a gloomy place, in which an individual is farther away from God than he was during his lifetime. We are told that 'the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything,' Ecclesiastes 9:5, and, according to Psalm 115:17, 'The dead do not praise Yahweh, nor any who go down into silence.'
We, too, would do well to remember where we've come from and the impact that God has on our lives, 2 Peter 1:5-9. Christians should see the impact God has had in their lives, we should see it in ourselves, and we should see it in each other.
David knows the impact God has had in his life; he knows that God has rescued him from his enemies. But there are times when our past way of living leaves us with scars.

I'm sure David would have had some scars from all his battles, but not all scars are physical; some are emotional scars, and some are spiritual scars or religious scars.

'Sing the praises of the LORD, you his faithful people; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. When I felt secure, I said, 'I will never be shaken.' Psalm 30:4-6

God saved David's life, and his response was simply praise and thanksgiving, Psalm 30:4, which he encourages everyone to do when they have been saved and healed, Psalm 30:2.
Notice the contrast here, God's anger only lasts for a moment, but His favour lasts for a lifetime, Psalm 30:5. Now make no mistake about it, God was angry at David, especially when he sinned with Bathsheba and murdered Uriah, her husband, 2 Samuel 11:1-16 / 2 Samuel 12:1-15.
I'm sure that David felt that anger; I'm pretty sure his relationship with God suffered because of his sinful actions.
I'm sure he felt that anger, and his relationship with God suffered because of what he wrote in Psalm 51 concerning his sinfulness with Bathsheba, Psalm 51:1-3.
He knew that God was angry with him when he realised it was because he had sinned against God, and so here, we read about his repentance, Psalm 30:5. The only reason God gets angry with us is that we sin against Him. But the purpose of that anger is to direct our lives back in line with the way He wants us to live for Him.
We may well want to cry our hearts out at night when we realise, we have sinned, but don't lose sight of the fact that if we repent, then we can rejoice in the morning, Psalm 30:5. God may get angry with us at times, but don't lose sight of the fact that His anger doesn't have to last for a lifetime.
Don't lose sight of the fact that God actually wants us to continue in His favour, Psalm 30:5. In other words, He wants us to feel secure, to enjoy all the blessings which He pours out upon us every day. When David felt secure, he said, I will never be shaken, Psalm 30:6.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 30:6.
'This refers to a past period of his life, when everything seemed to be prosperous, and when he had drawn around him so many comforts, and had apparently made them so secure, that it seemed as if they could never be taken from him, or as if he had nothing to fear.'

'LORD, when you favoured me, you made my royal mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed. To you, LORD, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy: 'What is gained if I am silenced, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness? Hear, LORD, and be merciful to me; LORD, be my help.' Psalm 30:7-10

David says when God favoured him, He made David's royal mountain stand firm, but when God hid His face, he was dismayed, Psalm 30:7. Let me point out something important here. Over and over again, we read passages in the Bible which speak about people seeing 'God's face', Psalm 30:7.
For example, when Moses stood at the entrance to the tabernacle, Exodus 33:1 says, 'The Lord would speak to Moses, face to face, as one speaks to a friend.' These passages aren't to be taken literally, after all, God doesn't have a physical face, any more than He has physical arms or legs, because God is Spirit, John 4:24. When the Bible speaks about 'seeing God's face', it's a Jewish metaphor which simply means they are in the presence of God.
And so, when David says there were times in his life when he felt that God hid His face, Psalm 30:7, he's saying that those were the times when he felt that God wasn't present in his life. Just because we don't feel God's presence doesn't mean that He's not nearby, Hebrews 13:5-6.
Because he didn't feel God's presence, he cried out for mercy, Psalm 30:8. When David asks these three questions concerning his dying, Psalm 30:9, we must remember that he, like all of those who lived in Old Testament times, had no real concept of eternal life. That didn't come until Jesus came, as Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 1:10.

David is saying, God doesn't gain anything from his death, if he dies, he doesn't get to praise God in the land of the living, Psalm 30:9. He says he's looking forward in his life to declaring God's faithfulness to others, but he knows that this won't happen if the Lord takes his life, Psalm 30:9. And so, once again he cries for mercy and help from God, Psalm 30:10.

'You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. LORD my God, I will praise you forever.' Psalm 30:11-12

Notice the contrast between wailing and dancing, between mourning and rejoicing, Psalm 30:11. When God delivers us from our enemies and heals our hidden scars, when God makes His presence known in our lives.
The result will not only be praise and thanksgiving to God, but it will also be true lasting joy, Psalm 30:11-12. This again reminds us of the impact that God should have in our lives, Ephesians 2:1-4 / Ephesians 2:12-13. In other words, a new life in Christ begins when the comfortable patterns of the old life are left behind, Hebrews 12:1-2.
We must look to the past, but we must also leave our former life behind us; we must look to Christ, Philippians 3:13-14, otherwise, we will never move forward in our Christian walk.
When we remember who we were and how we lived, and look at what God has done for us, then our response is only going to be praise, Ephesians 2:5 / Ephesians 2:13.
When we look back on our lives, we remember our past condition and when we look at what God has done for us, there's only one response and that's praise. But not only will we praise Him, we just can't stop praising Him, and we will want to tell others the reason why we can't stop praising Him, Psalm 30:12.
The time of joy is now, not when we finally make it to heaven. Some Christians have forgotten where they came from because they've been Christians for so long. There are way too many Christians who forget that God is blessing us now.

God wants us not only to enjoy life but to enjoy life to the full, as Jesus says in John 10:10. He wants us to get the best out of life and to experience what life with God is really about.
When an angel told Joseph that Mary's child's name was to be Immanuel, he was being told that 'God is with us', Matthew 1:22-25. If God is with us, then that means that we're always in the presence of God. He dwells in us, as does His Son, John 14:23 / John 15:4, and His Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:19 / Romans 8:9.
And if those thoughts don't make our hearts sing for joy, then I don't know what will. If those thoughts don't make us dance around with joy, then I don't know what will. If those thoughts don't encourage us to tell others about what God has done in our lives, then I don't know what will.

Not only is the time of joy now, but there's a time coming when we will eternally be joyfully praising Him for all the things He's done for each of us, Revelation 7:9-13.

CONCLUSION

David wasn't afraid to look back on his life and admit that he had several scars. We, too, should be afraid to look back in our lives to remember what we were like before we became Christians. Don't forget what God has done for you, and don't lose sight of the fact that one day, He's coming back for you, so we can all joyfully praise Him for eternity.

Have you got any scars in your life? I know if you've been physically abused in the past by a man or woman, you will have scars. I know if you've ever been emotionally blackmailed by your parents in the past, you will have scars.

I know if you've ever been spiritually abused by some church, or by some religious people in the past, you will have scars. There are some scars that we can't see, there are some scars that have cut so deeply within us that they still have an impact on our lives years later.

The good news is that God not only wants to save us, but He also wants to heal us from those unseen scars. Remember when Jesus met the man at the pool of Bethesda, who had been disabled for thirty-eight years. Do you remember what Jesus asked him? 'Do you want to get well?' John 5:6.
I can imagine that man lying there and saying to himself, 'Is this guy for real! I've been crippled for thirty-eight years, and He's asking me if I want to get well!' Let me ask you, wouldn't you want to get well if you were in his position? He's thinking about being physically healed, John 5:7.
But Jesus has something else in mind. On the surface, this seems like a cruel question, but Jesus wasn't just speaking about his physical condition; he was also speaking about his spiritual condition.

God cares for our healing, He loves us, and surrounds us with people who have also had hidden scars. And when we share those hurtful events from our past with each other, this helps us in the healing process.

CHAPTER 31

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of David, which is highly emotional; he begins with tears and finishes with joy. He trusts God in the time of his trouble and praises God for helping him be triumphant. This psalm is interesting because parts of it are quoted in other places within the Scriptures.

The first three verses of Psalm 71 are direct quotes from the first three verses in Psalm 31. Jonah, from inside the great fish, quotes Psalm 31:6, in Jonah 2:8. Jeremiah quotes Psalm 31:13, six times, Jeremiah 6:25 / Jeremiah 20:3 / Jeremiah 20:10 / Jeremiah 46:5 / Jeremiah 49:29 / Lamentations 2:22.
Paul quotes Psalm 31:24 in 1 Corinthians 16:13. Jesus, whilst on the cross, quotes Psalm 31:5, in Luke 23:46. Stephen, just before he was murdered, quotes Psalm 31:5, in Acts 7:59.

HEADING

'For the director of music. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm was for the director of music and was to be sung with the use of stringed instruments. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

'In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name, lead and guide me. Keep me free from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God. I hate those who cling to worthless idols; as for me, I trust in the LORD. I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. You have not given me into the hands of the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place.'
Psalm 31:1-8

David begins by telling us about how he trusted in the Lord, Psalm 7:1. No matter what the trials are that he is going through, his faith is in the Lord; he sees God as his refuge, Psalm 31:1 / Job 6:20 / Isaiah 30:5 / Jeremiah 2:26 / Jeremiah 14:3-4.
He knows that the Lord will always do what is right, hence why he is confident the Lord will deliver him, Psalm 31:1. When we listen to the Lord, He will be our rock of stability and house of protection, Psalm 31:2 / 1 Kings 20:28.
He asks God to listen to his pleas, Psalm 17:6, and asks Him to quickly rescue him, Psalm 31:2. In other words, he wants God to help him immediately. He describes God as his rock of refuge, Psalm 31:2 / Psalm 18:1-2 / Psalm 18:46, and a strong fortress, Psalm 31:2 / Psalm 18:2, that is, a house which is made strong and safe.
Because God was his rock and refuge, which demonstrates his trust and hope in the Lord, he asks the Lord to lead and guide him for His name's sake, Psalm 31:3 / Psalm 23:3. In other words, he wanted to be delivered from his enemies in order that he could give God the glory.
He asks God to keep him from the trap which has been set for him, Psalm 31:4 / Psalm 9:15. The phrase 'the trap' refers to the custom of hiding or concealing a net, so that the wild beast that was to be taken couldn't see it, or would fall into it unawares. David's enemies wanted to defeat him by springing a net upon him at a moment when he wasn't aware of it, and at a place where he didn't suspect.
Notice he says, 'into your hands I commit my spirit', Psalm 31:5, which is symbolic of total surrender to God. We know that Jesus quoted these words whilst on the cross, Luke 23:46.
And we know that Stephen quoted these words just before he was murdered, Acts 7:59. We must note the difference between David's use of the words and Jesus' use of the words.
Jesus appears to have used these words in the same understanding of them that David apparently had, with this exception: David commended his spirit to God that he might live and not die; Jesus used the same words to mean that he indeed would die, but that he would continue to live after the resurrection.

Jesus died with a prayer on his lips, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,' Luke 23:46, that is, Psalm 31:5, with one word added, 'Father' 'Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God.'
That verse was the prayer every Jewish mother taught her child to say the last thing at night. Just as we were taught, maybe, to say, 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' so the Jewish mother taught her child to say, before the threatening dark came down, 'Into your hands I commit my spirit.'

Jesus made it even more intimate, for He began it with the word 'Father'. Even on the cross, Jesus died like a child falling asleep in his father's arms.

1. A Word of Intimacy.

It was also a moment of intimacy. The two belong together, trust nurtured by intimacy, intimacy nurtured by trust. The intimate word Jesus added to the words of David was 'Father'. 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' David cried out to his God, 'O Lord,' he would say, 'You are My God.'

In David's time, such language was radical. The Psalms of David personalise the spiritual life in a way that earlier biblical literature did not. But Jesus took it even further. He consistently spoke of and to his Father. And to his disciples, he said, 'When you pray, say, 'Our Father.'

This language of intimate conversations with his Father, he shared with his followers. He prays to the Father as he has done throughout his ministry. For Jesus, death is no out-of-control enemy. No matter how bleak the moment, he knows his Father is present with him, now present to receive his spirit.

2. A Word of Trust.

Second, Jesus entrusts himself to his Father. In Psalm 31:5, the word 'commit' is the Hebrew verb 'paqad'. The corresponding Greek word means to entrust to someone for safekeeping, give over, entrust, commend. As He lets go of this life, Jesus trusts his eternal destiny to the Father's everlasting arms.

3. A Word of Surrender.

Finally, Jesus speaks a word of surrender. He gives up His human life to His Father, who gave it to Him thirty-three years before. The word 'spirit' is the common word 'pneuma', which means breathing, breath of life.

It can refer to the Holy Spirit, but here refers to the personal spirit of Jesus, part of the human personality, Hebrews 4:12 / 1 Thessalonians 5:23. He gave up his life as a voluntary sacrifice.

The loud voice just mentioned was significant. The loud voice shows that Jesus did not die of exhaustion. If death had come from exhaustion, his vocal cords would not have functioned at all. Jesus' death was conscious and voluntary, fulfilling his prophecy recorded in John 10:17-18.

Jesus prays His final prayer with this kind of equanimity and peace because He knows the Father and knows that there is life with the Father beyond death. As a devout Jew, He has prayed these words as part of an evening prayer all His life.

Now, at the end of His life, He prays one last time and lets go of human life in order to embrace the Life that the Father has to offer in His own presence. Death had no legitimate power over the sinless son of God, Philippians 1:20-23.

David says that he 'hates those who cling to worthless idols', Psalm 31:6 / 1 Corinthians 8:4, which is a reference to idols and is distinguished by the fact that the prophet Jonah quoted this verse in his prayer from the belly of the great fish, Jonah 2:8. His words are similar to the sentiment he expresses in Psalm 26:3-5. Instead of clinging to idols, he completely trusts God, Psalm 31:6.

His love for God is shown in that he knows God will see his 'affliction and know the anguish of his soul,' Psalm 31:7 / Isaiah 16:11 / Psalm 6:7 / Psalm 22:14. He knows God hasn't given him into the hands of his enemies, Psalm 31:8 / 1 Samuel 17:46 / 1 Samuel 24:18 / 1 Samuel 26:8, but has 'set his feet in a spacious place', Psalm 31:8, that is, in a place where there is room to move, Psalm 4:1 / Psalm 18:19 / Psalm 18:36.

'Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish, and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbours and an object of dread to my closest friends—those who see me on the street flee from me. I am forgotten as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery. For I hear many whispering, "Terror on every side!" They conspire against me and plot to take my life.' Psalm 31:9-13

David continues to pour his heart out to God in the time of his distress; his eyes are weak from the sorrow he feels deep within, Psalm 31:9. The word 'consumed' means wasted away or destroyed, Jeremiah 16:4 / Lamentations 2:11 / Psalm 84:2 / Psalm 143:7 / Psalm 69:3 / Job 11:20.
He feels as though his bones are wasting away, Psalm 31:10, which tells us he is absolutely exhausted, he has no more strength, Psalm 32:3 / Psalm 102:3. He feels like his neighbours and closest friends don't want anything to do with him, because of his enemies, Psalm 31:11 / Job 19:13-15 / Psalm 22:6.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Why were people afraid even to be seen with David? We can see from the fate of Abimelech and the priests of Nob what cause, humanly speaking, the people had for avoiding all intercourse with David. King Saul murdered Abimelech and all the priests of Nob because David had been done a favour by them, 1 Samuel 22. No wonder people were afraid even to be seen near him.'
David feels like those who have already died, they passed away, and no one remembers them, Psalm 31:12 / Psalm 88:4-5. He feels like broken pottery, Psalm 31:12, that is, something which is easily broken and when it is broken, it becomes worthless, Isaiah 30:14 / Jeremiah 22:28 / Jeremiah 48:38 / Lamentations 4:2 / Psalm 2:9 / Hosea 8:8. He hears what people are saying, he hears all the plots and schemes to take his life, Psalm 31:13 / Psalm 2:2.

'But I trust in you, LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me. Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. Let me not be put to shame, LORD, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and be silent in the realm of the dead. Let their lying lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous.'
Psalm 31:14-18

After pouring out his heart to God about his troubles, David, despite all those troubles, turns to God in trust, Psalm 31:14. He now feels that his fate was in the control of God, Psalm 31:14-15 / 2 Samuel 24:14.
He asks God to allow his face to shine on him, Psalm 31:16, which was an Aaronic blessing, where God's people sought God's goodness and favour, Numbers 6:23-27 / Psalm 4:6 / Psalm 67:1 / Psalm 80:5 / Psalm 80:7 / Psalm 80:19 / Psalm 119:135.
David calls upon the Lord for deliverance from the wicked because he doesn't want to be ashamed, Psalm 31:17. In other words, he doesn't want to be ashamed to trust in God, Psalm 25:2-3. And so, when God delivers him, it would be the wicked who would be ashamed for not trusting in God, Psalm 31:17.
He asks that the wicked be silenced in the realm of the dead, Psalm 31:17 / Isaiah 14:9 / Job 10:21-22 / Psalm 16:10. This was a request that David's enemies meet their judgment at the hand of God, Revelation 6:10. In other words, he doesn't want his enemies to win.
The realm of the dead is Sheol, and there are, in fact, three Biblical words, the meanings of which are often confused because people tend to use them very loosely. Two of the words in the New Testament are Greek words. The Third word is an Old Testament Hebrew word.

For instance, in the New Testament, we have the following.

1. 'Gehenna', which occurs twelve times, and, in the Authorised Version, is always translated 'hell'.

2. 'Hades', which occurs ten times, and which is also always translated as 'hell'.

3. The third word is the word 'Sheol', found in the Old Testament, and which sometimes is erroneously said to be the word that corresponds to 'Gehenna'.

You clearly see the confusion that has been created about the meaning of this word when you understand that, in the Authorised Version, out of the sixty-five instances it occurs, thirty-one times it has been translated 'hell' and thirty-four times it has been translated 'the grave'!

Now, although the word 'Sheol' literally means 'The Place of the Dead', you don't need much intelligence to recognise that 'Hell' and the 'Grave' aren't the same places! When a body is placed in the grave, it hasn't been consigned to 'Hell'!

But there is a history behind this inconsistent rendering of the word 'Sheol'. Whilst the translators of the Authorised Version believed 'Hell' to be the place of punishment for the wicked, they withdrew from the idea of saying that good people also go to 'Sheol', and so in passages that related to the death of good people, they decided to translate 'Sheol' as 'the grave'!

However, in Hebrew theology and in Old Testament teaching, 'Sheol' is described as the place to which all the dead go, both good and bad. It's defined as 'the place of departed souls'.

In the account of King Saul's visit to the medium at Endor, the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel is recorded as saying to Saul, 'Tomorrow, you and your sons shall be with me', 1 Samuel 28:19. Even the Oxford Dictionary is close to the truth as far as the meaning of the word is concerned. It says that 'Sheol' is 'The abode of the dead'. Furthermore, in the Old Testament, 'Sheol' is described as a gloomy place, in which an individual is farther away from God than he was during his lifetime. We are told that 'the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything,' Ecclesiastes 9:5, and, according to Psalm 115:17, 'The dead do not praise Yahweh, nor any who go down into silence.'
The wicked speak lies against David, and he wants God to silence them, Psalm 31:18 / Psalm 12:2-3.

'How abundant are the good things that you have stored up for those who fear you, that you bestow in the sight of all, on those who take refuge in you. In the shelter of your presence, you hide them from all human intrigues; you keep them safe in your dwelling from accusing tongues. Praise be to the LORD, for he showed me the wonders of his love when I was in a city under siege. In my alarm, I said, "I am cut off from your sight!" Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help. Love the LORD, all his faithful people! The LORD preserves those who are true to him, but the proud he pays back in full. Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.' Psalm 31:19-24

After pouring out his heart to God about his troubles, David, despite all those troubles, turns to God for hope and victory, Psalm 31:19. Victory is always the result for those who fear, Psalm 5:7, and trust God and His goodness, Isaiah 64:4 / Matthew 5:12 / 1 Corinthians 2:9. The goodness of God stored up for Christians is far superior to anything conceivable in our minds.
The phrase 'in the shelter of your presence you hide them', Psalm 31:20, means God's secret presence, Psalm 27:5.
The words 'human intrigues', Psalm 31:20, refer to human pride, Exodus 28:28 / Exodus 39:21.
In other words, when the wicked in their pride go against God's people, God will take them into His own immediate presence and will protect them in His dwelling place, Psalm 31:20 / Psalm 27:5, from their accusations, Psalm 31:20 / Psalm 37:5-6.
De Hoff, in his commentary, says the following concerning David's words concerning 'the city under siege', Psalm 31:21.
'This is probably a reference to David's taking refuge with Achish, king of Gath, who gave him Ziklag, a fortified city where David dwelt with his men during the period of his flight from Saul, 1 Samuel 27:6. The passage also may teach in a figurative sense that David was as safe in the hands of God as he would have been in a fortified city.'
David says, 'In my alarm I said, 'I am cut off from your sight!' Psalm 31:22. The word 'alarm' means he was afraid, he wanted to escape, 1 Samuel 23:26. Despite being alarmed, he knows that God heard his cry for help and so, God delivered him, Psalm 31:22.
David now calls upon all of God's faithful to love the Lord and to trust the Lord will deal with the proud, Psalm 31:23. He encourages the faithful to be strong and to take heart because their hope is in the Lord, Psalm 31:24 / Psalm 27:14.

CONCLUSION

David completely poured out his heart to God about how he was feeling. He was desperate, and in a desperate place in his mind, he didn't mess around with his words; he opened up to God and truthfully described how he was feeling.

In our society today, mental health has become a huge issue, and people are being encouraged to open up and speak to people about their feelings, troubles, and concerns.

If this is important for our mental health welfare, how much more important should it be for our spiritual health welfare? Every Christian should have at least one person within their congregation they can turn to in their time of need; often, this would be an elder or their spouse.

But they need someone they can express how they are feeling to, someone they can talk to about their troubles and concerns, Ecclesiastes 3:7 / Proverbs 21:13 / Proverbs 25:19 / James 5:16.
Along with speaking to someone else within the congregation about their feelings, troubles, and concerns, they should speak to God Himself. God completely understand us, He knows us better than anyone else does, Hebrews 4:15.
When we're tired and at the end of our tether, He understands, Isaiah 53:2 / John 4:6-7 / Mark 6:31. When society appears to be against us, He understands, Matthew 27:32 / Matthew 5:41 / Matthew 23:2-3 / Luke 6:31 / John 8:41. When our family and friends turn against us, He understands, Jeremiah 3:6-14 / Luke 9:46 / Luke 23:49 / John 1:46 / John 7:5 / John 7:15. When we're ill or in pain, He understands, Isaiah 52:14, Matthew 26:39 / Matthew 26:42. When we're grieving and in distress, He understands, Genesis 6:6 / Matthew 11:28-30.
The words of Johnson Oatman Jr. in his hymn, 'There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus', are good to remember.

'Jesus knows all about our struggles;
He will guide 'til the day is done:
There's not a Friend like the lowly Jesus:
No, not one! no, not one!'

CHAPTER 32

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of David, a psalm of repentance, very similar to the one he wrote in Psalm 51. The purpose of this psalm appears to demonstrate the importance of repentance and then confessing our sins to God, in order that we rejoice afterwards.

HEADING

'Of David. A maskil.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm tells us it's a psalm of David, a 'maskil'. No one really knows what the word maskil means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.

'Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.' Psalm 32:1-2

David recognises the blessings of life, Psalm 1, he acknowledges he is a transgressor whose sins have been forgiven, Psalm 32:1. We don't know what transgression David is speaking about, but it could be in reference to the sin he committed at Ziklag or with the sin he committed with Bathsheba and Uriah, 1 Samuel 27 / 1 Samuel 29-30 / 2 Samuel 11.

When God forgives our sins, it's always a time of rejoicing, Psalm 32:2 / Acts 8:39 / Acts 16:34. As we go through this psalm, you will notice that sin is described in four ways.

1. Transgression, Psalm 32:1 / Psalm 32:5, which means breaking the law.

The word 'transgressions' is the strongest Hebrew word used for sin, as it implies deliberately rebelling against God's laws, but God can even forgive this act of rebellion, Genesis 50:17 / Numbers 14:19 / Job 7:21 / Psalm 85:2 / Isaiah 2:9.

2. Sin, Psalm 32:1 / Psalm 32:2 / Psalm 32:5 / Psalm 32:6 / Psalm 32:11, which means missing the mark, Romans 3:23.

3. Iniquity, Psalm 32:5, which is gross wickedness.

4. Deceit, Psalm 32:2, which is hypocrisy.

David tells us that all these sins have been forgiven, covered, and not counted against them, Psalm 32:2 / Romans 4:7-8. When anyone repents and confesses their sin to God, they can go on to enjoy God's grace, 1 John 1:8-10. When we do those things, then God will see us as innocent, Romans 1:17 / Romans 3:24 / Romans 4:5 / Romans 5:1 / Romans 8:1.

'When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night, your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.' Psalm 32:3-5

Before David confessed his sins to God, that is, when he kept silent about them, Psalm 32:3, the effects of the guilt were felt in the inner parts of his being, Psalm 32:3 / Psalm 22:1. He was in anguish, he was in distress, he had little strength, and what little strength he did have was disappearing slowly.

He felt the hand of God pressing upon him, Psalm 32:4; it weighed him down, Job 13:21 / Psalm 39:10. This was the effect of sin in David's life before he was forced to repent and confess his sin before God, 2 Samuel 12:7-14 / Psalm 51.

You may notice at the end of verse four, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates his guilt before God and God's forgiveness.

David is ready to be restored to God, but he only got relief from his guilt after he acknowledged and confessed his sin to Him, Psalm 32:5 / 1 Timothy 1:16 / 1 John 1:9.

'Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.' Psalm 32:6-7

It's only those who are truly faithful and those who are truly repentant who will find God, Psalm 32:6 / Jeremiah 29:13 / 1 Corinthians 10:13. God doesn't hide Himself from sinners; it is those who refuse to repent that hide themselves from God, Hebrews 12:14.
God is our hiding place, Psalm 32:6, that is, He is our shelter, and we're in His presence, Psalm 9:9 / Psalm 27:5 / Psalm 31:20. He protects us and reminds us in the song of what he has done for us, Psalm 32:7.

'I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle, or they will not come to you. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him. Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!' Psalm 32:8-11

After learning the process in which a person can be forgiven for their sins, that is, repentance and confession, David says he will teach others what he has learned, Psalm 32:8, in order that they too may receive forgiveness, Psalm 51:12-13. Whenever anyone repents and confesses their sins to God, this is symbolic of submitting themselves to God and His ways, Psalm 33:18 / Psalm 34:15.
When David thought about his sin and the effect it was having on his life before he repented and confessed his sins to God, he says he was like a stubborn horse or mule, that could only be guided through pain or difficulty, Psalm 32:9, hence why, God allowed certain hardships to come into his life, 1 Samuel 30 / 2 Samuel 12.
Like a stubborn horse or mule, Psalm 32:9, David refused to come near to God until he went through difficult times. The wicked do face many woes, Psalm 32:10 / Proverbs 13:15; the wicked have many sorrows, heartbreaks, failures, and remorse. It appears that David is looking at the results of sin from his own life and wants to teach others not to make the same mistake, Psalm 51:13.
When a person repents and confesses their sins to God, they are glad they did, Psalm 32:10-11. It's those people who stubbornly refuse to repent and confess their sins that really have no joy and no peace, Ecclesiastes 2:26 / Ecclesiastes 8:15 / Ecclesiastes 9:7 / Philippians 4:4.
When we repent and confess our sins, this signifies that we disobeyed God, but we now want to please Him. The results of a repentant and confessing heart are always gladness, rejoicing and joy, Psalm 32:11.

CONCLUSION

It's very easy to come away from this psalm thinking that all we have to do to be saved is repent and confess our sins to God, but we must remember we're dealing with the Old Testament here. The Book of Acts in the New Testament history book about the early church, and there are nine examples of conversion given to us in this book.

When we examine each conversion, we will soon discover that repentance and confession aren't enough to have our sins forgiven; we must also be baptised, Acts 2:37-38 / Acts 8:5-12 / Acts 8:26-39 / Acts 9:18 / Acts 10:48 / Acts 16:15 / Acts 16:31-33 / Acts 19:5.
After a person has been baptised for the forgiveness of their sins, Mark 16:16 / Acts 2:28, that's the point at which they are saved. However, when Christians sin, and they will, they follow the instructions of the apostle John.

They will confess their sins to God for forgiveness, and they will confess their sins to each other, 1 John 1:9 / James 5:16. These were specific instructions given to Christians, not to non-Christians. For the Christian, praying for his or her forgiveness is appropriate and scriptural.

CHAPTER 33

INTRODUCTION

There is no heading for this psalm, so we don't know who wrote it. However, this psalm is a psalm of praise, and it directs our minds to the sovereignty of God and the power of His Word.

It begins by praising God for His creation and how He works in and through creation, and ends by directing our minds to the redemption which God provides for mankind.

'Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skilfully, and shout for joy. For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.' Psalm 33:1-9

The opening words appear to flow from the last few words of the previous psalm, 'all you who are upright in heart!' Psalm 32:11. It's clear that it's aimed at believers, that is, the righteous, Psalm 33:1, those who have responded in obedience to God's revelation through His creation and His Word.
Those who are 'righteous', Romans 3:21-26, by God's decree have an even greater responsibility to rejoice and praise, Psalm 33:1. Those who are 'upright', Proverbs 8:8, don't need to be commanded to praise God, they just can't help but praise Him for everything He has done in and through creation, Psalm 33:1.
The harp and the lyre, Psalm 33:2, are both stringed instruments which were introduced by David so that they could bring an atmosphere of tranquillity during the sacrificial events at the temple.
Just as a side note, the harp is the oldest stringed instrument mentioned in the Scriptures, Genesis 4:21. The lyre is first mentioned in 1 Samuel 10:5, and we get a good description of it in Isaiah 5:12.
The psalmist tells us to sing a 'new song', Psalm 33:3 / Psalm 40:3 / Psalm 96:1 / Psalm 98:1 / Psalm 144:9 / Psalm 149:1 / Isaiah 42:10 / Revelation 5:9. These are songs which praised God for His goodness.
To 'play skilfully', Psalm 33:3, basically means to play well, and 'shouts of joy', Psalm 33:3, indicates rejoicing, not so much the noise, Job 8:21 / 1 Samuel 4:5 / Psalm 81:10.
They tell us that God's Word, is 'right and true', and He is 'faithful in all He does', Psalm 33:4. In other words, God loves just judgment and since He is a God of truth, then His judgment can only be just, Psalm 33:5.
When we look at creation, we're reminded that everything God created was good, it was and still remains a demonstration of His unfailing love, Psalm 33:5. God's spoken word resulted in the creation of the universe, Psalm 33:6 / Genesis 1:3 / Genesis 1:6 / Colossians 1:16 / Hebrews 1:3.
He created the heavens above, Genesis 1:1 / Psalm 19:1-4, He created the starry hosts, Genesis 1:16-18 / Genesis 2:1 / Isaiah 1:9, simply with His breath, Psalm 33:6.
God originally created seas by dividing the waters from the land. Waters were gathered above the firmament in the heavens and underground storehouses, Genesis 1:9-10.

The word for 'jars', Psalm 33:7, in Hebrew is the word 'ned', which means to heap. In other words, the waves of the sea heaped up together like mounds. He collected those waters and kept them in their places as if they were solid matter, Psalm 33:7 / Joshua 3:13 / Joshua 3:16 / Exodus 15:8 / Psalm 78:13. This tells us of the absolute control and power God has over the waters.

God is the judge of all men, hence why we should fear Him, Psalm 33:8 / Psalm 5:7. All of mankind should fear Him because His power is shown in creation, Psalm 33:9 / Genesis 1:3 / Genesis 1:6 / Genesis 1:9 / Genesis 1:11 / Genesis 1:14 / Genesis 1:20 / Genesis 1:24 / Genesis 1:26. There is power in God's Word, and whatever He says, will be done, Luke 7:1-9.

'The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance. From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth—he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do. No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength, it cannot save.' Psalm 33:10-17

Here, the psalmist contrasts the power of God with the power of the nations and the psalmist tells us that even though governments think they are in control, it is actually God who is in control, Psalm 33:10.

All the plans and purposes of the nations of the earth that conflict with the purposes of God will be in vain, Psalm 33:11, God's will, will be done, Isaiah 8:9-10 / Isaiah 19:3.

We noted that God is the judge of all men, hence why we should fear Him, Psalm 5:7 / Psalm 33:8. We also noted that all of mankind should fear Him because His power is shown in creation. Here, David gives us two reasons why all of mankind should fear Him.

We should fear Him because He has the power to overthrow any human power that goes against His will, Psalm 33:10-11 / Psalm 33:10, and we should fear Him because God's will, will be done in everything, Psalm 33:11.

Any nation that has the Lord as its God will be blessed, Psalm 33:12, which also applies to any individual, Psalm 1:1.

The psalmist appears to have the Hebrew people in mind here, as he speaks about 'the people He chose for His inheritance', Psalm 33:12.

The Hebrews were God's chosen people, whom He called His inheritance, Deuteronomy 4:20 / Deuteronomy 9:26 / Deuteronomy 32:9 / Psalm 74:2 / Psalm 78:62 / Psalm 78:71 / Psalm 94:5 / Jeremiah 12:7 / Jeremiah 12:9.

As it was with the nation of Israel, so it is with the church. God chose the nation of Israel, and so, everyone who was physically born into the nation became a chosen person of God.

God chose the church, that is, His people, Ephesians 1:11-14, and everyone who is spiritually born, John 3:3-5, into the church by obedience to the Gospel, becomes a member of the chosen body, Ephesians 4:1-10.

God sees and hears everything which is happening on earth, Psalm 33:13-14. He knows the hearts of all men, Psalm 33:15. It doesn't matter if they are a king with many men in his army, Psalm 33:16, or a warrior, who has many men under him, Psalm 33:15; no human effort alone determines events, Ecclesiastes 9:11.

God's work and plan in, and beyond, and sometimes instead of human effort, accomplish His purpose, Daniel 4:25.

Although a horse is very strong, Psalm 33:17 / Job 39:19, it is limited; it doesn't really provide that much safety in battle. In other words, don't trust in the strength of a horse for salvation, Psalm 20:7-8.

'But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you.' Psalm 33:18-22

Here the psalmist uses a metaphor for God, he says the 'eyes of the Lord', Psalm 33:18. We know that God doesn't have eyes like ours, He is Spirit, John 4:24. The psalmist is using words we can understand to point out that God sees those who are His, those who fear Him, and those who hope in Him, Psalm 33:18.
God always sees the needs of those who obey Him and He delivers them from death and sustains them through times of drought, Psalm 33:19 / Job 5:20. Therefore, God is our help when we are in need, Psalm 33:20 / Psalm 10:14 / Psalm 22:11 / Psalm 30:10, He and our shield in times of persecution from our enemies, Psalm 33:20 / Psalm 5:12.
Because God is our deliverer and shield, we can only but rejoice and trust Him and His Name, Psalm 33:22 / Psalm 20:1. This is why our hope is in the Lord, Psalm 33:22 / Psalm 25:3 / Psalm 62:1 / Romans 8:24-25 / Hebrews 6:17-20, and His unfailing love, Psalm 33:22 / Psalm 13:5.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist began by reminding us to rejoice because of God's character and power as seen in His creation, and they end by reminding us to rejoice because of what God does for us.

Most people of the world hope in something or someone; some put their hope in kings, queens, governments, or even science. The world sees hope as some kind of wishful thinking, but our hope comes from God, Psalm 42:5.
For the Christian, hope is when God has promised that something is going to happen, and you put your trust in that promise. The Christian hope is a living hope, not just for things which will happen in this life, Romans 5:3-4 / 1 Corinthians 13:13, but for the life to come, 1 Thessalonians 4:13 / Titus 1:2 / 1 Peter 1:3-5 / 1 Peter 1:13.
The hymn 'My only hope is you Jesus' by Keith Lancaster is a perfect way to end our thoughts here.

'My only hope is You, Jesus
My only hope is You
From early in the morning to late at night
My only hope is You
My only peace is You, Jesus
My only peace is You
From early in the morning to late at night
My only peace is You
My only joy is You, Jesus
My only joy is You
From early in the morning to late at night
My only joy is You
All that I need is You, Jesus
All that I need is You
From early in the morning to late at night
All that I need is You'

CHAPTER 34

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm which speaks about the time when David deliberately pretended to be insane in front of Abimelek, so that he could save his life. After this, David went and hid in a cave in Adullam and was joined by many others. The background to this event is recorded in 1 Samuel 21:10-22:1.
We can't tell from our English Bibles, but in Hebrew, we find that each verse begins with another letter of the Hebrew alphabet: Psalms 9-10 / Psalm 25 / Psalm 34 / Psalm 37 / Psalm 111 / Psalm 112 / Psalm 119 / Psalm 145. This psalm is the same, except for the letter waw. Commentators give many different reasons for some psalms being written in Hebrew alphabetical order, but I personally think it was written this way to make the learning of the psalm easy and easy to memorise.

HEADING

'Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm tells us it's a psalm of David written when he pretends to be insane before Abimelek, 1 Samuel 21:10-15. Abimelek was probably a title given to rulers among the Philistines, 1 Samuel 21:10.

'I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth, my soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.' Psalm 34:1-3

When I read the opening verse, my first reaction was, That's one of those lines that people throw at you when you're going through a tough time. They're all smiley and tell you how much they appreciate what you're going through. Here's a Scripture to help you along, as they pat you on the back and disappear into the horizon. Leaving you struggling with your situation.

My next reaction was one of, It's OK for King David, he's got it made, he can afford to say something like that. He's the king, he's running the show, what's he got to worry about? Because a couple of Psalms back, in Psalm 32, he's confessed his sin to God, and God's forgiven him, and he gets to keep Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11-12.
David commits adultery with Bathsheba, gets her pregnant, arranges for her husband to be killed in battle and then marries Bathsheba. He's got everything! Forgiveness, a beautiful wife, and incredible wealth. No wonder he can say, 'I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth', Psalm 34:1.
But that's where ignorance comes in, ignorance of Scripture, and misusing it. The Psalms aren't in chronological order, yes, Psalm 32 was written when David was King and probably not long after he confessed his sin to God.
But this psalm is about a time when David wasn't king; in fact, he was a fugitive, a fugitive from King Saul. David has been hit with a double whammy here. Thinking he would be safe from Saul, he went to Gath, only to find out that he was in as much danger there as he was with Saul.

And so, surviving on his wits, he pretends to be crazy and ends up hiding in a cave, and it's from those circumstances that he pens this Psalm, 1 Samuel 21:10-22:1.

He knew it was God who had helped him escape from Saul and Abimelek, a title given to rulers among the Philistines, Achish, 1 Samuel 21:10. Because of this, he just praises God continually and encourages others to do the same, Psalm 34:2-3. A fact that he acknowledges next.

'I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears'. Psalm 34:4

The same God who helped David escape from evil and destruction then, Psalm 34:4, is doing the same for us today. Firstly, He's providing us with an escape route from sin and legalism, Romans 7:23-25 / Galatians 5:1. Secondly, when we're tempted to sin and return to our old ways, God is there to help, provided we let Him, 1 Corinthians 10:13.
Like David, when we find ourselves in difficult circumstances or tempted to do the wrong thing, we can either do it and sin or we can take up God's offer of letting Him provide a way out for us, Psalm 34:4.
With David, it was pretending to be mad, 1 Samuel 21:10-15. I'm not saying we need to do that, but I will say it's definitely madness to give in to temptation and sin.

'Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.' Psalm 34:5-8

This is a man in dire straits, begging and pleading for God to help him, Psalm 34:5-5. Have there been times like that in your life? Where things are so bad that we just cry out to the Lord, and the last thing we want to hear are cheap, meaningless clichés from people who don't understand our circumstances. Especially when we want answers as to why?
That's the time we cry out to the Lord, Psalm 34:5, because maybe we've tried other things or thought we could manage on our own, when in fact, it's the Lord we need in our lives. We need to turn it over to Him because He loves us, or as they say in the A.A., 'we need to let go and let God'.
There's a big difference between people quoting Scripture at us inappropriately and reading our Bibles and listening to what God has to say to us. God has given us many promises in the Bible, and we need to worship Him by believing these promises He has given us.

People might desert us in our hour of pain, God but won't, and neither will Jesus. Even though Adam and Eve disappointed God in the beginning, He still looked after them, Genesis 3:21, and He's looking after us today, Philippians 4:6 / 1 Peter 5:7. We can do that by regularly praying to God.
If we don't believe that God answers prayers and helps us with our worries, we need to talk to some people in our congregations. People who regularly pray to God and people who regularly receive answers to their prayers. It might not have been the answer they were looking for, but it was an answered prayer.

David said he was going to bless the Lord at all times, Psalm 34:1, and Paul told the Thessalonians to pray at all times, 1 Thessalonians 5:17. The two go hand in hand: read your Bible, and take God upon His promises.
Notice the mention of the angel of the Lord, Psalm 34:7. Who is this angel of the LORD? This is a Christophany, which suggests that this is a preincarnate appearance of Christ, Genesis 12:7. Remember the word 'angel' in Hebrew is 'malak', and it simply means messenger. Christ is God, not an angel.
Haynes Jr, in his commentary, says the following.

'A study of these passages reveals that the Angel of the Lord appeared in human form, Genesis 18:2 / Genesis 22:1-18 / Hebrews 13:2, and performed normal human functions, Genesis 32:24 / Numbers 22:23 / Numbers 22:31, yet he was an awe-inspiring figure, Genesis 32:30 / Judges 6:22 / Judges 13:22, exhibiting divine attributes and prerogatives

including predicting the future, Genesis 16:10-12, forgiving sin, Exodus 23:21, and receiving worship, Exodus 3:5 / Judges 13:9-20.'

David invites us to taste and see that the LORD is good, and he says blessed are those who take refuge in him, Psalm 34:8 / Psalm 19:10 / Psalm 119:103.

'Fear the LORD, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to blot out their name from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.' Psalm 34:9-17

David tells us that when we turn to God, He will take care of us, Psalm 34:9-10. God is going to provide for us, Psalm 34:9-10, and this is a promise repeated by Jesus in the New Testament, Matthew 6:25-30. God is going to take care of us, He will see to our needs, but remember it doesn't say that God will meet our greeds!

In Psalm 34:11, David is telling us what it means to fear the Lord, Psalm 34:9. This is the theme that continues through Psalm 24:12-14. The ideal life, the one God wants us to pursue, has three characteristics to it. This part of the psalm is an expansion of what David wrote in Psalm 34:3.

Whoever loves life, desires to see many good days, Psalm 34:12. Psalm 34:13 tells us to watch our tongue! Mind our language, 2 Kings 2:23-24. The same warning is repeated in the New Testament in James 3:2-10.

David says that we make mistakes; everyone does! But that's no excuse for deliberately swearing or telling smutty jokes. We're set apart from the world, John 15:18-19 / Romans 12:2 / 1 John 2:15.

I hear enough innuendo on the street, I don't want to hear it among Christians, and I know many of you feel the same way. Skip the learned phrases and say something meaningful when people are hurting.

That's the first thing; let's move on to the second. Psalm 34:14 tells us to do two things, and if you want a list of evil things to turn away from, Romans 1:18-31 / Galatians 5:19-26. The other is about doing good, Psalm 34:14; it's so easy to do good to those who are our friends or people we like.

The Bible commands us not to make any difference, Matthew 5:43-44 / Luke 6:31-33 / Galatians 6:10. The message is that we do good to everyone, not just those we like.

The third point is that we're to live in peace with others, Psalm 34:14. This is another command that is found in the New Testament, Romans 14:19 / Hebrews 12:14. This is something that David put into practice, 1 Samuel 25:14-16.

We can also find these essential rules for Godly living in 1 Peter 3:10-12 / Colossians 3:8-17.

'The LORD is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned. The LORD will rescue his servants; no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.' Psalm 34:18-22

When we are feeling broken-hearted and crushed in spirit, we need to remember that God is closer than we think, Psalm 34:18, even when we feel He is far from us.

Yes, we will have many troubles, 2 Timothy 3:12. God promises to deliver us and protect us, Psalm 34:19-20. Evil people will be judged for their actions, Psalm 34:22, but those who are His will not be condemned, Romans 8:1 / Romans 8:33-37 / 2 Peter 2:4-10.

CONCLUSION

In this psalm, David spoke about blessing and praising God with our mouths. Throughout the Scriptures, we are warned about how we use our tongues, and so we have a choice.

We can use our tongues negatively; we can blame God when we're tempted to do wrong, James 1:13-14. We can use our tongues like the hypocrites, James 1:26 / Titus 1:16. We use our tongue to express discrimination between rich and poor fellow believers, James 2:1-4.
We can use our tongues to speak unsympathetically to those in need, James 2:15-16. We can use our tongues to boast and use words of flattery, James 3:5 / James 3:14.
We can use our tongues to grumble against each other, James 4:12 / James 5:9. We can use our tongues for swearing and or blaspheming, James 5:12. Our tongues can be used to destroy, Proverbs 12:18 / Proverbs 16:27 / Matthew 12:34-35 / James 3:5-8.
We can also use our tongues positively; we can use our tongues to direct people, Proverbs 18:21 / James 3:4-5. We can use our tongues to delight, Proverbs 13:2 / Proverbs 18:4 / Proverbs 18:20-21 / James 3:19-20. We can use our tongues to praise God, Psalms 148 / Psalm 149 / Psalm 150 / James 3:9.
We can use our tongues to pray to God for wisdom, James 1:5-6, and when we need help in our time of need, James 5:13-16, healing, James 5:14-15, for what we call big requests, James 5:17-18. We can use our tongue when praying for those who are falling away, James 5:19-20, and for singing praises to Him, Psalm 51:14 / James 5:13.

CHAPTER 35

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of David, where he cries out to God for judgment to come upon his enemies because they were seeking to kill him. He asks God to avenge him by destroying his enemies, Deuteronomy 32:35 / Romans 12:19. This is one of several psalms where the writer calls for God to curse their enemies, Psalm 7 / Psalm 22 / Psalm 31 / Psalm 36 / Psalm 39 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 56 / Psalm 71 / Psalm 109 / Psalm 140, and there are more.

HEADING

'Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

This psalm simply tells us it's a psalm of David. We don't know the exact background to this psalm, but it could be related to the time when Saul was pursuing him. This is possible because the first few words of this psalm are very similar to what David says to Saul in 1 Samuel 24:15.

'Contend, LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me. Take up shield and armour; arise and come to my aid. Brandish spear and javelin against those who pursue me. Say to me, "I am your salvation." May those who seek my life be disgraced and put to shame; may those who plot my ruin be turned back in dismay. May they be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away; may their path be dark and slippery, with the angel of the LORD pursuing them. Since they hid their net for me without cause and without cause dug a pit for me, may ruin overtake them by surprise—may the net they hid entangle them, may they fall into the pit, to their ruin. Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD and delight in his salvation. My whole being will exclaim, "Who is like you, LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them." Psalm 35:1-10

As mentioned above, the first part of the first verse is very similar to what David says to Saul in 1 Samuel 24:15.
David wants to be vindicated, and so He basically takes the matter to God and asks God to fight for him, Psalm 35:1.
He wants God to step in and defend him from all those who were against him, Psalm 35:1.
Notice David asks God to take up His shield, Psalm 35:2 / 1 Samuel 17:7 / 1 Samuel 17:41, armour, spear, and javelin, Psalm 35:3. This is David's way of asking God to put on His armour, Isaiah 59:17, and fight on David's behalf.
He wants God to say to him, 'I am your salvation', Psalm 35:3. In other words, he's asking God to work through him so that he can confuse and track his enemies.
Remember, David was God's anointed, 1 Samuel 16:13, and so if anyone was against David, God's anointed, they were actually against God Himself, Psalm 35:4. He wants God to make it known that he really did serve and obey God and that those who opposed him were made like chaff before the wind, Psalm 35:5.
He calls upon God to intervene by sending 'the angel of the Lord', Psalm 34:5 / Psalms 34:7. Who is this angel of the LORD? This is a Christophany, which suggests that this is a preincarnate appearance of Christ, Genesis 12:7.
Remember the word 'angel' in Hebrew is 'malak', and it simply means messenger. Christ is God, not an angel.
Haynes Jr, in his commentary, says the following.

'A study of these passages reveals that the Angel of the Lord appeared in human form, Genesis 18:2 / Genesis 22:1-18 / Hebrews 13:2, and performed normal human functions, Genesis 32:24 / Numbers 22:23 / Numbers 22:31, yet he was an awe-inspiring figure, Genesis 32:30 / Judges 6:22 / Judges 13:22, exhibiting divine attributes and prerogatives including predicting the future, Genesis 16:10-12, forgiving sin, Exodus 23:21, and receiving worship, Exodus 3:5 / Judges 13:9-20.'
Notice he asks the angel of the LORD to intervene twice, Psalm 34:5-6 / Exodus 23:20-22. This is David pleading his innocence again.
The Pulpit Commentary says the following.

'The angel of the Lord, who protects the righteous, Psalms 34:7, is called on to complete the discomfiture of the wicked ones, who are David's enemies.'
Notice he tells God that his enemies did this without cause, Psalm 34:7. As a hunter, Saul had planned traps for David, that is, nets, Psalm 34:7, but David asked that Saul be caught in his own traps, and he wants it to happen unexpectedly, Psalm 34:8.
David wants his enemies to be caught in the very nets they have set for him. This would be useful for us to pray today, as the devil, our enemy, has many traps set for us, 1 Timothy 3:7 / 2 Timothy 2:26 / 2 Corinthians 2:11.

David knows that when God does all of these things, then he will rejoice and delight in his salvation, Psalm 34:9. His whole being will exclaim, Who is like you, LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them, Psalm 34:10 / Psalms 86:1.

'Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about. They repay me evil for good and leave me like one bereaved. Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother. But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee; assailants gathered against me without my knowledge. They slandered me without ceasing. Like the ungodly, they maliciously mocked; they gnashed their teeth at me. How long, Lord, will you look on? Rescue me from their ravages, my precious life from these lions. I will give you thanks in the great assembly; among the throngs I will praise you.' Psalm 35:11-18

These 'ruthless witnesses', Psalm 35:11, are false witnesses, and violent witnesses, and David says, they are guilty of injustice and wrong against him. We don't know what the charges were that these witnesses accused David of, but David says he knows nothing about them, Psalm 35:11.
This is a classic case of someone being totally misunderstood, someone who wants to help with no alternative motives, yet people still falsely accuse him of something else.

David contrasts his own behaviour with that of his enemies; he remembers when he had done good for his enemies, but his enemies paid him back with evil, Psalm 35:12.
He showed kindness to them when they were sick, Job 30:25, by wearing sackcloth, Psalm 35:13 / Psalm 30:11, which demonstrates deep sympathy and total reliance on God.
He humbled himself, Psalm 35:13 / Daniel 9:3 / Matthew 17:21 / Luke 2:37. Remember, David was slanderously attacked by Saul and his ruthless followers accused David of all kinds of evil things, but yet, David humbled his heart, he prayed and fasted for the very people who were now out to kill him, Psalm 35:13 / Luke 23:34.
He showed incredible love and concern for them when they were sick, Psalm 35:13. David prayed, concerning his enemies, but his prayers weren't answered at this time, Psalm 35:13.
He 'went about', Psalm 35:14, that is, his conduct was right, Philemon 3:18 / Galatians 2:14 / 1 Thessalonians 4:12 / 2 Thessalonians 3:11. He was making their problems his own and caring for them as though they were his friend or brother, Psalm 35:14.
He felt and acted toward them as though they had been his friend or brother. He bowed his head, Psalm 35:14 / 1 Kings 18:42, and went about weeping as if he had lost his mother, Psalm 35:14.
Despite David demonstrating genuine love and care for his enemies, his enemies turn against him. When he stumbled, his enemies 'gathered in glee,' Psalm 35:15, that is, they rejoiced.
It appears that David received no sympathy from his enemies, but despite being stricken with grief because of the relentless attack of those who were against him, David remained faithful to his calling as the anointed of God.

David says, they maliciously mocked him and they 'gnashed their teeth at me' Psalm 35:16. Gnashing the teeth, is an expression of rage, anger and deep hatred, Job 16:9 / Psalm 37:12 / Psalm 112:10.
In the New Testament, it refers to the agony of extreme disappointment, Matthew 8:12 / Matthew 13:42 / Matthew 13:50 / Matthew 22:13 / Matthew 24:51 / Matthew 25:30.
We have to admire David's honesty here in his prayer to God. He begs God to help him from his lion-like enemies, Psalm 35:17 / Psalm 22:20. He basically asks God, how long are you going to wait to deliver him and punish those who are treating him so badly, Psalm 35:17.
He knows that God sees everything and has witnessed everything which has happened, yet God doesn't intervene, Isaiah 18:4 / Revelation 6:10. He says that when God delivers him from his enemies, he will publicly express his gratitude and joy for God's deliverance, Psalm 35:18 / Psalm 18:49 / Psalm 22:25.

‘Do not let those gloat over me who are my enemies without cause; do not let those who hate me without reason maliciously wink the eye. They do not speak peaceably but devise false accusations against those who live quietly in the land. They sneer at me and say, “Aha! Aha! With our own eyes we have seen it.” LORD, you have seen this; do not be silent. Do not be far from me, Lord. Awake, and rise to my defence! Contend for me, my God and Lord. Vindicate me in your righteousness, LORD my God; do not let them gloat over me. Do not let them think, “Aha, just what we wanted!” or say, “We have swallowed him up.” May all who gloat over my distress be put to shame and confusion; may all who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and disgrace. May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness; may they always say, “The LORD be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant.” My tongue will proclaim your righteousness, your praises all day long.’ Psalm 35:19-28

Remember David wasn’t only driven out of Jerusalem without any cause, John 15:25, he was hunted down like a dog by Saul and his men, 1 Samuel 26:20. David was very much aware that he hadn’t done his enemies any wrong, and he knew he had done nothing to deserve the way his enemies were treating him, so, his prayer is simply a request that justice might be done, Psalm 35:19 / Matthew 5:11.

The ‘winking of the eye’, Psalm 35:19, was a way of mocking someone or insulting someone, Job 15:12 / Proverbs 6:13 / Proverbs 10:10 / Proverbs 16:30. He prays for vindication against his enemies because they plotted against those who live quietly in the land, that those who are humble and live in peace, Psalm 35:20.

They sneered at David and said, ‘Aha! Aha!’, Psalm 35:21 / Psalm 40:15 / Psalm 70:3, that is, they boasted with open mouths, Psalm 22:13, that they had seen the conquest of David, Psalm 35:22.

David asks God to awake, Psalm 35:23 / Psalm 44:23, and rise to his defence, Psalm 35:23 / Psalm 7:6. Notice he says, ‘my God and my Lord,’ Psalm 35:23. This is a phrase which combines two names for God than a name of God in its own right, John 20:28. The word God is the word, ‘Elohim’ and the word ‘Lord’ is the word, Adonai.

David asks God to vindicate him, Psalm 35:24, that is, he wants God to judge righteously between him and his enemies, Psalm 35:24 / Psalm 26:1. In the midst of those who shouted for victory over David, David begs the Lord to come to his defence, to work through him for the downfall of his enemies, Psalm 35:25.

To ‘swallow up’, Psalm 35:25, means to totally destroy, Numbers 16:31-35 / Lamentations 2:16 / Psalm 21:9. If David was killed, they hope to rise up because of his death. In this way, his enemies would be ashamed because they attacked God’s anointed, Psalm 35:26.

He doesn’t want his enemies to be successful in their plans because that would come across as if they were right. They would think that what they were doing was right, and if they defeated David, they would think that this was God’s will.

I don’t think that we are to think that David wanted God to kill his enemies; he simply wants God to defeat his enemies, not kill them. He wants them to be ashamed of what they are trying to do and see how disgraceful their behaviour towards him has been.

David wants God to deliver him so that his real friends would rejoice, Psalm 35:27, and although David focused a lot on himself in this psalm, he ends by exalting the Lord and praising Him, Psalm 35:28.

CONCLUSION

It’s incredible to think that David not only did good towards the very people who wanted him dead, but he also always prayed for them. The Old Testament law nowhere stated that people should ‘hate their enemies.’ This was a false interpretation by the Jews, Leviticus 19:17-18.

In Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus doesn't argue against the Old Testament law, but against those who falsely interpret it for their own personal desires. The principle of loving our neighbour fulfils all that the law would command concerning our duty toward our fellow man, Matthew 22:35-40.
The principle of loving our enemies is valid and binding upon everyone who follows Christ. There's no room in the Christian's heart, especially since they've had their sins forgiven, to have hatred towards anyone.

The kind of love used in our text doesn't necessarily refer to sentimental and affectionate love as we have towards our own family members. The kind of love meant here is the love manifested by God Himself in that He sends rain on the good and evil, etc. The implication is that Christians should treat their enemies with fairness and impartiality, doing unto them as they would desire people to do unto themselves.

Underlying these verses is the challenge that Christians should be 'like their Father who is in heaven,' Matthew 5:48. That's what it's really all about, that Christians should be like the pure and holy God whom we are taught to worship through Christ.
God loves sinners, even dying for them while they were yet in sin, so Christians should love all men, sinners included, even their own personal enemies! To live the other way is to be no better than a publican, the gatherer of the Roman taxes and, in the Jewish dictionary, that was about as low as a man could get!

The character that Jesus has just explained identifies those who are of the spirit of the Father, and thus, sons of the Father. God's love is impartial; He loved us when we were His enemies, Romans 5:8.
Christ here pronounced a new and thrilling principle to take the place of the old proverb that 'One rotten apple will spoil a barrel of good apples!' That is, 'One good apple can heal a barrel of rotten apples!'

Only Christ could have revealed such an exciting, new and effective doctrine as this. A true heart isn't one of malice or hate; hearts of malice and hate identify those individuals who are of the world. Luke, in his Gospel, adds that we should do good to and pray for our enemies, Luke 6:27-28.
There is no reward in a love that acts out of selfish motives to do something for others for the purpose of receiving something in return. True love must be unconditional; it mustn't seek a reward.

These Jews worked as tax collectors for the Roman government, and thus, were despised by the Jews. They were allowed to take a portion of the taxes that they collected.

If we embrace only those of his approval, then there is no true manifestation of love. The disciples' greetings must extend beyond what the world would do to and for itself.

God's people are to be different in that they are disciples who unconditionally love others. They are expected by God to do more than those who are outside a covenant relationship with God.

Jesus establishes a needed high standard of conduct in order that His disciples be made aware of their need for salvation and their need to struggle in order to have the kingdom reign of Jesus within them.

The word 'perfect' can refer only to one who is complete as a result of God's accredited righteousness that results from His grace. Christians aren't perfect in behaviour but are perfect in Christ through the blood of Jesus, Colossians 1:28 / Colossians 1:28.
In what way would Jesus' teaching on loving and praying for our enemies help us in our outreach efforts? It certainly tells us that we will have enemies and we will be persecuted at times, but it also teaches us to continue to love them and pray for them. Remember that prayer may not change their attitude towards you, but it may change your attitude towards them, John 15:18-21.

CHAPTER 36

INTRODUCTION

This psalm contrasts the difference between those who seek to live according to God's wisdom and those who seek to live according to their own wicked wisdom.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of David, the servant of the LORD.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm was for the director of music and was written by David. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. The addition in the heading, 'the servant of the Lord,' also appears in Psalm 36:1-4

'I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before their eyes. In their own eyes, they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin. The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful; they fail to act wisely or do good. Even on their beds they plot evil; they commit themselves to a sinful course and do not reject what is wrong.' Psalm 36:1-4

We must note that other translations don't begin with the words, 'I have a message from God', Psalm 36:1; they usually begin with the words, 'the transgression of the wicked saith within my heart'.
David is basically saying he has a message from God concerning sin, for the wicked, that is, those who practice sin, Psalm 36:1. The message comes from God, Genesis 22:16 / Numbers 14:28, placed in David's heart, and so, God uses David to speak to the wicked, 2 Samuel 23:1.
The apostle Paul quotes the words, 'there is no fear of God before their eyes', Psalm 36:1, in Romans 3:18, and he applies the words to both Jew and Gentile, those who were proud and hardened in their hearts. Anyone who doesn't fear the Lord has no respect or reverence for God.
The wicked like to flatter themselves, Psalm 36:2, that is, they are smooth talkers, Hosea 10:2 / Psalm 5:9 / Proverbs 28:23 / Proverbs 2:16 / Proverbs 7:5. They don't have a clear view of themselves, they don't recognise the sin within themselves, Matthew 7:3-5, and so, they smooth over their sin with lies.
Everything they say is wicked and false, Psalm 36:3 / Psalm 12:2; everything they do isn't right, Psalm 36:4; they aren't benevolent, and they are not kind. When they are in bed, they plot evil, Psalm 36:4 / Proverbs 4:16 / Psalm 4:4. It appears that the wicked spend most of their wakeful time going out of their way to do evil, Psalm 1:2 / Psalm 63:6.

The biggest problem for the wicked is that they think that no one will find them out; their deception of others is rotted on their own belief that others won't discover their deception. In a sense, they are deceiving themselves, 2 Timothy 3:13; they have forsaken God's wisdom and chosen a sinful course of life.

'Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, LORD, preserve both people and animals. How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.' Psalm 36:5-9

David now turns his attention to God, and he describes the character of God and contrasts it with the character of the wicked. Notice how he describes the character of God; he speaks of God's love, faithfulness, righteousness, and justice, and he describes them as the heavens, the skies, the highest mountains, and the great deep, Psalm 36:5-6. These are the biggest things which David can think of; each one is far-reaching and beyond measure, Job 11:7-9 / Isaiah 55:8-9. In contrast to the wicked who lack wisdom, the righteous and the animals enjoy the preservation of a loving God, Psalm 36:6.

He cares for all those who love Him, Psalm 91:4, His people take refuge in the shadow of his wings, Psalm 36:7, as a young bird seeks refuge under the wings of its mother, Deuteronomy 32:11-12 / Ruth 2:12 / Matthew 23:37.

The wise put their trust in God because they know all good blessings come from Him, James 1:17. It's from God's house, Psalm 36:8 / Psalm 23:6 / Psalm 27:4, that He provides abundant food, Psalm 36:8 / Judges 9:9 / Job 36:16 / Isaiah 55:2 / Jeremiah 31:14.

He provides us with enough to drink and notice it's not a pond or a lake but a river, Psalm 36:9 / John 4:13-14 / John 7:38-39. David acknowledges that life and light come from God; he understands that these are what a person needs to be satisfied and to have pleasure in life, 2 Peter 1:3-4.

God is the source of life and the life-giver, John 11:25 / 1 John 4:9. He is the light and the light-giver, John 1:9 / John 8:12 / 1 John 1:5 / Revelation 21:23 / Revelation 22:5 / 1 Peter 2:9.

'Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart. May the foot of the proud not come against me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away. See how the evildoers lie fallen—thrown down, not able to rise!' Psalm 36:10-12

David ends his psalm by asking God not to allow the will of the wicked to overcome those who wisely trust in God and His will. David asks God to continue His love, Psalm 36:10 / Psalm 36:5 / Psalm 36:7, and righteousness, Psalm 36:10 / 1 John 1:9, for those who are known by God, John 17:3 / Philemon 3:10 / Ephesians 3:19 / 2 Timothy 1:12. Those who are upright in heart, Psalm 36:10, are those who see themselves clearly and live accordingly, Psalm 7:10. David asks God to continue to protect those who love God from the foot and hand of the wicked, Psalm 36:11 / Psalm 18:40.

He doesn't want the wicked to trample all over those who God knows, Psalm 18:40, he doesn't want the wicked to destroy those who are known by God. David says the end result of the wicked isn't good; they fall and can't get back up again, no matter how often they try, Psalm 36:12 / Proverbs 24:16.

CONCLUSION

The wisdom of the wicked and the wisdom of those who are known by God are total opposites of each other. Wisdom is often personified in the Scriptures as something to be sought by those who want to live wisely, Proverbs 1:7 / Proverbs 1:20-22 / Proverbs 8:1-36.

Since godly wisdom only comes from God, we must ask Him for it, 1 Kings 3:8- 13 / James 1:5. James understood that godly wisdom is required in dealing with trials and temptations, and also that the outcome of enduring trials is steadfastness, which fosters perfection, completeness, and adequacy, lacking in nothing.
He explained the significance of this fact when he indicated the genuine source of true wisdom, that is, God, and the attitude, that is, in faith with no doubting, that must underscore the request, James 1:4-5.
Solomon appreciated the significance of wisdom. He knew that wisdom is more precious than rubies and that no singular desire of man is comparable with wisdom, Proverbs 8:11.
This understanding in him is probably the reason for him to ask God for wisdom when he had the chance to make a request to God at the beginning of his reign over Israel.

In Proverbs 8:12, the wise king says, 'I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion'. This practically suggests that lacking wisdom is equivalent to lacking prudence, knowledge and discretion, as all these important virtues are found in wisdom, 2 Chronicles 1:7-13.

CHAPTER 37

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find David, who is much older now, dealing with some securities and insecurities of his own. He's looking around and sees the wicked becoming more and more prosperous, and at the same time, he sees the righteous becoming more and more concerned about this.

We can't tell from our English Bibles, but in Hebrew, we find that each verse begins with another letter of the Hebrew alphabet: Psalms 9-10 / Psalm 25 / Psalm 34 / Psalm 37 / Psalm 111 / Psalm 112 / Psalm 119 / Psalm 145. Commentators give many different reasons for some psalms being written in Hebrew alphabetical order, but I personally think it was written this way to make the learning of the psalm easy and easy to memorise.

HEADING

'Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading simply tells us that this is a psalm of David.

‘Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun. Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.’
Psalm 37:1-8

The first piece of advice, to help us with worry, is to remind ourselves that ‘God commands us not to worry’, Psalm 37:1-2. Notice he says, ‘do not fret’, Psalm 37:1, three times, Psalm 37:7 / Psalm 37:8, and as we know, the New Testament commands us not to worry as well, Matthew 6:25 / Matthew 6:34 / Philippians 4:6.
Worrying is sinful because it’s a pointless exercise, Matthew 6:27. Jesus says worrying is an absolute waste of time because nothing good can come out of it. David, Paul, Philippians 4:6, and Jesus all command us not to worry, which tells us that worrying is sinful because worry is a choice.
If it weren’t possible to go through life without worrying, then why would God command us not to worry? We may not be able to control what kind of things enter our minds, but we can certainly control the things we choose to dwell on.

Worrying is a choice, and we choose to worry because we don’t trust God enough to take care of the things which are out of our control. If the God of creation can speak creation into existence, what makes us think He isn’t capable of looking after all our tomorrows? Psalm 37:2.
God is more than capable of helping us in our times of worry, and we need to learn to trust Him, Romans 8:28. When a person totally trusts God, they don’t rely on their own capabilities; they trust in His power, His plans, and His love for us.
David continues and gives us two more pieces of advice to help us with worry, he tells us to ‘trust in the LORD and do good’, Psalm 37:3. Trusting God and doing good go together, we can’t separate them.
If our faith isn’t demonstrated and backed up with doing good for others, then our faith, like worry, is a complete waste of time, James 2:14. When we trust God to take care of us, we can focus our attention on taking care of those around us, which means we haven’t got time to worry about ourselves.
David continues and gives us another piece of advice to help us with worry; he tells us to ‘take delight in the LORD’, Psalm 37:4. If anyone gets their source of pleasure solely from anything in this world, then they don’t really know God.
Speaking from his own experience, David says, when we delight in God, ‘God gives us the desires of our hearts’, Psalm 37:4. Obviously, if our heart’s desire is to sin, then God won’t grant those requests.
But if our heart’s desire is to do what God desires for us, then He will grant those requests, James 3:4 / 1 John 5:14.
In other words, if God gives us the desires of our hearts, then what have we got to worry about?
David continues and gives us another piece of advice to help us with worry; he tells us to ‘commit your way to the LORD’, Psalm 37:5. We all know how important commitment is in our relationships, marriages, and friendships, but the commitment that David is speaking about here relates to something much deeper than that.
The word ‘commit’, Psalm 37:5, used here, is the Hebrew word ‘galal’, and it means to roll onto something else. It’s used in relation to the theme of the first eight verses, which is worry. In other words, committing our ways to the Lord means we roll our anxieties onto the Lord, 1 Peter 5:7.
When we pray to God and pour out our anxieties and stresses upon Him, we need to learn to leave them with Him. We can’t do anything positive with them, so give them to God and trust Him to deal with those anxieties and worries for us.

David continues and gives us another piece of advice to help us with worry, he tells us to 'be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him', Psalm 37:7. When we pray to God and pour out our anxieties and stresses upon Him, 1 Peter 5:7.

We not only need to learn to leave them with Him, but we also need to 'learn to be silent', Psalm 37:7. We need to remember that there are times when we should just enjoy the silence.

David is telling us that there are times after we have spoken to God about our concerns, we simply need to sit quietly in silence before God, James 1:19. We would worry a lot less if we took time to sit at the Lord's feet in silence and listen to what He has to say to us.

When we pray to God and pour out our anxieties and stresses upon Him, we not only need to learn to leave them with Him. We not only need to learn to be silent, but we must also 'learn to be patient', Psalm 37:7. Patiently waiting on God helps us remember that God is in control, Revelation 6:11. Worry creates impatience, where we want all our problems over as quickly as possible.

David continues and gives us another piece of advice to help us with worry. He tells us to 'refrain from anger and turn from wrath', Psalm 37:8. We all get angry at times, but anger in and of itself isn't sinful; it's what we do with that anger that can lead to sin, Ephesians 4:26-27. God says we must be very careful what we do with our anger, because not only will it hurt others, but it will also ultimately hurt ourselves.

In this context, David is basically saying that the righteous shouldn't fret about all the inequalities of life, Psalm 37:8. The righteous shouldn't feel insecure because those who are evil appear to be thriving. And the reason the righteous shouldn't worry is simply that they have God, and the wicked don't.

The wealth of the wicked won't last long, but the righteous will have God in their lives forever. David says, as long as the righteous have food and shelter, they should be content with living in God's favour because God will supply them with what they need, Philippians 4:19.

'For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land. A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity. The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them; but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming. The wicked draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose ways are upright. But their swords will pierce their own hearts, and their bows will be broken. Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked; for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous. The blameless spend their days under the LORD's care, and their inheritance will endure forever. In times of disaster, they will not wither; in days of famine, they will enjoy plenty. But the wicked will perish: Though the LORD's enemies are like the flowers of the field, they will be consumed, they will go up in smoke'. Psalm 37:9-20

David continues and gives us another piece of advice to help us with worry; he tells us to 'forget about the wicked'. He says don't worry what the wicked are doing, he says not only will the wealth of the wicked not last long, but they themselves won't last long, Psalm 37:9-10.

Notice he says the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity, Psalm 37:11. Those listening to Jesus speak were full of the hope that He, as the Messiah, would lead them to conquest in a physical kingdom that would dominate by force, Proverbs 16:32.

However, Jesus taught true joy is found in meekness, Matthew 5:5. The primary meaning of this word is 'mild' or 'gentle.' Meekness is not another word for weakness, as some mistakenly believe, for genuine meekness is strength under control.

The word 'meek', Psalm 37:11, has its origin in the taming or domestication of animals. A wild animal is strong but destructive and of little value when out of control.

However, when a horse, for example, is tamed, it loses none of its power, but its strength is brought under the control of its trainer. It is now a useful animal and can be employed for much good.

The same is true of man. A person who is strong, physically or spiritually, is of little use to the Lord until they submit to Him and allow their strength to be controlled by God's desires.

A meek person is totally given to the divine will. Such a person does get angry when circumstances warrant it, but they do so in a controlled manner, i.e., without sinning, Ephesians 4:26.
Moses is a good example of meekness, Numbers 12:3 / Exodus 32:19-35, and Jesus Himself is also a good example of meekness, so is Jesus. Matthew 11:28-30 / John 2:14-22.
The Christian Courier Website notes the following concerning inheriting the earth, Matthew 5:5.
1. God is the owner of this earth, Psalm 24:1.
2. Those who obey Christ become children of God, Galatians 3:27 / Hebrews 5:9, and 'joint-heirs' with the Lord, Romans 8:17.
3. The Father supplies all our needs, Philippians 4:19. We therefore enjoy this earth and its blessings more than all others.
4. Mainly, however, our inheritance is spiritual, Acts 20:32; we are heirs in the kingdom of Christ, Ephesians 5:5, and citizenship in that kingdom is available now on this earth, John 3:3-5 / Colossians 1:13.
Finally, we also look for an inheritance that is reserved for us in heaven, 1 Peter 1:4, because we are aware that the earth will be destroyed when Christ returns, 2 Peter 3:10.
Spurgeon, in his commentary, says the following.

'It looks as if they would be pushed out of the world, but they shall not be, 'for they shall inherit the earth.' The wolves devour the sheep, yet there are more sheep in the world than there are wolves, and the sheep continue to multiply, and to feed in green pastures.'

In other words, the meek shall inherit the earth in the sense that they shall enjoy it more fully while living upon it, Psalm 37:1 / John 10:10 / Philippians 4:10-13. The world is full of injustice; it's full of people who think they can do what they like and get away with it.
David cries out and asks God, 'Why are the wicked prospering, whilst the righteous struggle to make ends meet? Psalm 37:12, and God just laughs, Psalm 37:13, and says, 'don't worry about it, their time is coming to an end', Psalm 37:10.
God says, 'let them use their swords and bows to attack you, Psalm 37:14, but those very same swords and bows will end up killing them', Psalm 37:15. In other words, the righteous shouldn't stress about how little they have compared to the wicked, Psalm 37:16.
Because what little they do have will outlast what the wicked have, Psalm 37:17. David's point is simply this: if God is working for us, if God is taking care of us, Psalm 37:18-20, then, why are you worrying about what the wicked are doing?

'The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously; those the LORD blesses will inherit the land, but those he curses will be destroyed. The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand. I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be a blessing'. Psalm 37:21-26

David continues and gives us another piece of advice to help us with worry; he tells us to 'count our blessings'.
While the wicked borrow and don't repay, the righteous give generously, Psalm 37:21 / 2 Corinthians 9:7.
Christians are the richest people in the world because we have the richest Father in the world. We're the richest people in the world because we don't count our blessings in terms of pounds. We're the richest people in the world because what we do have comes from the Lord, Psalm 24:1-2 / Hebrews 2:10-18.

While those the LORD blesses will inherit the land, those he curses will be destroyed, Psalm 37:22. It's God who makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him, and though he may stumble, he will not fall, for He upholds him with His hand, Psalm 37:22-24.

David, in his old age, can't remember a time when God turned His back on the righteous Psalm 37:25. He can't remember a time when the righteous have gone without, and He says, we are so blessed, we can generously help others who aren't so blessed, Psalm 37:26 / 1 Chronicles 29:13-14.

God blesses us so that we can bless others, and because of our relationship with God, He promises to uphold us and destroy all evil. He says the wicked will be removed from God's people, so they can enjoy peace in the Promised Land. In other words, when we count our own blessings, we won't have time to count how other people are being blessed.

'Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever. For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed; the offspring of the wicked will perish. The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever. The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak what is just. The law of their God is in their hearts; their feet do not slip.' Psalm 37:27-31

David continues and gives us another piece of advice to help us with worry; he tells us to 'allow God's Word to transform us'. We turn from evil and do good, Psalm 37:27, and we use words of wisdom and speak justly, Psalm 37:28.

David says that the righteous must have the confidence to know that God is working for them, Psalm 37:29-30. David says the righteous have 'the law of their God in their heart', Psalm 37:31. The word 'transformed' used in Romans 12:2 / 2 Corinthians 3:18, and it is the Greek word, 'metamorphoo'.

In other words, when we approach God's Word, we must take the words off the pages and put them into our hearts, Psalm 37:31. Because when we put them in our hearts, they will morph our hearts and morph our lives. But we must be willing to allow God's Word to change us.

'The wicked lie in wait for the righteous, intent on putting them to death; but the LORD will not leave them in the power of the wicked or let them be condemned when brought to trial. Hope in the LORD and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it. I have seen a wicked and ruthless man flourishing like a luxuriant native tree, but he soon passed away and was no more; though I looked for him, he could not be found. Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future awaits those who seek peace. But all sinners will be destroyed; there will be no future for the wicked. The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD; he is their stronghold in time of trouble. The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.' Psalm 37:32-40

While the wicked lie in wait for the righteous, intent on putting them to death, the LORD won't leave them in the power of the wicked or let them be condemned when brought to trial, Psalm 37:32-33 / Romans 8:1.

David continues and gives us his final piece of advice to help us with worry, he tells us to 'place our hope in the Lord', Psalm 37:34. David ends his Psalm by contrasting the righteous with the wicked.

He says the wicked oppress the righteous, but the Lord delivers those who are His. David is looking around and sees the wicked thrive; he sees the righteous being unfairly treated, Psalm 37:35.

And in what looks like a hopeless situation, he reminds the righteous to put their hope in the Lord. He reminds them to trust God, trust that God will deliver them, Psalm 37:36, but at the same time, they must be patient, Psalm 37:37.

David says we should stop worrying and start trusting. He says all sinners will be destroyed, there will be no future for the wicked, Psalm 37:38 / Romans 6:23. He says we must trust and put our hope in God because He is our salvation, Psalm 37:39. He's the One who gives us the strength to endure in times of trials, Psalm 37:39. He's the One who promises that He will deliver us from those hard times, Psalm 37:40.

CONCLUSION

David reminded the righteous, who are facing hardships, that although the wicked are prospering at the moment, the wicked's prosperity will soon come to an end, Ecclesiastes 3:17. He reminded the righteous not to worry; the question is, do we trust God enough to wait on Him to deliver us?
We must give God our concerns and trust that He will deliver us from them, Matthew 6:25 / Matthew 6:34 / Philippians 4:6. We must be patient when we're going through trials, as this will help us to grow as Christians, James 1:2-3. Instead of focusing on what the wicked are doing, maybe we should pause and reflect upon how God is blessing us, Ephesians 1:3 / Colossians 3:1-2.
The hymn writer Johnson Oatman once asked, in his hymn, 'Count your blessings',

'Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
When you look at others with their lands and gold
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold.
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly.
And you will be singing as the days go by.'

When was the last time we tried to count our blessings? When was the last time we took the time to sit down to try and name them one by one?

CHAPTER 38

INTRODUCTION

This is another psalm of repentance, Psalm 6 / Psalm 32 / Psalm 51 / Psalm 102 / Psalm 130 / Psalm 43, which was written by David. In it, he simply pours his heart out to God in remorse.
It's clear his sin had become a great burden to him because of the guilt associated with his sin. Although we are not told the background to this psalm, some commentators believe it relates to his sin with Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11-12.

HEADING

'A psalm of David. A petition.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading simply tells us that this is a psalm of David, a petition, that is, a request. Some translations tell us it was 'to bring to remembrance', the same heading we find for Psalm 70.

'LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. Your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down on me. Because of your wrath, there is no health in my body; there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin. My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly. I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning. My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body. I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.' Psalm 38:1-8

Before we get into the text, we must remind ourselves that generally speaking, God doesn't inflict sickness on someone because of their sin, Job 2:7-10. However, on some occasions, He has, 1 Chronicles 11:30 / James 5:15.
In this psalm, David was feeling like God had disciplined him with an illness because of his sin and in the despair of his illness, his heart was turned to focus on his sin and God. He begins by asking God not to rebuke him or discipline him, Psalm 38:1.
He feels God's anger and wrath upon him and so he cries out to God and turned to God in his despair, Psalm 6:1.
Notice the language which David uses to describe why he felt was angry with him, he felt like God's discipline was like arrows which pierced him, and he felt that God's hand was pushing down on him, Psalm 38:2 / Job 6:4 / Psalm 45:5.
Although we don't know what kind of illness David was suffering from, it's clear he's in real agony, his body is aching, inside and out, Psalm 38:3. The consequences of his sin and the guilt he feels are too much for him; his conscience is condemning him for his sin, Psalm 38:4.
As a result, his mind wrestles, and he has no peace of mind. David was feeling God's anger and wrath not only spiritually but also physically, Psalm 38:5 / Judges 20:48 / Isaiah 1:6 / Psalm 41:8.
What's interesting is that David knew exactly what was going on; he was feeling this way because of his own sin, his own iniquities, and his own foolishness, Luke 13:1-5. He was a victim of his own doing, and he knew that God was disciplining him.
He's in great pain; he was bowed down very low, Psalm 38:6, which speaks of his grief and sorrow, Psalm 10:10 / Isaiah 2:11. He was feeling the heavy burden of his sin and hoped that God would show him compassion while he went about mourning, Psalm 38:6 / Psalm 32:3-4 / Isaiah 1:6 / Isaiah 53:5.
There appears to be no escape from the way David is feeling; he's obviously feeling deeply depressed, weak and broken, Psalm 14:1 / Psalm 35:14 / Isaiah 21:3.
David says his 'back is filled with searing pain', Psalm 38:7, which a few commentators believe is speaking about his internal muscles, which are near the kidneys.
Whatever David is referring to isn't really that important; what is important is that he was at an all-time low, physically and spiritually. He's 'feeling feeble', Psalm 38:8, that is, cold, Genesis 45:26, and he's feeling 'utterly crushed', Psalm 38:8, that is, broken to pieces, Isaiah 19:10 / Isaiah 57:15 / Isaiah 53:5.
He's groaning, Psalm 38:8 / Psalm 22:1 / Isaiah 5:30, or roaring, as some translations have it, before God and in total misery, Job 1:20 / Job 2:8 / Psalm 35:14.

'All my longings lie open before you, Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you. My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes. My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbours stay far away. Those who want to kill me set their traps, those who would harm me talk of my ruin; all day long they scheme and lie. I am like the deaf, who cannot hear, like the mute, who cannot speak; I have become like one who does not hear, whose mouth can offer no reply.' Psalm 38:9-14

David says all his longings lie open before God, and his sighing is not hidden from Him, Psalm 38:9. His heart just keeps pounding, he's losing strength, and his eyesight has been deeply affected, Psalm 38:10.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the word 'pounds'.

'The word rendered 'panteth', in its original form, means properly to go about, to travel around and then, to travel around as a merchant or pedlar, or for purposes of traffic, Genesis 23:16 / Genesis 37:28 / Genesis 42:34. Applied to the heart, as it is here, it means to move about rapidly, to palpitate, to beat quick. It is an expression of pain and distress, indicated by a rapid beating of the heart.'

The guilt of David's sin made him feel vulnerable as his friends and family abandoned him, Psalm 38:11. Not only was David's heart pounding, but his strength was going, and his eyes were failing, Psalm 38:9-10. He obviously saw himself as one who was approaching death, Psalm 13:3 / Psalm 6:7 / Psalm 31:9.

His so-called friends and his companions were avoiding him, Job 2:11 / Job 19:21 / Psalm 31:11. They just let him suffer alone and didn't want to come to his aid, Psalm 38:11.

The word 'wounds', Psalm 38:11 / Deuteronomy 17:8 / Deuteronomy 21:5, implies that his friends and companions saw David as someone who was afflicted with some contagious disease, someone who was being judged by God, Genesis 12:17 / Exodus 11:1.

As a result of his friends leaving him, he felt like he was open to attack from his enemies; he couldn't defend himself, Psalm 38:12. David was feeling the pressure; his friends and companions offered him no support, and his enemies were continually trying to ruin him.

With David feeling the way he does, he is vulnerable to attack; he knows his enemies are trying to take advantage of the way he's feeling, hence why they set traps for him, Psalm 38:12 / Psalm 9:15, and spread lies about him all day long, Psalm 38:12 / Psalm 35:20.

Like someone who can't hear or speak, Psalm 38:13-14 / 2 Samuel 16:10 / Isaiah 53:7 / Matthew 26:63 / Matthew 27:12 / Matthew 27:14 / 1 Peter 2:23, he felt powerless to defend himself.

'LORD, I wait for you; you will answer, Lord my God. For I said, "Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me when my feet slip." For I am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me. I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin. Many have become my enemies without cause; those who hate me without reason are numerous. Those who repay my good with evil lodge accusations against me, though I seek only to do what is good. LORD, do not forsake me; do not be far from me, my God. Come quickly to help me, my Lord, and my Saviour.' Psalm 38:15-22

Although David is clearly going through 'the mill', as we say, we must admire his patience to endure all the wrongs he had suffered, Psalms 9:7 / Matthew 10:22 / Hebrews 12:20 / 2 Timothy 3:11. At this moment in time, he needs God more than ever; he waits and places his hope in God, Psalm 38:15.

Notice within these verses, David uses the three words which are commonly used to refer to God, 'LORD', Psalm 38:15 / Psalm 38:21, that is, Yahweh. 'Lord', Psalm 38:15 / Psalm 38:22, that is, Adonai, and 'God', Psalm 38:15 / Psalm 38:21, that is, Elohim.

Because David was feeling deeply depressed and because of his enemies wanting to kill him, he believed that God will answer his prayer, Psalm 38:15, take care of him and defend him, Psalm 37:5-6 / 1 Peter 2:23.

His enemies were 'exalting themselves', Psalm 38:16, that is, because David was feeling the way he was feeling, they would feel great about themselves because of it, Psalm 35:26.

Notice it was when David was about to fall, and the pain he was feeling was too much, that he finally repented and confessed his iniquity, Psalm 38:18. There are times when a person needs to hit rock bottom before they will repent and confess their sins to God, Matthew 5:1-12 / Luke 15:11–32.

David could no longer carry the guilt and shame of his sin; he had to confess his iniquity because his sin was troubling him, Psalm 38:18. This shows David's humility; there's no blaming others for his sin, there are no long-winded excuses for his sins, and he admits that he is a sinner, Leviticus 26:41.

His enemies have no cause to be his enemies, and he is hated without any cause, Psalm 38:19. Despite David doing only good to his enemies, they repay him with evil accusations, Psalm 38:20 / Psalm 35:11-18 / Matthew 22:35-40 / Luke 6:27-36.
Because David was feeling the way he felt, he didn't feel God's presence with him; he asks God not to forsake him, not to be far from him and to come quickly to help him, Psalm 38:21 / Psalm 10:1 / Psalm 13:1 / Psalm 35:22.
David ends his psalm with nothing changed; he's still feeling the way he feels about his sin and his enemies, but the good news is that he never lost his faith in God. He calls upon his Lord, that is his master and his Saviour, Psalm 38:22 / Psalm 27:1, to help him in his time of need.

CONCLUSION

In this psalm, we see that David never tried to run and hide from his sin as Adam and Eve did, Genesis 3:8. He openly confessed his sin, his iniquity, and his foolishness before God, just as Christians should do today.
We must remember that God is a holy God, 1 Peter 1:16, and he doesn't tolerate sin, Isaiah 59:2. We can't ignore our sin or try to cover up by blaming others for our sins, Genesis 3:12-13 / Proverbs 28:13 / Ezekiel 18:20-24.
David felt the consequences of his sin physically. Confessing our sins to each other is one way God has provided for us, in order that we may be healed from the physical consequences of our sin, James 5:16.
But God, in His grace, recognises we also need healing spiritually; these are the times when we don't feel God's presence because of our guilt. For that to happen, we must confess our sins to Him in order to restore our fellowship with Him once again, 1 John 1:9.

CHAPTER 39

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is another psalm of repentance, and many people believe it is a sequel to the previous psalm. David, who is going through a tough time, begins the psalm by telling us he is lost for words, then he finds the words to speak, and finally, he prays about his troubles.

HEADING

'For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a psalm of David, for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
Jeduthun was one of the musicians appointed by David to lead Israel's worship, 1 Chronicles 16:41 / 1 Chronicles 25:1-3. He also mentioned in the headings of Psalm 62 and Psalm 77.

'I said, "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth while in the presence of the wicked." So I remained utterly silent, not even saying anything good. But my anguish increased; my heart grew hot within me. While I meditated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue: "Show me, LORD, my life's end, and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure. "Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom; in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth without knowing whose it will finally be.' Psalm 39:1-6

David begins his psalm by asking God to help him not speak foolishly or sinfully when the wicked are before him, Psalm 39:1. He will put a muzzle, Psalm 39:1 / Deuteronomy 25:4 / 1 Corinthians 9:9, on his mouth while he's in the presence of the wicked, that is, he is going to restrain himself from saying the wrong thing.
It appears that David found it easier to say nothing than to speak words of wisdom, Psalm 39:2. Back in Psalm 38:13, David said he was feeling so low partly because of the wicked, that he wasn't able to defend himself with words. Here, he did well not to speak about his doubts or fears before the wicked, Psalm 39:2 / Psalm 73:15. As his anguish increases, his heart grows hotter, Psalm 39:2-3, which tells us that his silence has done nothing but bring him sorrow and anger, Deuteronomy 19:6 / Job 32:18-19 / Jeremiah 20:9 / Jeremiah 51:39 / Ezekiel 36:5.
It's clear that the more David thought about his problems, the more frustrated he became, the more he suppressed his feelings, and the worse he became. Surely, this is a lesson for all people today, not to bottle things up inside, but to speak to someone about how we're feeling.

David couldn't hold his feelings in any longer, and so, he turned to God in prayer, Psalm 39:3-4. He asks God to show him his life's end, the number of his day and the shortness of life, Psalm 39:4.
Henry, in his commentary, says the following.

'He prays to God to make him sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of life and the near approach of death. He asks God to give me wisdom and grace to consider it, Deuteronomy 32:29, and to improve what he knows concerning it, Ecclesiastes 9:5.'
Duhm, in his commentary, says the following concerning this prayer.

'In this Psalm, the psalmist has the idea of personal and conscious immortality before him. He longs to know whether his life, or at least his full conscious life, is to cease with death, and he here asks God to teach him this mystery.'

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'This expresses evidently the substance of those anxious and troubled thoughts of Psalm 39:1-2 to which he had been unwilling to give utterance. His thoughts turned on the shortness of life, on the mystery of the divine arrangement by which it had been made so short, and on the fact that so many troubles and sorrows had been crowded into a life so frail and so soon to terminate.'
David compares his days as a 'mere handbreadth', Psalm 39:5, which is around two inches, Job 6:4-12 / Job 7:7 / Job 14:1-13, but is nothing before God. Everyone's life, no matter how secure they feel, is but a breath, Psalm 39:5 / Job 7:7 / Psalm 144:4 / James 4:14.

You may notice at the end of verse five, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates the shortness of life.

Man indeed walks about as a mere phantom or shadow, Psalm 39:6 / 2 Kings 11:18 / Amos 5:26, and because life is so short, there is vanity to trying to amass wealth, Psalm 39:6 / Genesis 41:35 / Job 27:16 / Habakkuk 1:10.
People get so busy focusing on their wealth that they forget just how short life is, Job 27:16-19 / Ecclesiastes 2:18 / Ecclesiastes 2:21 / Ecclesiastes 5:13-14 / Luke 12:20.

'But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you. Save me from all my transgressions; do not make me the scorn of fools. I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for you are the one who has done this. Remove your scourge from me; I am overcome by the blow of your hand. When you rebuke and discipline anyone for their sin, you consume their wealth like a moth—surely everyone is but a breath. "Hear my prayer, LORD, listen to my cry for help; do not be deaf to my weeping. I dwell with you as a foreigner, a stranger, as all my ancestors were. Look away from me, that I may enjoy life again before I depart and am no more." Psalm 39:7-13

After realising that bottling his feelings up was doing him more harm than good, David talks to God and after doing so, he places his hope in God, Psalm 39:7. He understands that he can't do anything about the situation, but God can, Psalm 39:8.
Although we don't know exactly what transgression David is referring to, Psalm 39:8, he knows that only God can deliver him from his transgression, Psalm 39:8 / Romans 7:24-8:4.
Notice that David freely admits that he is a transgressor, he doesn't blame others for his transgression but knows what's happening to him is because it is God who is doing it to him.

David was 'silent', Psalm 39:9, that is, he didn't open his mouth to complain, he didn't speak of God as if he had dealt unkindly or unjustly with him, Psalm 39:2 / Isaiah 53:7. He knows he doesn't understand everything, but he also knows that it was God who wouldn't let him speak, Psalm 39:9.
He asks God to remove His scourge because God's hand was too much on him, Psalm 39:10. This tells us that when God was disciplining him, it was painful in many ways; therefore, he asks God for some relief.
He describes how the Lord's rebuke and discipline are like a moth, Psalm 39:11. As a moth consumes or destroys valuable objects, such as clothing, the strength of man is consumed or destroyed, as the texture of the cloth is consumed by the moth, Job 4:19.
David asks God to hear his prayer, Psalm 39:12, that is, to hear the remorse in David's heart because of his transgression. He wants God to have mercy on him, and to hear his cries and his tears of repentance, Psalm 39:12 / Job 16:20 / Romans 8:26.
David, along with his ancestors were foreigners in a strange land, Psalm 39:12 / Exodus 22:21, but he understood that he was only passing through this life, Psalm 39:21 / Hebrews 11:13 / 1 Peter 2:11.
He understood that in the briefness of his life on earth, Psalm 39:13, he could enjoy the creation which was owned by God, 1 Chronicles 29:15 / Hebrews 11:13-15.
Before passing from life, David wanted to be forgiven of his transgression, Job 9:27 / Job 10:20 / Amos 5:9, and he wanted to be healed of his physical illness before he died.
It appears that David thought that if he was going to die, he didn't want to die feeling the way he was feeling; he wanted to die being right with God, Job 14:1-12 / Psalm 6:5 / Psalm 30:9.

CONCLUSION

David struggled to express how he was feeling; he bottled his feelings up deep within himself, and as a result, he just felt even worse. However, when he started to pray to God about how he was feeling, he ended up feeling a sense of hope. All too often in our Christian lives, we bottle things up because we think our problems are far too big for God to help us with.

When we turn to God, He helps us put things into perspective, Matthew 16:24-27 / Romans 5:3-5 / Romans 8:28 / 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 / Philippians 4:10-13 / Hebrews 12:1 / James 1:2-4 / James 1:12.
God helps us see that He is more powerful than any problem we may be facing, John 16:33 / Matthew 8:23-27 / Psalm 40:1-3, and He reminds us that He is with us through our problems, John 16:33 / Romans 5:9 / Galatians 2:20 / Ephesians 1:7 / Ephesians 2:14-21 / Colossians 1:19-22 / 1 Thessalonians 5:10-11 / Hebrews 13:5.
God reminds us that He will give us peace, whilst we go through our problems, Numbers 6:25-26 / John 16:33 / John 14:27 / Philippians 4:7, and He reminds us that He can take our problems and make something good out of them, Genesis 45:4-8 / Proverbs 16:9 / Romans 8:28 / James 1:2-3 / 1 Peter 1:6-9.

CHAPTER 40

INTRODUCTION

This psalm of David is a psalm where he gives a sacrifice of praise, then later he cries out to God for help. This psalm is also partly prophetic as it speaks of Christ. Psalm 40:6-8 are quoted by the Hebrew writer, Hebrews 10:5-10, and Psalm 40:12-17 is similar to Psalm 70.

HEADING

‘For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a psalm of David, for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the ‘director of music’ is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

‘I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him. Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. Many, LORD my God, are the wonders

you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.' Psalm 40:1-5

David begins by reminding us that he had to wait patiently for the Lord to answer his prayer, Psalm 40:1, as he had done numerous times before, Psalm 25:5 / Psalm 25:21 / Psalm 27:14 / Psalm 37:7 / Psalm 37:9 / Psalm 39:7. This tells us that not all of our prayers will be answered as quickly as we would like. On this occasion, God heard his cry and answered him, Psalm 40:1.

After waiting on the Lord to answer his prayer, he praises God for lifting him out of the 'slimy pit and mud and mire', Psalm 40:2. When God lifts us from the slippery depths of despair, He always puts our feet back on solid ground, Psalm 40:2.

When He does deliver us from the deep paths of our sin, Psalm 40:2, that is, forgive us for our sins, our response will always be to sing a new song, Psalm 40:3 / Jeremiah 31:31-35.

David tells us that many see, fear and trust in God, Psalm 40:3, and when he tells others about what God has done for him, he encourages everyone who isn't proud and puts their trust in false gods, to put their trust in the Lord, Psalm 40:3-4 / Isaiah 30:7.

No one compares to God, Psalm 40:5, especially if we were to speak about His many deeds, Psalm 40:5. David realises he's lost count of the number of times God has come to his aid, Psalm 40:5.

'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—but my ears you have opened—burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, "Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart." I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, LORD, as you know. I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly. Do not withhold your mercy from me, LORD; may your love and faithfulness always protect me. For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me.' Psalm 40:6-12

God never really desired sacrifices and offerings, Psalm 40:6, that is, He never accepted those sacrifices and offerings that were legalistic and were given without a sincere heart, Isaiah 1:11-15 / Micah 6:6-8.

David's ears were open, Psalm 40:6, which is possibly referring to being a slave having their ear pierced, Exodus 21:5-6, but what God really wanted was for His people to listen to Him and obey His will, 1 Samuel 15:22-23.

Notice that Psalm 40:6-8 are quoted in Hebrews 10:5-7, in reference to the Messiah. "Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll', is a reference to the Mosaic Law, but we must note that nowhere in the Pentateuch, that is, the first five Books of the Bible, is David mentioned. However, the Pentateuch does contain many prophecies concerning the Messiah, that is, Jesus, Genesis 3:15 / Genesis 49:10 / Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'As the writer of Hebrews pointed out, the inferences here are tremendous. 1. This means that God's will had not been done previously. 2. It means that the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant were not effective in removing sin. 3. It means that God would take away the old Law, or the Old Covenant, and 4. That God would establish a New Covenant, Hebrews 10:9.'

David says, 'I desire to do your will', Psalm 40:8. God's commandments aren't burdensome, especially if we love Him, John 4:34 / 1 John 5:3 / 2 Corinthians 4:15.

David was a man after God's own heart, so doing God's will was a delight, 1 Samuel 13:14 / Acts 13:22. However, David was once again referring to Jesus, Hebrews 10:9.

David says, 'your law is within my heart,' Psalm 40:8. This again is another reference to the New Covenant, which would come into being at the coming of Christ, Jeremiah 31:33.

David says he will proclaim God's saving acts in the great assembly, Psalm 40:9. In other words, he wants God to be glorified, and he wasn't going to stop his lips from praising God. This again was fulfilled in Jesus, Psalm 22:22 / Hebrews 2:12.

David doesn't want to hide God's righteousness; he wants everyone to know of God's faithfulness and saving power, Psalm 40:10 / Psalms 107:2. David knows he has many troubles, and his sins have become a burden, to the point where his eyes have been affected and his heart, Psalm 40:11-12.

For David, this would mean that the sorrows from which he pleads for deliverance are the result of his own sins. However, for Christ, this would mean the consequences of the sins of all men that God has laid upon Christ have begun to catch up with Him, Isaiah 53:5.

'Be pleased to save me, LORD; come quickly, LORD, to help me. May all who want to take my life be put to shame and confusion; may all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace. May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!" be appalled at their own shame. But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who long for your saving help always say, "The LORD is great!" But as for me, I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; you are my God, do not delay.' Psalm 40:13-17

The verses we read here are almost the same as Psalm 70. David here doesn't ask God to forgive him his sins; he asks only for God's help and deliverance, Psalm 40:13 / Psalm 22:19.

It's possible that David was requesting salvation from the guilt that resulted from his sins. However, it's possible that this refers to the time when Christ was asking for help and salvation from the suffering He's about to endure, Matthew 36:36-46.

David felt that his enemies sought to take his life, and so he asked the Lord to put them to shame, be confused and disgraced, Psalm 40:14. If we apply this to Christ, this would be referring to the times when Christ's life was in danger, Matthew 26:18 / John 7:6 / John 18:6.

The words, 'Aha! Aha! Psalm 40:15, are words of reproach and contempt. They are used when a person rejoices over a fallen enemy, Psalm 35:21 / Psalm 35:25 / Ezekiel 25:3. If we apply these words to Christ, they would be referring to taunts and reproaches of his enemies after He was arrested, Matthew 27:29-31 / Mark 15:29-30.

David now calls all those who seek God, those who long to seek God, to rejoice and be glad; he wants them to glorify the Lord together, Psalm 40:16. David felt 'poor and needy', Psalm 40:17. These are words which imply poverty and sorrow.

If we apply these words to Christ, we know that He owned nothing except the clothes He wore. He had nowhere to lay His head, Luke 9:58. He was rich but became poor for our sake, so that we can be rich, 2 Corinthians 8:9. He was certainly a man of sorrows, Isaiah 53:3.

Despite feeling poor and needy, David says, 'may the Lord think of me', Psalm 40:17. This should read, 'yet, the Lord thinks about me', Jonah 1:6. In other words, he's not asking God to think about him.

He's acknowledging that the Lord does care for him, and He hasn't forgotten about him. He's saying, a man leaves him to poverty and sorrow, but God doesn't and won't leave him.

David felt secure in knowing that God cared for him, and so he asked God to be his helper and deliverer, Psalm 40:17 / Psalm 18:2. He asks God to help him without any delay, Psalm 40:17.

When we think of Christ, these words show a strong confidence in God, the Father, in the midst of His afflictions and sorrows, with earnest pleading, coming from the depth of those sorrows, that God would intervene for Him, Matthew 27:46 / John 19:30 / Luke 23:46.

CONCLUSION

David spoke words in this psalm which were later quoted by the Hebrew author. According to Hebrews 10:4, the worshipers knew that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. The Law of Moses was a shadow of a coming sacrifice that would take away sins.
If the Law of Moses could take away sins and cleanse the consciences of the worshipers, then the sacrifices would still be offered. But the sacrifices simply reminded the worshipers of the guilt of their sins and did not take away sins.

The writer of Hebrews goes on to prove the point that sacrifices were insufficient to deal with removing our sins. The illustration comes from Jesus and the quotation of Old Testament Scripture, Psalm 40:5-7 / Hebrews 10:5-7.
Psalm 40 is a song of salvation and deliverance. Rather than quoting these words and attributing them to David, the writer of Hebrews attributes the words as spoken by Christ. This is a conversation between Christ and Father.
When Christ was to come in the flesh, these are the words of the conversation. The Father did not want more animal sacrifices and offerings. The answer was in the body prepared for Christ. The sacrifice of Christ would be the answer for sins, Hebrews 10:8.
God did not take pleasure in the burnt offerings and sin sacrifices. God took pleasure in the perfect obedience of Jesus. This has always been true concerning God and His desire, 1 Samuel 15:22.
Jesus came to do the will of the Father, something no human had ever accomplished previously and would never accomplish later. Only Jesus was able to completely do the will of the Father.

Jesus came to do God's will, Hebrews 10:9-10. What was God's will? To take away the first covenant and establish a second covenant through which we can have true cleansing.
The writer of Hebrews has spent a lengthy amount of time teaching us that Jesus is the High Priest, which means there must be a new law. Jesus needed a body. Why?

1. To be able to communicate with mankind in a personal, unmistakable and uncomplicated manner.

2. To present the 'signs' which were to be the authentication and endorsement of His Messiahship.

3. To set the human race as the perfect example of obedience to the will of the Father.

4. And above all, by means of that perfect life, to demonstrate His worthiness to become the perfect offering for the sin of the world.

And so the Word must become flesh, John 1:1-3 / John 1:14. This was the divine plan, and it is why we find the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, placing the words of David, Psalm 40:6-8, into the Lord's mouth, Hebrews 10:5.

CHAPTER 41

INTRODUCTION

This psalm covers many topics, but mainly focuses on laments. David appears to be suffering from some illness, and he asks God to deliver him from those who are oppressing him, that is, his enemies and so-called friends.

HEADING

‘For the director of music. A psalm of David.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a psalm of David, for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the ‘director of music’ is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

‘Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the LORD delivers them in times of trouble. The LORD protects and preserves them—they are counted among the blessed in the land—he does not give them over to the desire of their foes. The LORD sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness.’ Psalm 41:1-3

David begins by reflecting on the blessings he received from the Lord as a result of his care for the weak, Psalm 41:1. He received deliverance, blessing, strength and mercy from the Lord because he had shown the same to the poor, Leviticus 19:9-10 / Leviticus 23:22 / Deuteronomy 24:19. Anyone who cares for the weak is blessed, Psalm 1:1.
He tells us that God will deliver those who have regard for the weak in their time of trouble, Psalm 41:1 / Psalm 18:24-26. God will also protect and preserve those who have regard for the weak, Psalm 41:2 / Psalm 1:3 / Psalm 37:3-4 / Psalm 37:11 / Psalm 37:23-26 / Psalm 37:37 / Matthew 5:5 / 1 Timothy 4:8.
David personally felt that God would give him good health while he was in his bed of sickness, Psalm 41:3. We don’t know what illness David was suffering from.
Coffman, in his commentary, suggests the following.

‘If we place this psalm in the times of the rebellion of Absalom, it fits exceptionally well. ‘The bosom friend’, Psalms 41:9, could well be Ahithophel and David’s illness would have led to David’s omission of many duties as charged by Absalom, 2 Samuel 15:2-6.’

‘I said, “Have mercy on me, LORD; heal me, for I have sinned against you.” My enemies say of me in malice, “When will he die and his name perish?” When one of them comes to see me, he speaks falsely, while his heart gathers slander; then he goes out and spreads it around. All my enemies whisper together against me; they imagine the worst for me, saying, “A vile disease has afflicted him; he will never get up from the place where he lies.” Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.’ Psalm 41:4-9

Because David had shown mercy to others, the Lord showed mercy to him, Psalm 41:4. Although we’re not told what David’s sin was, he felt that his illness was connected to his sin, hence why he admits he has sinned against the Lord, Psalm 41:4 / Psalm 38:3-5.
His enemies plotted evil against David while he was sick, and they rejoiced because they thought he would eventually die because of it, Psalm 41:5. They couldn’t wait for David to die; they couldn’t wait to have an opportunity to rejoice when he died.
When his enemies came to visit him when he was sick, 2 Kings 8:29, they went around everywhere, speaking falsely against him and slandering him, Psalm 41:6 / Job 1:9-11.

We can imagine them visiting David to find some fault, but when they couldn't find any fault, they would make things up to try, Psalm 41:7-8, and tell everyone they met that he wasn't really a man after God's own heart, 1 Samuel 13:14 / Acts 13:22.
We know that 'they imagined the worst for him', Psalm 41:7, that is, his enemies couldn't wait for him to die. We don't know what the 'vile disease', Psalm 41:8, was, but David described something similar in Psalm 38:3, and Psalm 38:6-8.
He tells us that his closest friend, someone he trusted, shared his bread, has also turned against him, Psalm 41:9. His close friend could be one of two people. He could be referring to his trusted advisor, Ahithophel, 2 Samuel 15:12 / 2 Samuel 15:31, or he could be referring to his son, Absalom, 2 Samuel 15.
Jesus Himself quoted these exact words in reference to Judas, who betrayed Him, John 13:18. The words, 'has turned against me', can also be translated as, 'had lifted up his heel against me', which is symbolic of the act of treachery, Genesis 3:15 / Psalm 55:12-14.

'But may you have mercy on me, LORD; raise me up, that I may repay them. I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me. Because of my integrity, you uphold me and set me in your presence forever. Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.' Psalm 41:10-13

David asks God to show him mercy, Psalm 41:10. In other words, he asks God to heal him of his sickness, so that he can 'repay them', Psalm 41:10. If David has his son Absalom in mind here, then as a restored king, David felt that it was his duty to render justice to those who had betrayed him, Proverbs 25:21-22 / Romans 12:20-21.
David is confident that God is pleased with him, Psalm 41:11 / Psalm 20:6, which in turn tells us he is confident that God will hear his prayer, Philemon 1:25. The evidence of this is seen in the fact that David says his enemies haven't triumphed over him, Psalm 41:11.
It was because of David's integrity, Job 1:1, that is, his uprightness, his sincerity, that God upheld him, Psalm 41:12. His enemies and close friends looked at David's illness as proof that he was a hypocrite, someone who didn't really know God. David isn't boasting about himself here; he's comparing what he is like to his enemies and his close friend, Psalm 7:8 / Psalm 25:21 / Psalm 26:1 / Psalm 26:11.
David ends by giving praise to God, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting, Psalm 41:13, which means God has no beginning and no end, Isaiah 44:6 / Revelation 1:8 / Revelation 22:13. Notice the double 'amen', Psalm 41:13. A single 'amen' usually means so be it, but the double 'amen' emphasises that what has been said is absolutely true.
It may come as a surprise to many that the word 'amen' only occurs thirty-five times in the Old Testament, five of which are found as a double word, 'amen', 'amen.' These words conclude the first book of the five books of the Psalms.

CONCLUSION

Saying the 'amen' is commonplace for Christians; usually, it's said after a prayer, sometimes it's said during or after the Word has been preached. Like so many things we practice in Christianity, there's a real danger of saying the 'amen' out of habit and without thinking about what it is we're actually saying. There's also the danger that it just becomes a byword for ending a prayer or sermon with its meaning lost.

When we say the 'amen', we usually say it at the end of a prayer, whilst those listening also say it. Those who say 'amen' at the end of their prayer usually say it because they believe what they've said is right before God and in accordance with His will, 1 John 5:14.

And for those listening they say ‘amen’ because they agree with what has been said, they believe that what has been said is true, in accordance to God’s will and want it to be so.

I remember being a visiting speaker in one congregation, and there was this one guy in the audience who zealously shouted ‘amen’ to almost every sentence that came from my mouth.

I personally find this very distracting, but as it turns out, he did that with everyone who preached. I guess some people have just got into the habit of saying it, without thinking about what they are saying or agreeing to.

I don’t believe there’s anything wrong with Christians saying ‘amen’ during a sermon if they agree with what is being preached, but not all the way through the sermon, as this can become very distracting and the word itself becomes meaningless.

With no disrespect to anyone, over the years I’ve heard countless prayers and countless sermons where I haven’t said the ‘amen’, simply because I haven’t clearly understood what was being said, 1 Corinthians 14:16.
There are other times I won’t say the ‘amen’, simply because I don’t agree with what has been said or there was no truth in what was said in that prayer or in that sermon.

No Christian should say the ‘amen’ if they don’t agree with or understand something which was said, especially if it wasn’t in accordance with God’s will or in line with His Word. No Christian should say the ‘amen’ just because everyone else does or because they are encouraged by others, Revelation 22:20-21.

CHAPTER 42

INTRODUCTION

In the second book of the Psalms, we see several texts that relate to the fears that troubled people and the paths to which they turn for help. We learn about the true and the false grounds for hope in a world of uncertainty. In Book 2, we find that eighteen psalms are ascribed to David and one to Solomon, Psalm 72; the rest are anonymous.
In Book 1, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found two hundred and seventy-three times. In Book 2, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found seventy-four times. In Book 3, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found thirteen times, and finally, in Books 4 and 5, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found three-hundred and thirty-nine times. As you can see, the name ‘Yahweh’ is more popular in Book 1.

In Book 1, the name ‘Elohim’ is found fifteen times. In Book 2, the name ‘Elohim’ is found two hundred and seven times. In Book 3, the name ‘Elohim’ is found thirty-six times and finally, in Books 4 and 5, the name ‘Elohim’ is found seven times. As you can see, the name ‘Elohim’ is more popular in Book 2.

This psalm is another psalm of lament. We’re not told who the author is, but the psalmist appears to be in exile among those who don’t believe in God. While the psalmist is in exile, they reminisce about the times when they were able to go to the house of God together with other believers to worship Him. Some commentators believe that this psalm and the next psalm actually belong together as one psalm.

HEADING

‘For the director of music. A maskil of the Sons of Korah.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a psalm for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the ‘director of music’ is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
No one really knows what the word ‘maskil’ means; some believe it’s a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.
The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It’s possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.

‘As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, “Where is your God?” These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng. Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour, and my God.’ Psalm 42:1-5

The psalmist begins by likening their thirst for God to a deer that is thirsty, Psalm 42:1 / Deuteronomy 12:15 / Deuteronomy 14:5 / Isaiah 35:6. They crave communion with God, Romans 12:1-2, their souls thirst for the living God, Psalm 42:2.
The psalmist’s longing to have communion with God is seen in the question, ‘Where can I go and meet with God?’ Psalm 42:2. The answer, of course, was God’s house, Exodus 23:15 / Exodus 25:30, the place where God dwells and where the ark of the covenant was present, 1 Chronicles 13:10 / 2 Samuel 6:7.
The psalmist appears to be contrasting the pagan dead gods with the true living God, who is alive and active in the lives of people, Jeremiah 10:10. They constantly cry, Psalm 42:3 / Psalm 1:2 / Psalm 39:12, and their tears have become their food, Psalm 42:3, that is, their tears keep them going.
It appears the more their enemies asked the psalmist, ‘Where is your God?’, Psalm 42:3 / Psalm 42:10, the more they get upset. The psalmist may have also been asking himself this very question; they may have felt alone and abandoned by God, Psalm 3:2 / Psalm 22:8.
They ‘pour out their soul’, Psalm 42:4 / Job 30:16, that is, their soul just melts, as these memories of the good old days which were filled with shouts of joy and praise bring back a lot of joy, Psalm 42:4.

The psalmist remembers how life was like when they and other believers went to worship God in His house, Psalm 42:4, that is, the tabernacle, Psalm 23:6. The psalmist remembers how protected they felt by the Mighty One; they remember the shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng, Psalm 42:4.

The 'festive throng', Psalm 42:4, is a reference to all the holidays within the Jewish calendar. These were times of great celebrations, eating, drinking and spending a lot of time together. This would include the feasts of Passover, Exodus 12, Pentecost, Exodus 34:22-23 / Leviticus 23:1-19, and the Tabernacle, Deuteronomy 26:1-11.

The psalmist continues to ask themselves why they are so upset, but then they turn to God for hope, Psalm 42:5. They will praise Him, they will praise their Saviour, God, Psalm 42:5.

Some translations end this verse with the words, 'the help of his countenance', Psalm 4:6 / Psalm 11:7 / Psalm 21:6 / Psalm 44:3 / Psalm 89:15, which means the psalmist is hoping that God would look favourably upon them.

'My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. By day, the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life. I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?" My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?" Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour, and my God.'
Psalm 42:6-11

It appears that every time the psalmist feels down, they choose to remember. Here, they remember when they were in the land of Jordan, Psalm 42:6 / Jeremiah 49:19 / Jeremiah 50:44, where Mount Hermon is. This is where David once fled when his son, Absalom, rebelled against him, 2 Samuel 15:19-37.

The psalmist's life was like one flood coming after another; they were being overcome by the floods of those who opposed them, Psalm 42:7. The rushing, heaving, and restless waters provided the psalmist with an illustration of the deep sorrows of their soul, Psalm 124:4-5.

The psalmist remembers God's love once again, Psalm 42:8 / Psalm 42:5, whilst feeling down, and when they do, they want to praise God, Psalm 42:8. Regardless of how they are feeling, regardless of all the turmoil, which is happening around them, they want to sing praises to God, Job 35:10 / Acts 16:25, their hope remained in God.

Despite God being their Rock, Psalm 42:9, who is their helper and Saviour, Psalm 18:2, the psalmist appears to think that God has forgotten them, Psalm 42:9, or forsaken them, Psalm 22:1. As a result, they were mourning, Psalm 42:9 / Psalm 35:14 / Psalm 38:6.

They felt oppressed by their enemies, and they felt in distress, Psalm 42:9 / Job 36:15 / 1 Kings 22:27 / Isaiah 30:20. When their enemies asked, 'where is your God?', Psalm 42:10, they felt like their enemies' words were cutting them down, crushing them, Ezekiel 21:22.

Because their enemies said this to them all day long, Psalm 42:10, that is, constantly, the psalmist felt like God had indeed forgotten and abandoned them. Once again, the psalmist in the midst of their distress remembers God and puts their hope in Him, Psalm 42:11. They will continue to praise God, their Saviour, no matter how they are feeling and no matter what their enemies may say.

CONCLUSION

Whilst in exile, the psalmist felt really despondent, but they remembered the good old days, the joyful days of the festive celebrations, the days when they praised God and worshipped Him at the tabernacle and the days when they were in the land of Jordan.

As Christians, when we're feeling despondent, it may be helpful for us to reminisce about the good old days. The days when we were together with God's people in worship, the days when we just blasted out, from the depths of our hearts, songs of praise, Ephesians 5:19 / Colossians 3:16 / Hebrews 13:15.
When we're feeling down, those are the times to remember our times together with God's people outside of worship times, Hebrews 10:23-25. Those are the times to remember that all is not lost, God hasn't forgotten us or forsaken us, but He is still our living hope and Saviour, Psalm 71:5 / Psalm 39:7 / Psalm 43:5 / Lamentations 3:24 / 1 Peter 1:3.

CHAPTER 43

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is another psalm of lament. We're not told who the author is, but the psalmist appears to lament over unjust treatment, and so, they ask God to deliver them from the unjust judgement of men. Some commentators believe that this psalm and the previous psalm actually belong together as one psalm.

'Vindicate me, my God, and plead my cause against an unfaithful nation. Rescue me from those who are deceitful and wicked. You are God, my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy? Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy, and my delight. I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour, and my God.' Psalm 43:1-5

The psalmist begins by asking God to vindicate him, Psalm 43:1, that is, judge him, to take up his cause, Psalm 7:8 / Psalm 26:1. They felt that the way they were being treated by an unfaithful nation was unjust and merciless, Psalm 43:1. David felt like this when his son, Absalom turned against him, 2 Samuel 15:31 / 2 Samuel 16:23 / 2 Samuel 17:14 / 2 Samuel 17:23.
The people of this unfaithful nation were deceitful and wicked, Psalm 43:1, but the psalmist recognises that God is their stronghold, Psalm 43:2 / Psalm 18:2 / Psalm 28:7. The psalmist feels as though God has rejected them, Psalm 43:2; they felt alone and abandoned, Psalm 22:1 / Isaiah 19:6 / Hosea 8:3 / Hosea 8:5 / Revelation 3:16.
They ask God why they should go on mourning because of the oppressions they receive from their enemy, Psalm 43:2 / Psalm 42:9. They ask God to send His light and His faithful care, Psalm 43:3. In other words, they seek God's presence and favour during their time of distress, Psalm 4:6.
The psalmist knows that God's light and care will lead them to God's holy mountain, where God dwells, Psalm 43:3. This would be the tabernacle, which symbolised the presence of God in Israel, Psalm 15:1. This also implies, just as the previous psalm does, Psalm 42:1-11, that the psalmist is in exile somewhere.
They know that God's light and care will lead them to the 'altar of God', Psalm 43:4 / 2 Samuel 6:17. This implies that the psalmist is confident that God will answer their prayer and they can go and offer a sacrifice to the Lord, Exodus 27:1-8 / Psalm 42:4 / Hebrews 13:10 / Hebrews 13:15.
They look forward to being in the presence of God with other believers to worship God, who is their joy and delight, Psalm 43:4. In the Old Testament, it was common practice to praise God with musical instruments in worship, Psalm 43:4 / Psalm 33:2-3. David was famous for playing the lyre, 1 Samuel 16:16-23.
Notice how personal the psalmist thinks of God; they say, 'O God, my God', Psalm 43:4 / Psalm 22:1. Despite going through all kinds of troubles, the psalmist didn't lose sight of who God was and what He meant to them.

Since the psalmist had just reviewed their hope in God, they concluded by questioning why they were in despair, Psalm 43:5 / James 1:2-3 / 2 Timothy 3:12. This is the same question the previous psalmist asked when they were going through a difficult time, which infers that the writer of this psalm is the same person, Psalm 42:5 / Psalm 42:11.

The psalmist speaks to themselves again and reminds themselves to put their 'hope in God', Psalm 43:5. They have full confidence that God will answer their prayer because they say they will praise their Saviour and God again, Psalm 43:5.

They have full confidence that they will be in God's presence once again. Some translations end this verse with the words, 'the help of his countenance', Psalm 4:6 / Psalm 11:7 / Psalm 21:6 / Psalm 44:3 / Psalm 89:15, which means the psalmist is hoping that God would look favourably upon them.

CONCLUSION

Despite being in despair, the psalmist asked God to send His light, which would lead them back into the presence of God with other believers. Jesus is the light of the world, and as the light, He asks us to follow Him in order to get out of the darkness, John 8:12.

However, Jesus also says that Christians are the light of the world, who should let their light shine in order that others would see it and encourage them to come to Him, Matthew 5:14-15.

The church would be much more effective if all Christians shone every day of the week. It's just sad that some only shine on Sunday mornings. Jesus says, 'you're the light of the world', not just your place of worship. He says, 'let people see that light, 'let your light so shine before men.'

And as one of God's stars, we have to reflect on the brilliance of God's holiness in this dark world, because the world is filled with crooks and perverts, Philippians 2:14-15. God wants big stars in this dark world we live in, Ephesians 5:8-14.

Sometimes people of the world will criticise the light, and sometimes they will argue with the light. Sometimes they will mock the light, but we've got to keep on shining.

Remember that Jesus says, 'I am the light of the world,' not for the Jews only, but for everyone else as well. Jesus doesn't care where we come from or what our background is. He says eternal life is available to everyone and anyone who believes in Him, John 8:12 / John 12:46.

CHAPTER 44

INTRODUCTION

Although we are not told about the actual historical background to this psalm, it appears to be written about a time when there was national despair, when the psalmist was in captivity, Psalm 44:11.

Some believe it's referring to the Babylonian captivity, whilst others believe it could be referring to a time when Israel was restrained by the nations around them, just before Judah fell in 586 B.C. Others believe it could be referring to a time when Israel suffered a defeat by their enemies.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a psalm for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
No one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.
The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It's possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.

'We have heard it with our ears, O God; our ancestors have told us what you did in their days, in days long ago. With your hand, you drove out the nations and planted our ancestors; you crushed the peoples and made our ancestors flourish. It was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory; it was your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face, for you loved them.' Psalm 44:1-3

The psalmist begins by bringing back to their memories the time when God delivered the nations of the land into their hand, Psalm 44:1. Notice that their ancestors told them, which means the account was told over and over again, from one generation to the next, Exodus 10:2 / Exodus 12:26-27 / Psalm 145:4.
It was God who drove out the nations, Psalm 44:2 / Genesis 3:23 / 1 Kings 9:7, not Israel. It was God who drove out the Canaanites and planted Israel in the land promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Psalm 44:2 / Psalm 80:8-11.
It was by the hand of God that the nations were driven out, not by the sword of Israel, Psalm 44:3 / Deuteronomy 8:10-18 / Deuteronomy 9:3-6 / Joshua 24:12-13. The words, 'light of your face', Psalm 44:3, mean that they had God's favour, Psalm 4:6 / Psalm 11:7 / Psalm 21:6 / Psalm 44:3 / Psalm 89:15.

‘You are my King and my God, who decrees victories for Jacob. Through you, we push back our enemies; through your name, we trample our foes. I put no trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame. In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever.’ Psalm 44:4-8

The psalmist pleads with God, their King, Psalm 44:4, that Israel would once again be delivered from their enemies by the strong arm of God working through them.
They prayed that God would command victories for Jacob in the present day, Psalm 44:4. In other words, if God would remember His people, they would once again humble their enemies in order to boast that God worked for them.
Notice how confident the psalmist’s prayer is to God. If God is with them and working through them, then through God’s name, Psalm 44:5, they will push back their enemies, Psalm 44:5 / Deuteronomy 33:17 / 1 Kings 22:11, and trample their foes, Psalm 44:5 / Psalm 7:5 / Psalm 18:40 / Job 40:12 / Isaiah 10:6 / Isaiah 63:3 / Daniel 7:23.
The psalmist’s confidence is seen in the fact that they pray as if it has already occurred. The psalmist told us earlier that their ancestors didn’t take the land by themselves; it was all God’s doing.

Now the psalmist says their hope is not in their bow or sword, their hope is in God, Psalm 44:6. Just like their ancestors, they recognise it is God who gives the victory and puts their adversaries to shame, Psalm 44:7.
Because of what God has done in the past and will do in the future, the psalmist says that God’s people will boast all day long and praise His name forever, Psalm 44:8. This again demonstrates the confidence in the psalmist’s prayer that God will deliver them.
You may notice that at the end of verse eight, some translations have the word ‘selah’. Although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said, Psalm 92:3.
We can imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they reflect upon how God fought for Israel in the past and will hopefully fight for them again in the present.

‘But now you have rejected and humbled us; you no longer go out with our armies. You made us retreat before the enemy, and our adversaries have plundered us. You gave us up to be devoured like sheep and have scattered us among the nations. You sold your people for a pittance, gaining nothing from their sale. You have made us a reproach to our neighbours, the scorn and derision of those around us. You have made us a byword among the nations; the peoples shake their heads at us. I live in disgrace all day long, and my face is covered with shame at the taunts of those who reproach and revile me, because of the enemy, who is bent on revenge.’ Psalm 44:9-16

Notice in these verses how many times the psalmist uses the word ‘You’ to refer to God. The psalmist tells us that ‘you’, God, had rejected them and humbled them, Psalm 44:9 / Psalm 44:7. The reason God rejected Israel was simply that Israel had rejected God.
This was the reality of their situation at the time the psalmist wrote. At a time when they trusted in God alone, God had worked through them to drive out Israel’s enemies from the land of Palestine.

But at this time in their history, they had put their trust in false gods, and so, God had ended His work through them, in order to lead them to be victorious over their enemies, 2 Chronicles 35:20-27 / 2 Chronicles 36:5-6.
Because God rejected Israel, their enemies pushed them back, and they plundered them, Psalm 44:10. That is, they took off the spoils of war; this could be referring to the Babylonians, 2 Kings 23:33 / 2 Kings 24:13-16 / 2 Kings 25:13-17 / 2 Chronicles 36:7.
God gave up on them so that they would be devoured like sheep for slaughter and had them scattered among the nations, Psalm 44:11 / Amos 1:6 / Amos 9. The psalmist is very much aware that if Israel were victorious, it was because of the hand of God; if they were defeated, scattered, and sold, it was by the hand of God.

God sold them for a pittance, and gained nothing from selling them, Psalm 44:12, which implies that God sold them into slavery, into the hands of their enemies, for next to nothing, Deuteronomy 32:30 / Judges 2:14 / Judges 3:8 / Judges 4:2 / Judges 4:9 / Judges 10:7 / Isaiah 52:3.
They were reproached, scorned, and ridiculed by their neighbours, Psalm 44:13 / Psalm 39:8, that is, when God had rejected them as His people, the nations around no longer held them in high regard.
Israel became a 'byword' among the surrounding nations, Psalm 44:14 / Deuteronomy 28:37. Israel had brought disgrace upon themselves and God because of their disobedience, Psalm 44:15-16.

'All this came upon us, though we had not forgotten you; we had not been false to your covenant. Our hearts had not turned back; our feet had not strayed from your path. But you crushed us and made us a haunt for jackals; you covered us over with deep darkness. If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart? Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' Psalm 44:17-22

Despite knowing that God had rejected them and handed them over to their enemies, the psalmist declares that Israel didn't forget about God and they were faithful to His covenant, Psalm 44:17 / Deuteronomy 28:15-68. The psalmist, speaking on behalf of Israel, says that their faithfulness to God and His covenant was reason enough to call on God to deliver them, Psalm 44:18.
Israel had been defeated, their cities and towns had been reduced to ruins, and their land had been laid waste. The place where they had been was crushed to the point it was only fit for wild animals like the jackal, Psalm 44:19 / Isaiah 13:22 / Isaiah 13:19-22 / Jeremiah 9:11.
In other words, Israel's faithfulness to God had been answered by the disaster sent by God. The words 'deep darkness', Psalm 44:19, signify death and ruin; Israel's land had been covered in deep darkness as if death had cast its shadow over the land, Job 3:5 / Psalm 23:4.
The psalmist says if they had forgotten God's name or committed idolatry, Psalm 44:20 / 1 Kings 8:22 / 2 Chronicles 6:12-13 / Isaiah 1:15, God would know about it, Psalm 44:21. In other words, God would know they were guilty, 1 Chronicles 28:9 / Romans 8:27 / Revelation 2:23.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The idea here is that this was not the cause or reason of their calamities, that if this had occurred, it would have been a sufficient reason for what had taken place, but that no such cause actually existed, and therefore the reason must be found in something else. It was the fact of such calamities having come upon the nation when no such cause existed, that perplexed the author of the psalm, and led to the conclusion in his own mind, that these calamities were produced by the malignant designs of the enemies of the true religion, and that, instead of their suffering for their national sins, they were really martyrs in the cause of God, and were suffering for his sake.'

Despite Israel's claims to be faithful to God and His covenant, they suffered death, like helpless sheep to the slaughter, Psalm 44:22. Paul speaks about this in Romans 8:35-36, to point out that even though we face death all day long and are like helpless sheep to the slaughter, nothing can separate us from the love of God.

'Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever. Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression? We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground. Rise up and help us; rescue us because of your unfailing love.' Psalm 44:23-26

The psalmist here speaks to God as though God were a man, John 4:24. Obviously, God doesn't sleep, Psalm 121:1-4, but using human reasoning, the psalmist asks God to awake and rouse, Psalm 44:23.
They felt that God had hidden Himself from them and forgotten their suffering; they thought that God had forsaken them to the will of their enemies, Psalm 44:24. Israel was at a critical point in their history; they were in the dust of shame and defeat, Psalm 44:25.

Despite how Israel was feeling and despite everything that Israel was going through, the psalmist ends by demonstrating their faith in God to help them and rescue them on the basis of God's unfailing love, Psalm 44:26 / Psalm 25:22 / Psalm 31:5 / Isaiah 1:27 / Isaiah 52:3.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist began by reminding us of what God did for their ancestors in the past and how one generation after another shared those events with each other, Psalm 145:4.
It's critically important that we teach our children about God and about what He has done in the past, Luke 22:19, in order that they, in turn, teach their children the ways of God. If we aren't convinced by God and what He has done in the past, then it's obvious our children won't be, and in turn, their children won't be.
As Christian parents, we have a duty to teach our children about God and His ways, Deuteronomy 6:4-7 / Deuteronomy 11:19 / Proverbs 22:6 / Psalm 78:5-7 / Ephesians 6:1-4.
If parents don't teach their children about God and His ways, then those children will grow up knowing nothing about Him; as a result, they won't be equipped to teach their children about God and His ways.

The church also has a responsibility in teaching children about God and His ways, especially if those children don't have Christian parents or if only one of their parents is a Christian, Deuteronomy 31:10-13 / Acts 22:3.
The church also has the responsibility of equipping parents to teach their children about God and His ways, Deuteronomy 4:9 / Ephesians 4:11-12 / 1 Corinthians 14:20 / 2 Peter 3:18.

CHAPTER 45

INTRODUCTION

This psalm, in its historical setting, describes the marriage of a king; it's one of praise for the grandeur of the king and his work among the people. However, because the Hebrew writer refers to this psalm in Hebrews 1:8-9, it's clear that this is also a Messianic psalm which metaphorically refers to King Jesus, 1 Timothy 6:15-16 / Revelation 17:14 / Revelation 19:16.

HEADING

'For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil. A wedding song.'

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No one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.
The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It's possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.
It was a wedding song to be sung to the tune of Lilies, 1 Kings 7:22 / 1 Kings 7:26 / 2 Chronicles 4:5 / Hosea 14:5. A lily was probably some kind of musical instrument which looked like or was shaped like a lily. Or it may refer to the general beauty of the composition.

'My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skilful writer. You are the most excellent of men, and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword on your side, you mighty one; clothe yourself with splendour and majesty. In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility, and justice; let your right hand achieve awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore, God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory, the music of the strings makes you glad. Daughters of kings are among your honoured women; at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.' Psalm 45:1-9

The psalmist begins by setting out the main subject of the psalm, that is, the king, Psalm 45:1 / Isaiah 5:1. This is the King, whom the Old Testament prophets spoke about and looked forward to coming, the Messiah, King Jesus, 1 Peter 1:10-12.
The psalmist's tongue was their pen, Psalm 45:1 / Job 19:24, and it was ready to express their thoughts and feelings. Since God blessed the King forever, the King's lips have been anointed with grace, Psalm 45:2, that is, their lips are covered and flowing with grace. This is another clear reference to King Jesus, Matthew 7:29 / Matthew 13:54 / Luke 4:22 / Luke 2:47 / John 7:46.
King Jesus is prepared for battle and conquest with a sword, Psalm 45:3. He is the 'mighty one', Psalm 45:3, and His sword is called 'splendour and majesty', Psalm 45:3 / Revelation 19:11-16.
He is the conquering King who is ready to go forward to defeat the nations around Himself, 1 Corinthians 15:25 / 1 Corinthians 15:28, and set up a permanent kingdom, Psalm 45:5-6 / Isaiah 49:2 / Daniel 2:44 / Hebrews 4:12 / Revelation 1:16 / Revelation 19:15.
The King is going to ride victoriously in the cause of 'truth, humility and justice', Psalm 45:4. In other words, Christ's kingdom would be based upon truth, humility, and justice, John 18:37.
His arrows, Psalm 45:5 / 1 Kings 22:34 / 2 Kings 9:21-24, which represent truths, are designed to pierce deep into the hearts of His enemies, resulting in the fall of His enemies, Psalm 45:5 / Matthew 7:13-14 / Acts 2:37 / Acts 7:54 / Hebrews 4:12 / Revelation 6:14-17.

The words of Psalm 45:6-7 are an obvious reference to King Jesus, as the Hebrew writer quotes them in reference to Him, Hebrews 1:8-9. When we carefully watch the argument that is made about the Son in Hebrews 1:8-9, we see the writer saying that this quotation is speaking about the Son, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever." This is speaking about the throne of the Son.

In speaking about the Son, 'your throne, O God,' the Son is God; the writer states this point clearly, and it cannot be missed or avoided. God, the Father, calls His Son God, which is clear evidence of the trinity, John 1:1 / John 1:14 / Colossians 2:9 / Philippians 2:6-8.

Psalm 45, is a royal wedding song written for the King, Psalm 45:10-11 / Psalm 45:13 / Psalm 45:16. But the psalm is strange because in Psalm 45:6, the King is called God, Deuteronomy 6:4 / Galatians 3:20.

But Psalm 45:7 is even stranger, the King is God, but He has a God 'your God'. There is no king in the Hebrew Scriptures that this describes, so this is all about the Messiah.

Again, it is a coronation picture, the Son has been chosen above all and has been anointed with the oil of joy, Psalm 45:7. Olive oil was used to anoint the kings of Israel at the inauguration of their rule. It is a Messianic royal wedding. This image explains the parables in the Gospels Jesus told concerning 'The wedding feast', Luke 14:7-14 / Ephesians 5:32 / Revelation 19:6-8. When we look at Hebrews 1:7, we see the angels serve, but the Son rules, and so the Son is superior.

The King's robes are fragrant with 'myrrh', Psalm 45:8 / Genesis 43:11 / Esther 2:12 / Psalm 133:2 / Exodus 30:23 / Matthew 2:11 / Mark 15:23 / John 19:39-40. And 'aloes', Psalm 45:8 / Exodus 30:24 / Numbers 24:6 / Proverbs 7:17 / Ezekiel 27:19. And 'cassia', Psalm 45:8 / Exodus 30:24 / Ezekiel 27:19.

The 'palaces adorned with ivory', Psalm 45:8, are where the King lived, 1 Kings 22:39. Metaphorically, this is speaking of heaven. The King is glad because of 'the music of the strings', Psalm 45:8. In other words, the Messiah is made happy by the affection and fellowship with His people.

Those who were attending the King's wedding were honoured women, and at His right hand is His bride, Psalm 45:9 / 1 Kings 2:19 / Mark 14:62 / Mark 16:19 / Hebrews 1:3 / Acts 7:55. The bride is adorned with gold of Ophir, Psalm 45:9 / 1 Kings 9:26-28 / 1 Kings 22:48 / Isaiah 13:12.

This is a beautiful metaphor for Christ's wedding to His church, Ephesians 5:25–27 / 2 Corinthians 11:2 / Ephesians 5:24. The church, the bride of the Lamb of God, is raised to the highest post of honour, Revelation 19:7-9 / Revelation 21:1-2.

'Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention: Forget your people and your father's house. Let the king be enthralled by your beauty; honour him, for he is your lord. The city of Tyre will come with a gift, people of wealth will seek your favour. All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold. In embroidered garments, she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her—those brought to be with her. Led in with joy and gladness, they enter the palace of the king. Your sons will take the place of your fathers; you will make them princes throughout the land. I will perpetuate your memory through all generations; therefore, the nations will praise you for ever and ever.' Psalm 45:10-17

At this point, the psalmist appears to turn to the bride to speak to her, Psalm 45:10. They basically ask her to forget her people and her father's house, Genesis 2:24, and be married to the anointed King, Psalm 45:10-11.

This again is a metaphor relating to Christ and His bride, the church. Jesus Himself says if we want to follow Him, we must do the same thing, Luke 14:26 / Luke 14:33.

The King recognises his bride's beauty, Psalm 45:11. In other words, the church, God's people, are beautiful and clothed in righteousness, 1 Peter 3:3 / Revelation 19:8. The queen in the immediate context would honour the king, Psalm 45:11.

Some translations use the word 'worship', which would imply that the church would worship King Jesus, Matthew 2:11 / Matthew 8:2 / Matthew 14:33 / Matthew 15:25 / Matthew 18:26 / Matthew 28:9 / Ephesians 5:33 / Hebrews 1:6 / Revelation 19:10 / Revelation 22:9.

Being married to the King would bring benefits. Here, we see the city of Tyre, Psalm 45:12 / Isaiah 60:5-7 / Isaiah 60:9 / Isaiah 60:11 / Isaiah 60:13 / Matthew 11:21, would attend the wedding and bring a gift, Psalm 45:12.
Tyre is used symbolically for the Gentile nations that shall listen to and obey the Gospel of Christ. People who are rich will look to the King's bride for favour, Psalm 45:12 / Revelation 21:24.
The bride is all glorious because she is married to a glorious King and her gown is interwoven with gold, Psalm 45:13. Her gown would have been highly colourful, Psalm 45:13 / Judges 5:30 / 1 Chronicles 29:2 / Ezekiel 17:3 / Ezekiel 16:10 / Ezekiel 16:13 / Ezekiel 16:18 / Ezekiel 26:16 / Ezekiel 27:7 / Ezekiel 27:16 / Ezekiel 27:24.
This is the way Christ sees His beautiful bride, the church, Ephesians 5:25–27 / Revelation 19:7-8 / Revelation 21:2 / Revelation 21:9. While the bride is dressed in all her glory, she is brought to the King, followed by her 'virgin companions', Psalm 45:14, that is, the bridesmaids, 2 Corinthians 11:2, and others who are a part of this great wedding procession, Psalm 45:14.
They were all led in with joy and gladness, Psalm 45:15 / Isaiah 35:10. This again is a metaphor for Christ and His church, Revelation 21:9, who are described as beautiful and glorious, and as worthy of the affection of its Saviour, Ephesians 5:27.
As in most weddings today, a blessing is bestowed upon the marriage of the newlyweds. It appears that the fathers have passed away, but they will be replaced by sons who come from the marriage, Psalm 45:16.
Because of Christ, all of God's children are now kings and priests, serving King Jesus, 1 Peter 2:9 / Revelation 1:6. This again is another metaphor to describe the union between Christ, the King, and His bride, the church, who produce children who themselves are sons in all the earth, Daniel 7:14 / Daniel 7:27 / Hebrews 2:10.
The glorious union produces a posterity among the nations which generates praise from the people forever and ever, Psalm 45:17. In other words, singing praises to Christ, the King, will never cease, Revelation 4:10 / Revelation 5:9-13.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist metaphorically described Jesus as the King and His church as His bride. In Revelation 21:9, one of the angels said to John, "Come! I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." Paul highlights the beauty of the relationship between Christ and His church by comparing it to the traditional Jewish marital relationships, Ephesians 5:25.
In Jewish custom, after the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom would often depart to prepare a house where he and his bride would call their home. This could take quite a bit of time to accomplish.

The bride, therefore, was to have the patience to wait for her beloved, and the loyalty to refuse any temptation to be with another man, Revelation 2:4. She lived for the return of her husband and was always in a state of eagerness to hear the charming voice of the bridegroom.
Once the house was finished, it was customary for the father of the groom to examine it, and if it met his approval, he would say, "Go and get your bride." The festivity that followed wasn't the marriage, since this had occurred previously; it was the marriage feast or supper. This is what the five foolish virgins missed in Jesus' parable of the ten virgins, Matthew 25:1-13.
Before the death of Christ, John the Baptist introduced Jesus as the bridegroom in John 3:29. He did this by emphasising the fact that he was not the Christ. John explained that he was merely a friend of the bridegroom and that his joy was fulfilled in introducing the presenting Jesus, the true bridegroom.

As the groom would depart after the bride to prepare a place for them to live, so Christ has returned to heaven to prepare a place for His bride, the church, John 14:3. It is this momentous occasion we patiently wait as Christ's bride. No other event holds more meaning to us or produces as much eager anticipation as the return of Christ from heaven. As we wait for Jesus, we must be characterised by loyalty and fidelity to Christ and His teaching, Ephesians 5:27. The great idea behind the church as the bride of Christ has to be the great and profound love that Christ has for us. With this knowledge of his profound love, how could we ever forsake Him? How could we ever do anything but love Him? May our expectation of His return produce within us purity, steadfastness, and joy.

CHAPTER 46

INTRODUCTION

This psalm, along with the next two psalms, speaks about the strength of God to help His people. The psalmist encourages the righteous by revealing God's awesome power to control and destroy everything which exists.

We don't know what the historical background is to this psalm, although some believe this psalm looks back to the deliverance from Sennacherib, Psalms 46:5 / Isaiah 37:36.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Psalms 46-48 form a group of three which we may assign with little doubt to the reign of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib's army was suddenly destroyed, 2 Kings 19:35. They all three strike the same note of gratitude, confidence and praise, which is found in Isaiah's references to the same event, Isaiah 29-31 / Isaiah 33 / Isaiah 37'.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamoth. A song.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a song, a psalm for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
No one really knows what the word 'alamoth' means, some believe it's a musical instrument, 1 Chronicles 15:20.
The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect

of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5. Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It's possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.

'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.' Psalm 46:1-3

The psalmist is obviously going through some kind of trial and so, they begin by describing God as their refuge, strength, and ever-present help, Psalm 46:1. They are in trouble but God was the answer, God is their place of safety, God is their strength, Psalm 18:2 / Proverbs 18:10, and God is always their help, no matter where they were.
Because God is described in such wonderful ways, the psalmist isn't afraid, Psalm 46:2 / Psalm 56:3 / Psalm 102:26, they know that God has control over all things, Hebrews 1:3. Even if there are natural disasters, Psalm 46:2-3, or the world comes to an end, Zephaniah 1:2-3 / 2 Peter 3:10-13, God is still in control of all things.
You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate the awesomeness of God and His power to control all things.

'There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.' Psalm 46:4-7

The psalmist now turns their attention to the future, where they see a river whose streams make glad the city of God, Psalm 46:4. After describing the chaos from the elements in the first three verses, they now speak about the calmness and security which flows from God's city, Psalm 46:4.
In other words, no matter what is happening in the physical world around them, Jerusalem would be calm, as calm as a gently flowing stream, Psalm 1:3 / Psalm 36:8 / Isaiah 32:2 / Isaiah 33:21 / Isaiah 41:18. The river here speaks of God's abundant grace and His constant presence, Revelation 22:1.
Some believe the psalmist is describing the river of life which is flowing out of the throne of God in the new Jerusalem, where the tree of life grows on either side of the river and its leaves are for healing the nations, Isaiah 8:6-8 / Ezekiel 47:12 / Revelation 3:12 / Revelation 22:1-2.
Jerusalem was where God dwelt, 'within the holy place,' Psalm 46:5, is the tabernacle, Psalm 48:1. However, if this psalm is relating to the time of Hezekiah, then it would be the temple the psalmist is referring to, Psalm 84:2 / Psalm 132:5 / Hebrews 9:2-3.
God is within the city, and so, He will protect the city, and will certainly ensure that the city won't fall, Psalm 46:5.
Notice the words, 'God will help her at the break of day', Psalm 46:5.
Some see this as a reference to the events when Isaiah speaks of Sennacherib's army as being dead bodies, when the people got up early in the morning, Isaiah 37:36.
The psalmist tells us that 'the nations are in uproar', Psalm 46:6. This would certainly fit in with the events of the Assyrians conquering many nations, Isaiah 37:18-20, and going on to make war against Jerusalem, Isaiah 36:18-20.
It was during this time that God lifted His voice, Psalm 46:6 / Habakkuk 3:6, and the earth melted, Psalm 46:6, that is, everything became calm as the danger passed. Here again, the psalmist speaks of God's control over all things, Psalm 33:9 / Psalm 107:25 / Psalm 107:29 / Matthew 8:26.

The psalmist tells us that 'the LORD Almighty', Psalm 46:7, that is, the LORD of Hosts, is also in total control of His armies, Isaiah 1:9 / Psalm 24:10. It's God who is with them, it's God who will defend and protect His people, Psalm 46:7 / Isaiah 7:14 / Isaiah 8:8. It's the God of Jacob, Psalm 46:7 / Psalm 24:6, who is their fortress, that is, He is their 'high place', as some translations render this verse, Psalm 9:9 / Psalm 18:2.
You may notice at the end of verse seven, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate God's power to protect His people in difficult times.

'Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.' Psalm 46:8-11

After describing God as their fortress, the psalmist now considers the glory of God. They invite the people to come and see what God has done, in reference to the desolations He brought upon the earth. Psalm 46:8.
Many commentators suggest this is speaking about the invasion of the land of Israel by Sennacherib, when the angel of the Lord killed one hundred and seventy-five thousand in one night, Isaiah 37:36, which resulted in Jerusalem being delivered from danger.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'Nothing 'could' furnish a clearer proof of the power of God to save, and of the propriety of putting confidence in him in times of national danger, than a survey of the camp of the Assyrians, where a hundred and eighty-five thousand men had been smitten down in one night by the angel of God, 2 Kings 19:35 / 2 Chronicles 32:21 / Isaiah 37:36.'
When the Lord defeated the Assyrian army, there was certainly peace throughout the earth, Psalm 46:9 / Isaiah 14:6-7. When Christ established His kingdom, it would be a kingdom of peace, Isaiah 2:2-4 / Hosea 2:18 / Micah 4:1-3.
Notice God 'breaks the bow, shatters the spear and burns the shield', Psalm 46:9. This means that God makes them absolutely useless for anything, and they can't be repaired for future use.
You will notice that some translations use the word 'chariots'. This would be speaking about the war chariots which were used in battle, Psalm 20:7 / Isaiah 2:7; even so, God burned them with fire, Psalm 46:9.
After considering God's greatness to overthrow His enemies, He asks the psalmist to 'be still and know that I am God', Psalm 46:10 / Exodus 14:23. To 'be still', implies to be relaxed in our minds, without stress, knowing what God had done will certainly give all the evidence they need to know that He is God, Psalm 46:10 / Isaiah 37:36.
If the psalmist is speaking about the time when Jerusalem was being attacked by the Assyrians under Sennacherib, then we can understand the full impact of being still before God.

God will be exalted not only among the nations but throughout the earth, Psalm 46:10. Although many nations worshipped foreign gods, when they see what God did with the Assyrians, these nations and all peoples of the earth will understand that God is indeed the One and only true God, Exodus 9:16 / Daniel 3:28-29 / Daniel 4:1-3 / Daniel 4:37 / Romans 9:17.
The psalmist ends their psalm, Psalm 46:11, by repeating the words of Psalm 46:7. When God overthrew the invasion of Sennacherib, then everyone would know that God was with His people.
You may notice that at the end of verse eleven, some translations have the word 'selah'. Although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

As mentioned previously, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate how God overthrew the Assyrian army.

CONCLUSION

In the midst of disaster and staring defeat in the face, God reminded the psalmist to 'be still and know that I am God', Psalm 46:10. As Christians, when we're going through really difficult times in our lives, it's often difficult to be still and know that He is God.
It's during those times of difficulties that we should relax and not get stressed out. When we're going through hard times, and we're tired and weary, we must trust God to fight our battles for us, Exodus 14:14.
When we're going through hard times, and we're tired and weary, we must remember to allow God to take the lead and lead us to a better place, Psalm 23:2. When we're going through hard times, and we're tired and weary, we must remember to look for the presence of God, 1 Kings 19:11-12.

CHAPTER 47

INTRODUCTION

This psalm, along with the previous and next psalm speak about the strength of God to help His people. This psalm begins by calling upon the people of the earth to praise God because He rules as King over all things, and the psalm ends by describing the awesomeness of God's glory.

We don't know what the historical background is to this psalm, although some believe this psalm looks back to the deliverance from Sennacherib, Psalms 46:5 / Isaiah 37:36.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Psalms 46-48 form a group of three which we may assign with little doubt to the reign of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib's army was suddenly destroyed, 2 Kings 19:35. They all three strike the same note of gratitude, confidence and praise, which is found in Isaiah's references to the same event, Isaiah 29-31 / Isaiah 33 / Isaiah 37'.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a song, a psalm for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It's possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.

'Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. For the LORD, Most High, is awesome, the great King over all the earth. He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.' Psalm 47:1-4

The psalmist begins by calling upon the nations to clap their hands, Psalm 47:1. The nations probably refer to the Jewish people. The clapping of the hands was a way of expressing their joy over the great victory which God had gained over their enemies, Isaiah 37:36 / Isaiah 55:12.
They were to shout to God cries of joy, acknowledging what God has done for His people, Psalm 47:2 / Exodus 32:18 / 2 Samuel 6:15 / 1 Chronicles 15:28 / Job 39:25 / Zechariah 4:7 / Isaiah 12:6 / Isaiah 42:11 / Isaiah 44:23 / Jeremiah 50:15.
The rejoicing was great because of what and who the 'LORD Most High', Psalm 47:2, is, that is, awesome. In other words, God is to be feared, He is worthy of worship, and He is to be exalted above all other beings, Exodus 18:11 / 1 Chronicles 16:25 / 2 Chronicles 2:5 / Psalm 96:4 / Psalm 95:3. God is described as the 'great King over the earth' Psalm 47:2.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'No event in the history of Israel has demonstrated this truth more than the unqualified destruction of the army of Sennacherib. This truth is one that gets overlooked today, but the hand of God continually moves in human history. He rules in the kingdom of men, exalting whom he will, Daniel 4:25. God has even determined the appointed seasons of nations and the boundaries of their dwelling places, Acts 17:26. Men may not like this, or accept it as a fact, but it is true anyway. It was the Providence of God alone, for example, that gave Babylon the victory over Assyria.'
God, the Father, can reign without being on this earth, Psalm 48:2 / Psalm 74:12 / 1 Samuel 12:12 / Isaiah 41:21.
Jesus has now assumed this reign; He has ascended to the throne in heaven and reigns over all things, Daniel 7:13-14 / Ephesians 1:20-24 / Philippians 2:5-11.
He is reigning over all the earth as the Father reigned over all the earth before the ascension of Jesus, Matthew 28:18.
It was God who subdued the nations, Psalm 47:3, that is, He only had to speak and it was done, Psalm 18:39 / Psalm 18:47 / Psalm 33:9.
It was God who put the people under His people's feet, Psalm 47:3 / Psalm 7:5 / Psalm 44:5. In other words, it was God who helped them be triumphant over their enemies. It was God who chose their inheritance for them, Psalm 47:4, that is, the Promised Land.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the pride of Jacob, Psalm 47:4.
'The meaning is, that it was a land of which Jacob, the ancestor of the people, might be proud, or which he did boast of. It was ever regarded as an honour among the Jews that they dwelt in a land which had been the abode of the

prophets, and especially was anything regarded as of value that could be traced to Jacob, that had been once in his possession, or that could be regarded as his gift, John 4:12. Perhaps special allusion is here made to 'Jacob' rather than to Abraham and Isaac because the land came actually into the possession of the Hebrew people in the time of Jacob's sons. It was divided among the descendants of his sons, the twelve tribes, bearing their names, and thus Jacob was most naturally referred to as having been in possession of the land. Abraham and Isaac dwelt in the land as strangers and pilgrims, Hebrews 11:9-10 / Hebrews 11:13, having no possession there, not even of a burying-place except as they purchased it, Genesis 23:12-16, and the land actually came into the possession of the nation only in the family of Jacob.'

You may notice at the end of verse four, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate how praiseworthy their awesome God is.

'God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.' Psalm 47:5-9

God ascended to heaven, Psalm 47:5, which is His eternal dwelling place, Psalm 7:7. If He ascended to heaven, Psalm 47:5, this implies that He must have descended at some point to help His people who were at war, by overthrowing their enemies.

After the victory was secured, He returned to heaven amid shouts of joy, amid the sounding of trumpets and praise. When we think of God ascending and descending, we turn our thoughts to the apostle Paul's statement in Ephesians 4:8-10, where Christ is described as doing the same thing, Revelation 11:15.

When people acknowledge that God is king over all the earth, the natural response is one of praise, Psalm 47:6-7. We can almost hear the joyous sounds of praise in these verses as they recognise that God is King over all things, Psalm 47:7-8.

It's only God who is truly worthy of all praise, Psalm 47:7. It is God who reigns over all things; today, He reigns through the hearts of those who are obedient to Him, Luke 17:20-21 / Romans 5:17.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 47:9.

'The words 'are gathered together' may refer either to a voluntary or an involuntary assembling, meaning either that they came in chains as prisoners of war, subdued by the arms of the people of God, and thus rendering an involuntary tribute to their power and their religion, or that they came in a voluntary manner, and submitted themselves, acknowledging the God of Israel to be the true God.'

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'The 'peoples' here are the 'nations,' i.e., 'the Gentiles', who are said to be gathered together for the purpose of becoming the people of the God of Abraham. In all the Bible, there is not a clearer prophecy of God's converting the Gentiles and of bringing them into the kingdom of God, alongside the Jews, than we have here, Galatians 3:28-29. Thus, as several writers have pointed out, we have the fulfilment here of what God promised Abraham, that through him "all the families of the earth would be blessed, Genesis 12:3 / Genesis 17:4.'

Whatever our understanding of these verses is, God is being greatly exalted, Isaiah 60.

Some commentators point out three prophecies within this psalm.

1. The Incarnation of Christ, certified by His ascension.

2. The establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

3. The union of both Gentiles and Jews in the Messianic phase of God's kingdom.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist uses the word 'praise' five times in the second part of the psalm, which really emphasises that only God is worthy of our praise. John, in his vision, tells us that the four living creatures just praised God day and night, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,' who was, and is, and is to come,' Revelation 4:8.
They go on to praise Him even more by saying, 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will, they were created and have their being,' Revelation 4:11.
When we go to Revelation 5, we find John weeping because no one is worthy to open the seals, and after thinking all was lost, an angel tells him, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals," Revelation 5:5.
Afterwards, we read that the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb and started to praise Him by singing a new song. 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth,' Revelation 5:9-10.
As Christians, our very lives and every aspect of our lives should be a continuous reflection of our praise to God, Psalm 145:3 / Romans 12:1. Even when all seems lost, we still find a reason to praise Him for Who He is, what He has done and what He will do, 1 Chronicles 16:34.

CHAPTER 48

INTRODUCTION

This psalm, along with the previous two psalms, speaks about the strength of God to help His people. Although no one really knows the background to this psalm, it's possible that the historical setting could be the deliverance of Jerusalem from the attack of Sennacherib, who was king of the Assyrians, 2 Kings 18-19 / Isaiah 36-37. There are other commentators who believe that this is also speaking of the future Messianic kingdom, Hebrews 12:18-24.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Psalms 46-48, form a group of three which we may assign with little doubt to the reign of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib's army was suddenly destroyed, 2 Kings 19:35. They all three strike the same note of gratitude, confidence and praise, which is found in Isaiah's references to the same event, Isaiah 29-31 / Isaiah 33 / Isaiah 37'.

HEADING

'A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a song. The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It's possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.

'Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain. Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, like the heights of Zaphon, is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King. God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress. When the kings joined forces, when they advanced together, they saw her and were astounded; they fled in terror. Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labour. You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind. As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the LORD Almighty, in the city of our God: God makes her secure forever.' Psalm 48:1-8

The psalmist begins by declaring that the Lord is great, Psalm 48:1, that is, He is all-powerful, powerful enough to defend His people. He is worthy to be praised, Psalm 48:1 / Psalm 47:5-9, because He saves His people.
The 'city of God' Psalm 48:1, is a reference to Jerusalem, Psalm 46:4 / Matthew 5:35. The city that was chosen by David as the capital of the southern kingdom, Judah. His 'holy mountain', Psalm 48:1, is a reference to Mount Moriah, where the temple was built, and its location was beautiful, Psalm 48:2.
Because it was a place of beauty and because of its strength, and because it was the place where God was worshipped, it was the source of joy for all the inhabitants of the earth, Psalm 48:2.
Mount Zion, Psalm 48:2, refers to the whole city of Jerusalem, Isaiah 2:2-3. God is in her citadels, Psalm 48:3, that is, He is in the houses and places, He is their fortress, Psalm 48:3, that is, He is their refuge, Psalm 46:1, and security.
The kings who are mentioned, Psalm 48:4, may refer to the time of Jehoshaphat, where the kings of Ammon, Moab and others came up against Jehoshaphat, 2 Chronicles 20:1 / 2 Chronicles 20:10.
There was an attack against the city, but when the attackers saw the beauty and strength of the city, they were astounded and fled in terror, Psalm 48:4-5 / 2 Kings 19:35-36 / 2 Chronicles 20:22-25.
These kings were overtaken by fear like a woman who is in labour, Psalm 48:6, that is, the worst kind of pain, Jeremiah 4:31 / Jeremiah 6:24 / Jeremiah 13:21 / Jeremiah 22:23 / Jeremiah 30:6 / Jeremiah 49:24 / Micah 4:9-10 / Isaiah 53:11. God destroyed these kings 'like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind', Psalm 48:7 / 1 Kings 22:48 / 2 Chronicles 20:36-37 / Isaiah 2:16.
The psalmist says that what God has done has been heard and seen in His city, Psalm 48:8 / Isaiah 1:24 / Psalm 24:10, by others. They declare that God will secure His city forever, Psalm 48:8. This is also an illusion of the establishment of Christ's church, Matthew 16:18.
You may notice at the end of verse eight, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate the greatness of God.

'Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love. Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness. Mount Zion rejoices, the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments. Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.' Psalm 48:9-14

From within God's temple, Psalm 48:9 / Psalm 5:7, God's people meditate on His unfailing love, Psalm 48:9, that is, they contemplate what they had heard and seen themselves and from others, Psalm 48:8 / Philippians 4:4.
His unfailing love is like God's Name, it will be praised throughout the earth, Psalm 48:10 / Isaiah 11:12 / Revelation 7:1. God's right hand is filled with righteousness, Psalm 48:10, that is, everything which God did was just and right.
Mount Zion, Psalm 48:11, refers to Jerusalem and its inhabitants rejoice, whilst the villages or daughters of Judah, as some translations have it, are glad, Isaiah 1:8, because of God's righteous judgments, Psalm 48:11.
The psalmist encourages the people to 'walk about Zion', Psalm 48:12, that is, as a group, Job 1:5, they were to walk around the city, and admire its beauty and strength, Psalm 48:12. As they walked around the city, they were to 'count the towers', Psalm 48:12 / Genesis 11:4-5 / 2 Chronicles 26:9-10 / Isaiah 2:15.
They were to 'consider the city's ramparts', Psalm 48:13, that is, they were to consider how well-fortified the city was, 2 Samuel 20:15 / Isaiah 26:1. They were to 'view the citadels', Psalm 48:13, or palaces, as some translations have it. That is, they were to look at the royal palaces, which were often well fortified and well-guarded.
Because God had delivered the city from those who attacked the city, the message of this was to be told to everyone, especially the next generation, Psalm 48:13. Notice the psalmist tells us that 'this God is our God for ever and ever', Psalm 48:14.
Notice how personal God is to them. God is their God and always will be their God. The psalmist says that God will be their 'guide even to the end', Psalm 48:13. This implies that God will lead and guide them, not only for the rest of their lives but also in the life to come.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist called upon the people to meditate upon God's unfailing love, which is a theme which runs through many of the psalms, Psalms 13:5 / Psalm 17:7 / Psalm 31:16 / Psalm 36:5 / Psalm 107:1 / Psalm 136:1.
There are times in our Christian lives when we don't 'feel' loved by God, especially after we have sinned against Him. The problem is our feelings can be very misleading, Proverbs 14:12.
But when we take a moment to meditate upon His love for us, we begin to stop trusting our feelings, and we start thinking about what we actually know as true.

We know that God is love, 1 John 4:8. We know that He loved us before we became Christians, John 3:16 / Romans 5:8. If God loved us so much before we became Christians, what makes us think He will love us less, now that we have become Christians!
We may not always 'feel' God's love for us in our lives, but we have the assurance that nothing will separate us from His love, Romans 8:38–39. We have the assurance that He will forgive us our sins when we confess them to Him, 1 John 1:6-9.

CHAPTER 49

INTRODUCTION

This psalm deals with the question, why do the wicked prosper, while the righteous suffer in their poverty? Psalm 37 / Psalm 73. The psalmist also gives us the answer to this question, which is that the wealth of the rich is only temporary.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a psalm for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It's possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.

'Hear this, all you peoples; listen, all who live in this world, both low and high, rich, and poor alike: My mouth will speak words of wisdom; the meditation of my heart will give you understanding. I will turn my ear to a proverb; with the harp I will expound my riddle.' Psalm 49:1-4

The psalmist begins by addressing everyone on the earth, no matter what their position in life and no matter their wealth status, Psalm 49:1-2. He asks them all to listen, Isaiah 1:2, to wisdom and to try to understand things from an eternal point of view, Psalm 49:3.
This proverb, Psalm 49:4, or riddle was some profound thought they had to share, a thought which was difficult to understand and perceive, Psalm 78:2 / Proverbs 1:6 / Proverbs 2:2. They hoped that by using a harp, it might help the message to be better remembered and understood, Psalm 49:4.

'Why should I fear when evil days come, when wicked deceivers surround me—those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches? No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them—the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough—so that they should live on forever and not see decay. For all can see that the wise die, that the foolish and the senseless also perish, leaving their wealth to others. Their tombs will remain their houses forever, their dwellings for endless generations, though they had named lands after themselves. People, despite their wealth, do not endure; they are like the beasts that perish.' Psalm 49:5-12

The psalmist now goes on to make a contrast between themselves and the wicked. While the wicked fear when days of evil come, the psalmist won't fear, Psalm 49:5. The psalmist doesn't trust in their wealth or riches to buy God's favour, while the wicked do, Psalm 49:6.

No amount of riches can be given to God to redeem anyone from their dilemma of sin, and no amount of money can be paid for the redemption of someone's dead brother, Psalm 49:7-8. The foolishness of the rich and wealthy is seen in the fact that they are trying to buy God's favour with their wealth.

Redemption is God's work and is only accomplished by His atoning sacrifice, Genesis 3:21 / Genesis 22:13-14 / Leviticus 1-7. People are redeemed today only through the redeeming sacrifice of Christ on the cross, Isaiah 53:10-11 / Hebrews 10:12.

Our souls are costly, Psalm 49:8 / 1 Kings 10:2 / 1 Kings 10:10-11, and only the precious blood of Christ was able to pay the price of the redemption of our souls, 1 Peter 1:17-21.

Remember, the psalmist's proverb wasn't to the wealthy, but to the poor who would be jealous of the state and status of the wealthy in this world. But their jealousy would be foolish if it were based upon the belief that wealth in any shape or form gave them some kind of spiritual advantage in reference to redemption, Isaiah 43:3 / Matthew 16:26.

The psalmist knows that no one can be saved from death, Psalm 49:9. It comes to everyone, whether they are wise or not, Psalm 49:10. They understood that we can't take our material goods with us when we die, Psalm 49:10 / Ecclesiastes 6:1-2. Everything which a person worked hard for all their lives is left behind and is often squandered by those who didn't work for it, Ecclesiastes 2:18-19.

The wealthy expect that their possessions will always remain in the family and be passed down from one generation to the next. It appears that the wealthy named lands after themselves, Psalm 49:11. They did this because they hoped that when they died, their name could carry on from generation to generation, Psalm 49:11 / Proverbs 10:7.

The psalmist reminds us that no matter what our status, no matter what wealth we have, no matter how secure we feel, no matter what possessions we have, everyone will perish, Psalm 49:12.

'This is the fate of those who trust in themselves, and of their followers, who approve their sayings. They are like sheep and are destined to die; death will be their shepherd (but the upright will prevail over them in the morning). Their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions. But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead; he will surely take me to himself.' Psalm 49:13-15

The psalmist tells us that those who trust in themselves and those who follow them by acquiring and consuming the wealth of the world, Psalm 49:13, often lose their focus on that which permeates death, Psalm 49:14. In other words, having all the wealth in the world and trusting in yourself doesn't prepare us for the world to come.

You may notice that at the end of verse thirteen, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate the fate of those who trust in themselves and their wealth.

Notice the fate of those who trust in themselves. They are like sheep, and they will be buried like a sheep, and their bodies will decay in the grave, Psalm 49:14, that is, the place of the dead, Job 10:21-22 / Psalm 6:5.

In contrast to their fate, the upright, Psalm 49:14, that is, those who didn't trust in themselves or their wealth, will prevail over them in the morning, Psalm 49:14. In other words, the upright will be justified, Matthew 25:46 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.

They will have dominion over those who lived and died with a focus on the material and with no urgency to prepare for the world to come, Psalm 49:14 / Psalm 30:5.

The psalmist clearly understands that it is God and God alone who had the power to redeem his soul from the power of the grave, Psalm 49:15 / Isaiah 14:9 / Hosea 13:14 / 1 Corinthians 15:55.

The realm of the dead, Psalm 49:15, is Sheol, and there are, in fact, three Biblical words, the meanings of which are often confused because people tend to use them very loosely. Two of the words in the New Testament are Greek words. The Third word is an Old Testament Hebrew word.
For instance, in the New Testament, we have the following.

1. 'Gehenna', which occurs twelve times, and, in the Authorised Version, is always translated 'hell'.

2. 'Hades', which occurs ten times, and which is also always translated as 'hell'.

3. The third word is the word 'Sheol', found in the Old Testament, and which sometimes is erroneously said to be the word that corresponds to 'Gehenna'.

You clearly see the confusion that has been created about the meaning of this word when you understand that, in the Authorised Version, out of the sixty-five instances it occurs, thirty-one times it has been translated 'hell' and thirty-four times it has been translated 'the grave'!

Now, although the word 'Sheol' literally means 'The Place of the Dead', you don't need much intelligence to recognise that 'Hell' and the 'Grave' aren't the same places! When a body is placed in the grave, it hasn't been consigned to 'Hell'!

But there is a history behind this inconsistent rendering of the word 'Sheol'. Whilst the translators of the Authorised Version believed 'Hell' to be the place of punishment for the wicked, they withdrew from the idea of saying that good people also go to 'Sheol', and so in passages that related to the death of good people, they decided to translate 'Sheol' as 'the grave'!

However, in Hebrew theology and in Old Testament teaching, 'Sheol' is described as the place to which all the dead go, both good and bad. It's defined as 'the place of departed souls'.

In the account of King Saul's visit to the medium at Endor, the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel is recorded as saying to Saul, 'Tomorrow, you and your sons shall be with me,' 1 Samuel 28:19. Even the Oxford Dictionary is close to the truth as far as the meaning of the word is concerned. It says that 'Sheol' is 'The abode of the dead'. Furthermore, in the Old Testament, 'Sheol' is described as a gloomy place, in which an individual is farther away from God than he was during his lifetime. We are told that 'the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything,' Ecclesiastes 9:5, and, according to Psalm 115:17, 'The dead do not praise Yahweh, nor any who go down into silence.'
You may notice at the end of verse fifteen that some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely it means to pause.

As mentioned above, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate God's power to redeem their soul.

'Do not be overawed when others grow rich when the splendour of their houses increases; for they will take nothing with them when they die, their splendour will not descend with them. Though while they live they count themselves blessed—and people praise you when you prosper—they will join those who have gone before them, who will never again see the light of life. People who have wealth but lack understanding are like the beasts that perish.' Psalm 49:16-20

The psalmist now tells those who are poor, not to be overawed when others grow rich, Psalm 49:16. In other words, don't be afraid of the power which comes from wealth, don't be afraid of anything someone can do because they are rich.

Rich people often show off their homes or the furniture within their homes, Psalm 49:16, as some kind of status symbol to those who live within the community. Nevertheless, they can't take their riches with them when they die, Psalm 49:17 / Job 27:16-19 / 1 Timothy 6:7.

Notice the word 'descend', Psalm 49:17. This implies that when a person dies, they will go down to the grave and take nothing with them. The upright, however, will 'ascend', they will go up in glory, in God's glory when they leave this world, 2 Thessalonians 2:14 / Hebrews 2:10.

While alive, the rich count themselves as blessed, Psalm 49:18, that is, they blessed themselves, and they congratulated themselves as long as he lived. It appears that they wanted others to praise or congratulate them, too, for being so blessed, Psalm 49:18.

The psalmist says that those who trusted in themselves and their wealth, like those gone before them, will never see the light of life, Psalm 49:19, that is, the light of this world, Job 33:30 / Psalm 27:13 / Isaiah 38:11.

In other words, they, too, like those who have gone before them, Genesis 25:8 / Genesis 25:17 / Numbers 31:2 / Deuteronomy 32:50 / Judges 2:10, will be united with them again in death.

We must remember that the thought of eternal life and eternal damnation wasn't really taught in the Old Testament; the thoughts of going to heaven or hell and living forever only came into light when Christ came, 2 Timothy 1:10.

The psalmist ends by reminding us of an eternal truth. People can be rich but lack understanding, and as a result, they too perish like the beasts of the earth, Psalm 49:20 / Mark 8:36 / Mark 10:21 / Luke 12:16-21.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist highlighted the foolishness of putting our trust in riches and wealth instead of God. In The Parable of the Rich Fool, Luke 13:16-21, Jesus explains the rich man was foolish because he forgot five things.

1. He forgot other people, Luke 13:17 / James 1:27.
2. He forgot that man is more than what he owns, Mark 10:23 / 1 Timothy 6:9-10 / 1 Timothy 6:17-19.
3. He forgot the source of real happiness, Ecclesiastes 2:3-11.
4. He forgot God, James 4:13-15.
5. He forgot about death, Psalm 90:9-10 / Matthew 6:19-21 / Matthew 25:41-46 / Luke 12:19-20.

There's nothing wrong with being rich and wealthy, but we must be careful not to make the same mistakes the rich fool did, Luke 12:33-34. The minute we forget about God, that's when we forget our purpose.

When we forget about other people, that's when we forget that a person is more than what they own. When we forget the source of real happiness, that's when we forget God, and that's when we forget about death.

CHAPTER 50

INTRODUCTION

This psalm demonstrates that no matter how sincere a person may be in going through their religious ceremonies, this doesn't take the place of obedient faith. When a person is sincerely obedient to God, then the results will simply be praise and thanksgiving.

HEADING

‘A psalm of Asaph.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a psalm of Asaph. This is the first of twelve psalms of Asaph; the others are found in Psalms 72-82. Asaph was possibly one of the leaders of choirs or musicians in David’s time, such as Heman the Singer, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 2 Chronicles 16:17 / 2 Chronicles 25:6.

‘The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to where it sets. From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth. Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages. He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people: “Gather to me this consecrated people, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for he is a God of justice.’ Psalm 50:1-6

Asaph begins by using three different names which describe the character of God. The Mighty One, that is, El, God, that is Elohim and LORD, that is, Yahweh, Psalm 50:1.
It is God who is speaking, and He summons the whole of the earth, Psalm 50:1 / Psalm 113:3 / Isaiah 59:19 / Malachi 1:11. God is summoning all the people of the earth to judgment, Genesis 6:11 / Genesis 9:13 / Deuteronomy 32:1.
Asaph reminds us of the time when God came to Mount Zion, Psalm 50:2 / Exodus 19:16-19, but he tells us that this time, God comes from Zion. God shines and causes His light and beauty to appear, Psalm 50:2 / Deuteronomy 33:2 / Psalm 80:2 / Psalm 94:1.
Despite calling all the earth together here, God didn’t come to judge all the peoples of the earth; He came to judge His people, Psalm 50:3-4, that is, those who made a covenant with Him by sacrifice, Psalm 50:5 / Exodus 19:5-6 / Exodus 24:5-8.
Righteousness is the foundation upon which God has a right to judge His people, Psalm 50:6 / Psalm 97:6, and because God is the only just one, Psalm 50:6, God and God alone has the right to call all into a final judgment, Matthew 25:32 / Revelation 20:11-14.
You may notice at the end of verse six, some translations have the word ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates God’s judgment upon His people.

‘Listen, my people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, Israel: I am God, your God. I bring no charges against you concerning your sacrifices or concerning your burnt offerings, which are ever before me. I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? “Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfil your vows to the Most High, and call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honour me.” Psalm 50:7-15

All people of the earth are now present, but notice who is first to be judged: it's God's own people, Psalm 50:7 / 1 Peter 4:17. Israel was faithful in legally performing the sacrifices of the law, but this wasn't God's charge against them, Psalm 50:8 / Isaiah 1:11.

Neither was God looking to be fed as a man with the meat of the animals of the world, for all the world belonged to Him, Psalm 50:9-13 / Exodus 29:11 / Exodus 29:36 / Leviticus 4:4.

The charge was that God's goodness toward them didn't motivate them to give thanks, Psalm 50:14 / 2 Corinthians 4:15 / Mark 12:33-34. It appears that Israel was just going through the motions or the rituals, without being obedient or thankful.

God tells them if they fulfil their vows, Psalm 50:14 / Psalm 76:11 / Ecclesiastes 5:5 / Isaiah 1:11-17, and call upon Him when they are in trouble, Psalm 50:15, then God will deliver them, and as a result, Israel will honour Him, Psalm 50:15.

God's charge against them was that they weren't offering obedience, that is, they didn't fulfil their vows, and they didn't offer thanksgiving in prayer that brought God honour, Psalm 50:15.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The purpose of all that is said here is to show that true religion, the proper service of God, does not consist in the mere offering of sacrifice, but that it is of a spiritual nature, and that the offering of sacrifice is of no value unless it is accompanied by corresponding acts of spiritual religion, showing that the heart has a proper appreciation of the mercies of God and that it truly confides in him.'

'But to the wicked person, God says: "What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips? You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you. When you see a thief, you join with him; you throw in your lot with adulterers. You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit. You sit and testify against your brother and slander your own mother's son. When you did these things, and I kept silent, you thought I was exactly like you. But I now arraign you and set my accusations before you. "Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with no one to rescue you: Those who sacrifice thank offerings honour me, and to the blameless I will show my salvation." Psalm 50:16-23

God now turns His attention to the wicked among His own people, Psalm 50:16. It was the wicked among Israel who proclaimed the statutes of God by legally offering the sacrifices, Psalm 50:16. The problem was that they didn't give any glory to God in their hearts, and they didn't offer any thanksgiving for His goodness.

In other words, they publicly read out God's laws, Deuteronomy 31:10-13, but their lives didn't bring any honour to God, Psalm 50:16-17. They weren't practising what they were preaching, and as a result, their lives spoke louder to God than what they said, Romans 2:17-23.

They had broken several of God's commandments. They joined in with a thief, Psalm 50:18 / Exodus 20:15 / Deuteronomy 5:19. They were involved in adultery, Psalm 50:18 / Exodus 20:14 / Deuteronomy 5:18.

They used their tongues for evil and deceit, Psalm 50:10 / Exodus 20:16 / Deuteronomy 5:20. Notice that not only did they do wrong, but they also joined in with the wrong of others, Psalm 50:20 / Romans 1:32.

God kept silent when they were involved in these things, Psalm 50:21 / Acts 17:30, and they thought that God was like them, Psalm 50:21, that is, they didn't see God as a holy God whose dwelling place was heaven, and they thought that God wouldn't mind them doing what they were doing. How wrong they were, God is going to arraign them, Psalm 50:21, that is, rebuke them and set out His case against them, Psalm 50:21.

Notice how gracious God is with them, He asks them to 'consider', Psalm 50:22, which implies He's giving them time to deeply think about what they are doing and time to repent of their sinfulness before it's too late, Acts 17:30-31 / 2 Peter 3:9 / Revelation 2:5.

God wants people to truly honour Him in worship with praises of thanksgiving, and He wants people to be blameless, Psalm 50:23, that is, He doesn't want any hypocritical lip service. If people really want to find the way to truth and salvation, God will show them the way to go, Psalm 50:23 / Psalm 25:9 / John 14:6.

CONCLUSION

Asaph reminded the people that God will not accept lip service in worship, and although He accepted sacrifices, He wouldn't accept sacrifices without thanksgiving and obedience, 1 Samuel 15:22 / Proverbs 21:3 / John 4:24.
As Christians, it's all too easy to worship God simply with our lips; our mouths may move, and sound may come out, but we can have no real understanding of what we are praying or singing, and as a result, there is no real thanksgiving in our hearts for what God has done or is doing in our lives, 1 Corinthians 14:15-16.
Even those who claim they do great things for God in His Name can be guilty of giving Him lip service, Matthew 7:21. It's all too easy to go through the motions of our religion with our hearts far from God, Isaiah 29:13 / Matthew 15:8-9.
We can deceive the world around us and one another into thinking that we truly are 'religious', but God knows what's really in our hearts, Jeremiah 17:10 / Galatians 6:8.
The good news is that God gives us all time to 'consider', He gives us time to seriously think about our ways and time to repent before the final judgment, 2 Peter 3:9 / 2 Peter 3:15.

CHAPTER 51

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of repentance and heartfelt prayer for forgiveness. The historical background was the time when David committed adultery with Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11-12.
In this psalm, David pours his heart out to God and openly confesses his sins to God and pleads that God will forgive him. We read that his prayer was rewarded because of his humble spirit, 1 Samuel 13:14 / Acts 13:22.

HEADING

'For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a psalm of David, for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. The historical setting was when he was confronted by Nathan the prophet concerning his sin with Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11-12.

'Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.' Psalm 51:1-4

David begins by asking God to have mercy on him, Psalm 51:1. This is understandable considering he committed adultery with Bathsheba, tried to cover his actions up by more or less ordering the killing of Uriah, her husband and then thinking he got away with it all until he was confronted by Nathan the prophet, 2 Samuel 12.
After being confronted by Nathan, David didn't try to justify his actions or come up with any other kind of excuse; he simply admitted he had sinned against the Lord, 2 Samuel 12:13. Even in this psalm, we must take note of how personal this is. Notice throughout this psalm, David uses the words 'me', 'my', and 'I' over and over again.
He asks for mercy according to God's unfailing love, Psalm 51:1 / Psalm 36:7, and he asks God to have mercy on him according to His great compassion, Psalm 51:1 / 1 Timothy 1:16, to blot out his transgressions, Psalm 51:1 / Jeremiah 18:23.
It's not surprising that he asks God to blot out his transgressions, Psalm 51:1, that is, to wipe away all records of them, Exodus 32:32-33 / Numbers 5:23 / Isaiah 43:25 / Isaiah 44:22 / Colossians 2:14.
David knew that his many sins were really condemning him, not only from God's point of view but also in his own conscience. He asks God to wash away his iniquity and cleanse him from his sin, Psalm 51:2 / Isaiah 1:16.
David knew he had acted perversely with Bathsheba and totally missed the mark in having Uriah murdered. He wants God to wash him of his sin completely, in order that he becomes completely pure.

We don't know exactly how long it was from the time he committed adultery, had Uriah killed, to the time he was confronted by Nathan, possibly a few months, but it appears that since he knew his transgressions, and sin was always before him.

This implies that his transgressions and sins were always on his mind, no matter what he did to try and ignore them or even deny them; they were constantly on his mind, Psalm 32:5.
Notice the three words which David uses to speak of his offence against God.

1. Transgressions, Psalm 51:1 / Psalm 51:4, have the idea of crossing a boundary.
2. Iniquity, Psalm 51:2, has the idea of twistedness or perversion.
3. Sin, Psalm 51:2 / Psalm 51:3, has the idea of falling short or missing the mark.

Notice how he asks God not just to remove one transgression but many transgressions, Psalm 51:1 / Psalm 51:3.
David openly confesses that he has crossed the boundary on more than one occasion.
Others had suffered from the consequences of David's sin. Uriah was dead, and Bathsheba was a grieving widow.
But David realised that the sin was against God, for God only could grant forgiveness. He is well aware that he had done evil in the sight of God, Psalm 51:4.
David knew that God was right in His verdict about him and justified in His judgment about him, Psalm 51:4. By acknowledging this, David is saying that God's judgments are good and just, Romans 3:4.

There are times when we think God doesn't see what we do in our lives, but He sees it all, Genesis 16:13 / Hebrews 4:13. He was very much there when David was in bed with Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11:4. He was very much there when he gave the command to kill Uriah, 2 Samuel 11:14-15.

'Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.' Psalm 51:5

This is one of those passages which has been totally misunderstood by many, Psalm 51:5. There are those in the religious world who sincerely believe that all humans are born sinners and are inherently evil.
They believe that when a child is born, that child is already lost in sin because they have inherited the sin of Adam and Eve, indirectly through their parents. This is the reason why many people have their children 'christened' a few days after birth. Some call this teaching 'inherited sin,' and others call it 'original sin.'

Now I don't believe that the Scriptures teach anywhere that we inherit sin from anyone; we all suffer the consequences of Adam's sin, whether we ever actually sin ourselves or not.

In other words, we all suffer physical death as well as other things listed in Genesis 3 / 1 Corinthians 15:22, but I do believe that children may inherit the 'consequences' of their parents' sinfulness.
For example, if a child's parents robbed a bank, and were caught and sentenced to life in prison, that child will be taken into care and would have to deal with all the consequences of being raised without any parents for the rest of their life. The child has done nothing wrong; they haven't sinned, but they will have to pay the consequences of their parents' sin.

Another example would be if a pregnant mother has been drinking alcohol whilst driving and crashes her car, she may damage her unborn child; again, the child isn't guilty of drunkenness or any other sin.

Those who believe in the doctrine of 'original sin' believe that Jesus was born of Mary; therefore, Jesus didn't inherit sin because Mary was sinless. I don't know how they can claim Mary was sinless because the Bible clearly tells us that she made a sin offering according to the Law, Leviticus 5:7-13 / Luke 2:22-24. Despite there being no Scriptural evidence, they believe that Mary was born without sin because she herself was 'immaculately conceived'.
When it comes to Scripture, we must always be careful how we understand it and, more importantly, we must be extra careful not to read too much into it and make it mean something it was never meant to mean.

Psalm 51 is a Psalm written by David after his sinful behaviour with Bathsheba, but notice it deals with the sin of an adult and shows the repentance of an adult, Psalm 51:10-13.
If you take the time to read the whole Psalm, you'll see that he isn't saying he was born a sinner. He's saying that his mother conceived him in sin, his mother was sinful, Psalm 51:5; the KJV makes this clearer.
What David is saying is that he was born into a sinful world, and sin was everywhere and all around him from birth. Even Jewish historians teach that David was saying that he was born in a sinful environment.

David also says, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies,' Psalm 58:3. The first thing to notice with this verse is simply this: if these people were 'born astray', then they couldn't 'go astray from birth'. David again is saying that babies are born into a sinful world with their eyes and ears wide open.
We all know that babies are so inquisitive; they begin to learn immediately through taste, touch, sound, sight, and smell. They are watching, and they see evil all around them, constantly from birth.

Yes, they don't know or understand what evil is when they are born, but evil is present; it's all around them, and they're influenced by it. David is simply saying that the ones going astray 'speak lies', so going astray has to be accomplished, at the very least, only after the person has learned to speak.

Paul writes, 'Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Ephesians 2:3.

Ask yourself this question: What was it that made these people 'children of wrath'? Was it something they inherited or something they had done? If we read this verse in its proper context, you'll see that Ephesians 2:1-2 gives us the answer.

Paul says they were 'by nature' what they were; the word 'nature' used in Ephesians 2:3 doesn't refer to an inherited character but rather to habit. In other words, sin became natural, or as some say, 'second nature' to them by their long and industrious practice of it.

Read carefully what Jesus actually said, in Matthew 18:1-3, He said 'we must change and become like little children'. Common sense tells us that He wouldn't tell us to become like little children if we were born sinners and inherently evil.

If babies are born inherently evil, this would mean that there's nothing in them that isn't evil, and therefore, we shouldn't become like children in any sense. But Jesus didn't mean that, He meant there was something in children that we need to take as our example, their humility. This passage clearly shows us that children aren't born inherently evil, Psalm 106:36-39.

The Hebrew writer refers to God as the 'Father of spirits', Hebrews 12:9. While we inherit our physical attributes from our physical parents, our inner person, our spirit, we get from God, Ecclesiastes 12:7, our spirit is created 'in His image', Genesis 1:27.

Common sense again tells us that if we're born inherently evil, then we're evil in body and spirit, and if that's the case, then we inherit our sinful, evil spirits from God! But we know that's not true because in God there is no evil, Psalm 5:4, and therefore there is no evil to pass on to us.

Paul also says, 'If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself,' 2 Timothy 3:13. Think about this verse! If we were born inherently evil, then we couldn't get any worse.

Jesus, Himself also says, 'But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.' Luke 8:15. Think about this verse! If we were born inherently evil, then this would mean there's no such thing as 'noble and good' hearts.

Before we get into dealing with the above doctrine, let's look at what sin is, because this will help us understand why no child is born a sinner. Please note that sin isn't described as something we're born with; it's described as something we do or don't do. When we break God's law, we sin. Note the following Scriptures.

Paul says in Romans 3:23 that sin is missing the mark, falling short of God's expectations. John tells us in 1 John 3:4 that sin is transgression of God's law. He also tells us in 1 John 5:17 that sin is not doing right, and James tells us in James 4:17 that sin is failing to do what we know to be right.

Now remember, a child, a newborn child, doesn't have the capability of exercising choice. All of the passages noted above indicate a choice; sin is something that we do either in thought or action. A child can hardly be held accountable for sin if they aren't aware of what sin is, Romans 7:7-25.

We need to ask ourselves a simple question: Who is responsible for our sins? Are we going to blame Adam and Eve? Are we going to blame our parents? Take a moment to read through Ezekiel 18, where we find the children of Israel in Jerusalem being conquered by their enemies, the Babylonians, and they are seeking to blame their fathers for their sins.

Note the following. If Ezekiel teaches us anything in Ezekiel 18:4 and Ezekiel 18:20, he teaches us that God holds each of us accountable for our own sins, not someone else.

It's very easy to blame God and say, 'I was born that way!' It's very easy to blame our parents and say, 'I inherited my sin from them!' Those who believe that babies are born sinners and inherently evil need to start taking some responsibility for their own actions, Romans 2:6.

Instead of blaming God or others for our sins, we should acknowledge our sins before Him, repent and turn from them and be baptised into Christ so that we might have our sins forgiven, Acts 2:38. After we have done this, we need to continue to confess and repent of our sins so we might be forgiven, 1 John 1:1-2:2.

'Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.' Psalm 51:6-9

David says with God, there is faithfulness but with him, there is sin and falsehood, and he knows that God taught him wisdom, which would help him live right all of his life, Psalm 51:6. In other words, David says that he is the total opposite of what God desired of him, God's desire was that David be totally transformed deep within.
Notice David's words of faith in God, cleanse and he will be clean, wash and he will be whiter than snow, Psalm 51:7. He asks God to cleanse him with hyssop, Psalm 51:7 / Exodus 12:22 / John 19:29 / Hebrews 9:19.
Hyssop is a plant or herb which was used to sprinkle blood on a leper by the priest to signify his cleansing, Leviticus 14:4 / Leviticus 14:6 / 1 Kings 4:33 / Hebrews 9:13-14 / 1 John 1:7. David wants God to cleanse him both spiritually and morally.
He asks God to wash him so that he will be whiter than snow, Psalm 51:7 / Isaiah 1:18, that is, he wants God to remove any defilement from him, Isaiah 1:16. The word 'wash' in Hebrew is the word, 'kabac' and it is the word that was used by those who beat clothes on a solid surface in order to dislodge grime.
It's clear that the weight of David's sins felt like his bones were being crushed, but he was confident that all the pain he was enduring because of his sin would lead to joy and gladness, Psalm 51:8 / Psalm 32:1-2. Crushed bones speak of total submission to allow God to completely humble David because of his sin.
Like many of us today, we often wait until we're feeling crushed before we confess our sins to Him, Psalm 6:2 / Psalm 22:14 / Psalm 32:3 / Psalm 31:10 / Psalm 38:3. David, once again, as he does throughout this psalm, just pours out his heart to God and asks Him for forgiveness and restoration, Psalm 51:9 / Psalm 13:1.

'Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.' Psalm 5:10-11

A pure heart and a steadfast spirit were going to be the results of David's repentance and God's forgiveness, Psalm 5:10 / Ezekiel 36:26. He didn't just want a clean heart, he wants a pure heart, he didn't just want his spirit renewed, he wanted a renewed steadfast spirit within him so that he could live the way God wanted him to. Psalm 5:10.
David doesn't want God to abandon him and leave him in his sin and sorrow, Psalm 5:11 / Psalm 16:11 / Psalm 31:20 / Psalm 140:13. He doesn't want God to remove the Holy Spirit from him, Psalm 5:11.
In other words, he didn't want God's presence to leave him. Remember, in the Old Testament, there was no 'indwelling of the Spirit' as Christians have today. The 'indwelling of the Spirit' is received at baptism, Acts 2:38 / Romans 8:9 / 1 Corinthians 6:19.

'Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.' Psalm 51:12-13

After dealing with the consequences of sin deep within him, David asks the Lord to restore the joy of His salvation, Psalm 51:12. He wanted to feel that joy which comes about when a person has been forgiven of their sins, 1 John 2:29 / 1 John 3:7 / 1 John 3:10.
He wants God to give him a willing spirit to sustain him, Psalm 51:12 / 1 Chronicles 28:21 / Exodus 35:5. In other words, he wants God to help him to be able to obey His will.
David knows how much mercy he needed from God, and as a result, he said he would teach others about God's mercy, so that they would turn to Him, Psalm 51:13 / Luke 22:32 / 2 Corinthians 4:15.

‘Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Saviour, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. May it please you to prosper Zion, to build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole; then bulls will be offered on your altar.’
Psalm 51:14-19

David now asks God, his Saviour, to deliver him from the guilt of commanding the murder of Uriah, Psalm 51:14 / 2 Samuel 11:14-17. As a result of God’s forgiveness, David would once again sing praises about God’s righteousness, Psalm 51:14-15 / Psalm 35:28.
David knows that God didn’t delight in sacrifice and burnt offerings, Psalm 51:16 / 2 Samuel 6:13 / 2 Samuel 6:17-18 / Psalm 40:6-8 / Psalm 50:7-15 / Isaiah 1:11; otherwise, he would have done that.
He understands that what God really wants is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, Psalm 51:17 / Psalm 44:19. In other words, He wants the very heart of man, Isaiah 57:15 / Isaiah 66:2.
David knows that his sin did more than affect him as a king; his sin affected more than Bathsheba and her husband; his sin also affected his kingdom, Psalm 51:18. Hence, he asks God to make Zion prosper and build up the walls of Jerusalem, Psalm 51:18.
After repenting and confessing his sins to the Lord, David, along with all the righteous, that is, those who are right with God, will be able to offer their sacrifice to the Lord with a clear conscience, Psalm 51:19 / Deuteronomy 33:10 / Leviticus 6:9 / Leviticus 1:3-17.

CONCLUSION

David mentioned within his psalm that he didn’t want God to take away the Holy Spirit, Psalm 51:11. Notice the words, ‘Holy Spirit’, the N.I.V. and other translations use a capital ‘H’, for ‘holy’, when it should be a small case ‘h’. We find the phrase, ‘holy Spirit’ in the Old Testament in three places.
But you will notice in the original text that the word ‘holy’ doesn’t begin with a capital letter. Nor can you find the term, ‘THE Holy Spirit’. The word ‘holy’ begins with a small ‘h’ because the word is used in an adjectival sense and not as a title or designation. The first person who is said to have used the term was David, where he pleads with God, ‘take not your holy Spirit from me’, Psalm 51:11.
David knew what happened to King Saul; he knew that Saul had been disowned by God, and he was afraid that God might also abandon him because of his terrible sin. The Scriptures tell us that ‘the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul’, 1 Samuel 16:14, and the prophet Samuel never again went to see him.
Remember, at this time, David was the King, the Lord’s Anointed One. He was the man on whose young head had been poured the anointing oil which had been the symbol in its gentle flow and sweet perfume, of his setting apart for high office in the service of God.

And now, he is very much afraid that this special privilege and symbol of God’s presence had been forfeited, might be taken back, lost! ‘Take not your holy Spirit from me’.

The other two occasions when the expression ‘holy Spirit’ is used are found in the book of the prophet Isaiah, Isaiah 63:10-11. ‘Yet they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit.’ ‘Where is he who set his holy Spirit among them?’
This is a very significant statement because it reveals an important truth, namely that in Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit took hold of men to use them for specific tasks. He didn’t indwell them. He didn’t come to ‘live in’ them as in the New Testament times with Christians.

And what is truly remarkable is that the Spirit of God took hold of men for special purposes, without reference to their character. Sometimes they were good men. Sometimes they were not so good! But He took them and used them to accomplish His purposes.

This is one of the amazing differences between the people of God of Old Testament times and the people of God today, that is, the church, 1 Corinthians 3:16 / 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
In Old Testament times, the Spirit of God is never said to 'fill', or 'dwell' in the nation, the people of God, but only used particular people, at particular times, for particular purposes.

CHAPTER 52

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm that contrasts the righteous with the wicked; it reveals the frustration the righteous have toward the wicked and their ungodly ways. The historical setting is found in 1 Samuel 21-22, where we find that Doeg told Saul where David was and told him about the help David received from the priests who served there. As a result, Saul had Doeg kill the priests and others at the tabernacle, 1 Samuel 22:18-19.

HEADING

'For the director of music. A maskil of David. When Doeg the Edomite had gone to Saul and told him: "David has gone to the house of Ahimelek.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm was for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
No one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.
In 1 Samuel 21-22, we find the historical background where Doeg told Saul where David was and told him about the help David received from the priests who served there. As a result, Saul had Doeg kill the priests and others at the tabernacle, 1 Samuel 22:18-19.

‘Why do you boast of evil, you mighty hero? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God? You who practice deceit, your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor. You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth. You love every harmful word, you deceitful tongue! Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin: He will snatch you up and pluck you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living.’ Psalm 52:1-5

David begins this psalm with thoughts about Doeg the Edomite and the evil report he brought to King Saul. As far as David is concerned, what Doeg had done was evil, boastful, and disgraceful, 1 Samuel 22:9.
Doeg was no ‘mighty hero’, Psalm 52:1; he killed eighty-five priests, their wives, children and livestock. The priests weren’t trained soldiers; they were priests who had no experience in battle, 1 Samuel 22:18-19.
David tells us just how deceitful Doeg was; his whole life was directed by his evil tongue, which worked like a ‘sharpened razor’, Psalm 52:2 / Isaiah 7:20. In other words, what Doeg said caused a lot of damage, even murder, Psalm 5:9 / Psalm 38:12 / Proverbs 18:21 / James 3:8.
Remember, David did do wrong at the tabernacle; he did lie to Ahimelek, but Psalm 52:3, he admitted his wrongdoings and took full responsibility for doing so, 1 Samuel 22:14 / 1 Samuel 22:22. But he also knew he wasn’t responsible for the killing of those eighty-five priests, Psalm 52:3.
You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates what Doeg had done to those eighty-five priests, their families, and livestock.

After pausing for a breath, David is confident that God will ‘destroy’ Doeg for what he did, Psalm 52:4 / Leviticus 14:45 / Judges 6:30 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9. He is confident that God would bring judgment upon Doug, as he will be ‘snatched up and pluck out of his tent’, Psalm 52:5, that is, removed from his house and he will be removed from ‘the land of the living,’ Psalm 52:5 / Isaiah 53:8 / Ezekiel 32:32. In other words, he is destined to die, Hebrews 9:27.

‘The righteous will see and fear; they will laugh at you, saying, “Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others!” But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God’s unfailing love for ever and ever. For what you have done, I will always praise you in the presence of your faithful people. And I will hope in your name, for your name is good.’ Psalm 52:6-9

David says when Doeg is destroyed and removed from the land of the living, the righteous will see it, Psalm 37:34, and they will fear God, Psalm 52:6, that is, they will be afraid to turn away from God’s will.
The righteous will also laugh in satisfaction at the destruction of such evil men, Psalm 52:6 / Psalm 58:10 / Psalm 64:9-10 / Proverbs 1:26, that is, they will rejoice that evil didn’t win the day. They will laugh because such men trust in their wealth, instead of trusting God, Psalm 52:7 / Psalm 62:10 / Matthew 7:2 / 1 Timothy 6:9-10 / 1 Timothy 6:17-19.
It appears that David is implying that Doeg murdered those eighty-five priests, their wives, their children and their animals, for financial gain. 1 Samuel 22 indicates that Doeg did this to gain the favour of Saul, but the favour of a king could be a path to significant riches.
When David encountered Doeg, it happened at the ‘house of God’, Psalm 52:8, that is, the tabernacle, 1 Samuel 21:1-7. It’s possible that he saw an ‘olive tree’ nearby, which was ‘flourishing’ Psalm 52:8, because it was planted close to the tabernacle, Psalm 1:3 / Psalm 92:13.
As a result of seeing this flourishing olive tree, David could say that he trusts in God’s unfailing love forever and ever, Psalm 52:8. David is confident that God will bring an end to Doeg, and as a result, he will always praise God in front of the faithful, Psalm 52:9 / Psalm 22:25 / Psalm 35:18 / Psalm 111:1 / Isaiah 38:20. He will always hope in God’s good Name, Psalm 52:9 / Psalm 69:30 / Proverbs 18:10.

CONCLUSION

In this psalm, David reminded us of the many downfalls of Doeg the Edomite. He trusted in his own strength, rather than God's strength, Proverbs 3:5-6 / Acts 17:28; he denied God and despised man, and it cost him his life. It's never a good idea to leave God out of our lives, as this will only lead us into sin, which will result in shame and misery, Ecclesiastes 2:12-26.

Doeg also made the mistake of trusting in his riches, rather than trusting in God. He was worldly and covetous, 1 John 2:15. It's never a good idea to put our hope in our wealth, which is here today and gone tomorrow; it's always better to put our hope in God, Mark 10:23 / 1 Timothy 6:17.

CHAPTER 53

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is basically the same as Psalm 14; the difference is that the word 'Yahweh', that is, God, is used in this psalm, whilst the word 'Elohim', that is, Lord, is used in Psalm 14, in reference to Deity.

Although we don't know the historical background to this psalm, it appears to be speaking about an event which took place when God's enemies made an attack against God's people, Acts 9:4. The good news is that David is confident that God will deliver His people and give them a great victory over their enemies.

HEADING

'For the director of music. According to Mahalath. A maskil of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

The word 'mahalath' appears to be some kind of musical term, which may be related to a Hebrew root verb meaning 'grow weak' or 'fall sick'. This suggests a gloomy and sad tone. The word also appears in the heading for Psalm 88.

No one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.

'The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good. God looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.' Psalm 53:1-3

David begins by telling us that those who don't believe in the existence of God are fools, Psalm 53:1 / Psalm 14:1. We can all be foolish sometimes and have foolish thoughts, 1 Samuel 25:25 / 1 Samuel 27:1.
Here, however, it's not that fools don't know that God exists, it's just that they are morally depraved and wished that God didn't exist, John 3:20 / Romans 1:22. David says these fools are corrupt and vile, and they don't do good, Psalm 53:1, which is the obvious end result of anyone who denies the existence of God.
While the fool wished that God didn't exist and tried to forget about God, God looks down from heaven and can't help but remember mankind, Psalm 53:2 / Psalm 14:2. God is looking for anyone who understands and anyone who is seeking Him, Psalm 53:2.
God knows that we need Him because our very existence is reliant upon Him, Matthew 5:45 / Acts 17:28. When God does look down from heaven, Psalm 14:3, He sees that everyone has turned away, Psalm 53:3 / Genesis 11:5, and as a result, they have become corrupt and there's no one who does good, Psalm 53:3 / Romans 3:10. David is telling us that mankind is truly and deeply fallen.

'Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on God. But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, where there was nothing to dread. God scattered the bones of those who attacked you; you put them to shame, for God despised them. Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores his people, let Jacob rejoice, and Israel be glad!' Psalm 53:4-6

David now turns his attention to the fate of God's people in such a fallen world. These evildoers have no true knowledge of God; otherwise, they wouldn't do to God's people what they are doing, Psalm 53:4 / Psalm 14:4.
At first glance, it appears to David that these evildoers are really strong; that is, they devour God's people like bread, even though they don't call upon God, Psalm 53:4.
Notice that David says, 'there they are, overwhelmed with dread, where there was nothing to dread', Psalm 53:5. David appears to have slightly modified the words of Psalm 14:5-6, to meet the present crisis and used them to encourage God's people.
Notice also that God 'scattered the bones' of those who attacked God's people, Psalm 53:5, which means they had been overthrown, and their bones had been scattered on the ground. This leads some to believe that this is speaking about an event which took place when God's enemies made an attack against God's people, Psalm 14:1-7.
God put His enemies to shame, Psalm 53:5, which was seen in them being overthrown because they despised God, Psalm 53:5. It appears that God's enemies are fools in more ways than one. First, they denied the existence of God, and then they tried to fight against God; no wonder they are fools.
Although David was a man of great faith, he, like many of us, when facing difficult times, found it difficult to see how he was going to get through this. He longs that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion, he longs that God would bring about the victory against those who were attacking His people, Psalm 53:6.
Notice, however, David's faith in God as he ends this psalm, he says, when God restores His people, David is fully confident that God will deliver His people from the hands of his enemies, Psalm 53:6 / Psalm 14:7 / Job 42:10 / Ezekiel 16:53. And when God does deliver His people, then God's people will rejoice in what He has done for them, Psalm 53:6.

CONCLUSION

David tells us that being a fool involves either refusing to believe that God exists or totally ignoring the fact that God exists. However, the fool needs to take a simple look up into the skies above and ask themselves, where did all this come from? Psalms 19:1-4.
The fool often looks around at the world and questions if there is a God, because of all the pain and suffering they see in the world. Sometimes these same fools actually blame God, the God that they don't believe exists, for all the pain and suffering.

However, if that same fool only looked deep within themselves, they would see why there is so much suffering and pain in the world. They would see that deep down in their heart of hearts, they want to do their own thing, they want to live and do as they please, and they hate good and love evil, Romans 1:18-20.
What is the opposite of being a fool? The opposite of being a fool is to be wise, but where does true wisdom come from? It comes from God, Proverbs 9:10. Maybe the fools of this world should pray to God and ask for wisdom, James 1:5.

CHAPTER 54

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of lament, probably relating to the time when David was betrayed by the men of Ziph, 1 Samuel 23:19-26 / 1 Samuel 26:1-4.

HEADING

'For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David. When the Ziphites had gone to Saul and said, "Is not David hiding among us?"

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

It was to be used with stringed instruments, and one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.

The Ziphites betrayed David not once but twice, first in 1 Samuel 23:19-26 and the second in 1 Samuel 26:1-4. This psalm appears to deal with the first occurrence.

'Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might. Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth. Arrogant foes are attacking me; ruthless people are trying to kill me—people, without regard for God.' Psalm 54:1-3

David begins by asking God to save him by His name and vindicate him, Psalm 54:1, that is, judge him by His might. In other words, David relied on God's strength and power to save him. He asks God to hear his prayer, Psalm 54:2 / Psalm 17:6, because he knows that God will not only hear his prayer but also act upon it.

He cries out to God to save him and judge him because of those who were rising up against him, Psalm 54:3 / Psalm 7:8 / Psalm 18:20 / Psalm 26:1 / Psalm 43:1 / Acts 16:25. These arrogant foes, Psalm 54:3, who were attacking David, were the Ziphites, 1 Samuel 23:14-24.

The Ziphites were Israelites of the same tribe as David, that is, Judah. Despite being of the same tribe, they were trying to kill David because they had no regard for God or His authority, Psalm 54:3 / Psalm 36:1.

You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates how his own people could betray him as they were doing.

'Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me. Let evil recoil on those who slander me; in your faithfulness, destroy them. I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, LORD, for it is good. You have delivered me from all my troubles, and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes.' Psalm 54:4-7

Despite being hunted down like a dog, David has full confidence in God to help and sustain him, Psalm 54:4, that is, to save his life. David asks God to let these evil people reap what they sow, Psalm 54:5 / Galatians 6:7-8. In other words, he asks God to kill his enemies.

He didn't pray this because of self-righteous reasons; he prayed this so that God's faithfulness could be seen Psalm 54:5. In other words, David didn't want to take vengeance against his enemy; he trusted that God would do that for him, 1 Samuel 26:1.

Despite being hunted down like a dog, David still has his thoughts on God. He says he will sacrifice freewill offerings to God after God has removed the threat, Psalm 54:6, which implies this was voluntary, Exodus 35:29 / Exodus 36:3 / Leviticus 7:16 / Leviticus 22:18 / Numbers 15:3 / Numbers 29:39. This was an expression of thankfulness for what God had done.

Despite being hunted down like a dog, he says he will praise the LORD's name, for it is good, Psalm 54:6 / Psalm 52:9. Notice David is confident that God will deliver him because He has delivered him from trouble time and time again, Psalm 54:7.

He's seen it happen with his own very eyes, Psalm 54:7. He had experienced God's deliverance in the past, and so, there was no reason to doubt that God would deliver him again. We know that God delivered David on both occasions after the Ziphites betrayed him, 1 Samuel 23:19 / 1 Samuel 23:27-28.

CONCLUSION

David was confident that God would deliver him from the hands of his enemies because God had done it before. As God was with him when he defeated Goliath, 1 Samuel 17:41-52, David knew that He was going to be with him through this time of betrayal by the Ziphites.
As Christians, we all face many trials in our lives, but when we look back and remember how many times God has delivered us before, this too should give us the confidence to know that God will deliver us again from our present situation, Psalm 46:1-2.
Paul had absolute confidence in the Lord to deliver him from any situation, 2 Timothy 4:8, even if that meant those who can kill the body but not the soul, Psalm 121:7 / Matthew 10:28 / Philippians 1:21-24 / 2 Timothy 4:6 / 2 Peter 2:9. He also had absolute confidence that the Lord God would bring him safely into his heavenly kingdom.
Because the Lord holds such power to deliver us all and bring us all safely to His heavenly kingdom, then we too should give glory to the Lord, Romans 11:36 / Galatians 1:4 / Hebrews 13:21 / 2 Peter 3:18.

CHAPTER 55

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm in which David speaks about how he felt when he was betrayed by someone close to him. David's life is in danger, and so he cries out to God for help and puts his faith in him.

Although we're not told the background to this psalm, it appears it's relating to the time David's son Absalom rebelled against him, along with Ahithophel, 2 Samuel 15-18.

HEADING

'For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

It was to be used with stringed instruments, and no one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.

'Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me, and I am distraught because of what my enemy is saying, because of the threats of the wicked; for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger. My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me. I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. I would flee far away and stay in the desert; I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm." Psalm 55:1-8

As David's life is in serious danger, he begins by pleading with God to listen to his prayer, Psalm 55:1-2 / Psalm 5:1 / Psalm 17:6. His prayer suggests that he felt very vulnerable because God was far away from him, Lamentations 3:56. His thoughts are troubling him and he feels distraught, Psalm 55:2. In other words, he's in serious need of God's help.

Because of what his enemy was saying and the threats from the wicked, David is feeling the pressure from it all, Psalm 55:3 / Amos 2:13. His heart is in anguish, and the terror of death has fallen on him, Psalm 55:4, that is, they were causing him a great deal of trouble and stress 2 Samuel 15:2-6.

His mental health is really struggling because the threat is real and he is fearful for his life, and trembles at the thought of his enemies trying to kill him, Psalm 55:5 / Job 4:14.

David needs some kind of relief from his thoughts and fears, and so, he dreams of having the wings of a dove, Psalm 55:6, that way he could fly away to the desert where he would find rest away from all the stress of life, Psalm 55:7 / Psalm 11:1.

You may notice at the end of verse seven, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates in his mind, going to a place away from all his troubles and fears.

Notice he wants to go 'to his place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm' Psalm 55:8. This suggests that David wants to go back to the time when life was much simpler for him. The days when he saw God's faithfulness, the days when everything was calm and peaceful, 1 Kings 19:3-9 / Jeremiah 9:2 / Jeremiah 10:19.

'Lord, confuse the wicked, confound their words, for I see violence and strife in the city. Day and night, they prowl about on its walls; malice and abuse are within it. Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets. If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshipers. Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the realm of the dead, for evil finds lodging among them.' Psalm 55:9-15

Notice all the words David uses in relation to what his enemies are doing. They are saying things, Psalm 55:3; he wants God to confound their words, Psalm 55:9; they lie, Psalm 55:11; and they insult him, Psalm 55:12. Whatever his enemies were saying, it was causing a lot of grief for David.

David doesn't ask the Lord to kill his enemies; he asks God to confuse the wicked and confound their words, Psalm 55:9 / Genesis 11:1-9 / 2 Samuel 15:31. In other words, he's asking God to bring judgment upon them, and he's asking God to protect him. He's asking God that all those who were speaking evil things against him turn on each other. This prayer was answered and recorded in 2 Samuel 17:1-23.

David now sees 'violence and strife in the city', Psalm 55:9. We don't know what city this is, possibly Jerusalem, but it appears that the verbal abuse he was receiving turned into violence, Psalm 55:9.

The trouble David was facing wasn't only against him now, it was against all those who lived in the city, Psalm 55:10-11. He knows if an enemy was insulting him, if a foe was rising against him, he could do something about it, he could endure it and hide, Psalm 55:12.

Notice, that he doesn't use the words, 'enemies' or 'foes', in Psalm 55:12. He speaks in terms of a singular person, this is, someone close to him to turn against him, 2 Samuel 15:31. It was a man like David, his companion, his close friend, someone he enjoyed fellowship with as they worshipped God together, Psalm 55:13-14 / Psalm 41:9.

It was this man who turned against David and turned his life upside down. David's betrayal was so hurtful that he wanted death to take his enemy by surprise, and he wanted them to go down alive in the realm of the dead, Psalm 55:15 / Numbers 16:30 / Job 10:21-22.

The realm of the dead, Psalm 55:15, is Sheol, and there are, in fact, three Biblical words, the meanings of which are often confused because people tend to use them very loosely. Two of the words in the New Testament are Greek words. The Third word is an Old Testament Hebrew word.

For instance, in the New Testament, we have the following.

1. 'Gehenna', which occurs twelve times, and, in the Authorised Version, is always translated 'hell'.

2. 'Hades', which occurs ten times, and which is also always translated as 'hell'.

3. The third word is the word 'Sheol', found in the Old Testament, and which sometimes is erroneously said to be the word that corresponds to 'Gehenna'.

You clearly see the confusion that has been created about the meaning of this word when you understand that, in the Authorised Version, out of the sixty-five instances it occurs, thirty-one times it has been translated 'hell' and thirty-four times it has been translated 'the grave'!

Now, although the word 'Sheol' literally means 'The Place of the Dead', you don't need much intelligence to recognise that 'Hell' and the 'Grave' aren't the same places! When a body is placed in the grave, it hasn't been consigned to 'Hell'!

But there is a history behind this inconsistent rendering of the word 'Sheol'. Whilst the translators of the Authorised Version believed 'Hell' to be the place of punishment for the wicked, they withdrew from the idea of saying that good people also go to 'Sheol', and so in passages that related to the death of good people, they decided to translate 'Sheol' as 'the grave'!

However, in Hebrew theology and in Old Testament teaching, 'Sheol' is described as the place to which all the dead go, both good and bad. It's defined as 'the place of departed souls'.

In the account of King Saul's visit to the medium at Endor, the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel is recorded as saying to Saul, 'Tomorrow, you and your sons shall be with me,' 1 Samuel 28:19. Even the Oxford Dictionary is close to the truth as far as the meaning of the word is concerned. It says that 'Sheol' is 'The abode of the dead'. Furthermore, in the Old Testament, 'Sheol' is described as a gloomy place, in which an individual is farther away from God than he was during his lifetime. We are told that 'the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything,' Ecclesiastes 9:5, and, according to Psalm 115:17, 'The dead do not praise Yahweh, nor any who go down into silence.'

'As for me, I call to God, and the LORD saves me. Evening, morning, and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. God, who is enthroned from of old, who does not change he will hear them and humble them, because they have no fear of God. My companion attacks his friends; he violates his covenant. His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords. Cast your cares on the LORD, and he will sustain you;

he will never let the righteous be shaken. But you, God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of decay; the bloodthirsty and deceitful will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.' Psalm 55:16-23

It's clear that David wasn't looking for vengeance; he left that to God. Despite the city being terrorised and his close friend turning against him, David turned to God to ask Him to save him, Psalm 55:16.
Three times a day, he cries out to God in distress, Psalm 55:17 / Daniel 6:10 / Psalm 119:164, but he is confident God will hear his prayers, Psalm 55:17. As far as David is concerned, God has and will rescue him from the battle and all those who oppose him, Psalm 55:18.
He appears to be at peace within himself now, when he focuses on what God can and will do for him, Psalm 55:19.
He knows God doesn't change, he knows his enemies don't fear God, and so, he knows that God sees and hears what his enemies are doing, Psalm 55:19.
You may notice at the end of verse nineteen, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates the consequences of those who don't fear God.

David's companions not only betrayed him and his friends, but they also 'violated their covenant', Psalm 55:20, that is, they broke their agreements with others, 2 Samuel 15:12 / 2 Samuel 15:31.
His companion is a 'smooth talker', but inside they are 'drawn swords', Psalm 55:21, that is, in their heart, they are ready to kill someone, Psalm 28:3 / Psalm 57:4 / Isaiah 5:20 / Romans 16:18.
We can almost feel the pain of betrayal in David's heart when he thinks about his once close friend. He knows that God would carry his burdens, he knows that God would bear his burdens, Psalm 55:22 / Proverbs 16:3 / Philemon 4:6-7 / 1 Peter 5:7.
He knows that God would sustain him and never allow him to be moved, Psalm 55:22 / 2 Corinthians 12:9. He knows that God wouldn't only protect him, but he also knows that God will bring down and cut short the lives of those who are 'wicked', 'bloodthirsty' and 'deceitful', Psalm 55:23.
The pit of decay, Psalm 55:23, refers to the grave, Job 17:16 / Job 33:18 / Job 33:24 / Psalm 9:15 / Psalm 28:1 / Psalm 30:3 / Psalm 30:9, the place where they will be cut off from their sins. There's nothing David can do about his enemies, but He knows he can, and so he places his trust in God, Psalm 55:23.

CONCLUSION

One of the most hurtful experiences in life is when we feel 'let down' by our friends. It's all so easy to turn our backs on our friends and just ignore them because of the hurt they have caused us.

Instead, pray for them, Luke 6:28, and remind yourself of how much you are loved by God, 1 John 4:10-11, and remind yourself that love keeps no records of wrongs, 1 Corinthians 13:5.
Praying and showing love to those who let us down may not change their attitude towards us, but it will certainly change our attitude towards them. And who knows, after reconciliation, Colossians 3:13, you may truly become real friends who will always be there for each other, no matter what life throws at you both, Ecclesiastes 4:10.

CHAPTER 56

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of David in which he cries out to God, trusting that God would deliver him. The historical background appears to be the time when David fled to Achish, who was the Philistine king of the city of Gath. It was there that he pretended to be mad so that they wouldn't kill him, 1 Samuel 21:10-15.

HEADING

'For the director of music. To the tune of "A Dove on Distant Oaks." Of David. A miktam. When the Philistines had seized him in Gath.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
The psalm was to be directed to the 'tune of a dove in distant oaks'; no one knows what this tune was, but some suggest it represents a dove that was in trouble.

No one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.
The time when the Philistines seized David was a time when David was lonely, desperate, and scared. This was the time when David pretended to be mad, 1 Samuel 21:10-15.

'Be merciful to me, my God, for my enemies are in hot pursuit; all day long they press their attack. My adversaries pursue me all day long; in their pride, many are attacking me. When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? All day long, they twist my words; all their schemes are for my ruin. They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, hoping to take my life. Because of their wickedness, do not let them escape; in your anger, God, bring the nations down.' Psalm 56:1-7

David begins by asking God to show him mercy, Psalm 51:1, because his many enemies which would have included Saul and the Philistines were in hot pursuit, Psalm 56:1.
Saul had been relentless in pursuing David, even to the point that David fled to Israel's enemy, the Philistines, but he fully trusts in God to rescue him from their hands and as a result of trusting in God, he isn't afraid, Psalm 56:2-3.
David begins to think about God and His Word, which also leads him to trust God and not be afraid, Psalm 56:4. The words here are possibly the words which were spoken to him by Samuel when he told him he would be king over Israel, 1 Samuel 16:1-13. The more David trusted God and His Word, the more his faith grew, and his fear was lessened.

He asks the question, 'What can mere mortals do to me?' Psalm 56:4. I guess on the physical side, they could do a lot of damage, but when God is for him, then who cares what mere mortals can do to him. His soul and relationship with God are more important, Matthew 10:28 / Romans 8:31-34 / Hebrews 13:6.

David didn't only face physical abuse, but also verbal abuse, Psalm 56:5. His enemies twisted their words in order to get others to go against David; they plotted and schemed in order to ruin David's life, Psalm 56:5.

His enemies, conspire, lurk, and watch David's every step looking for a way to catch him and kill him, Psalm 56:6.

When David fled to Achish, king of Gath, he was driven away by him, it was then he was watched by Saul and his men, and it was then they chased him into the wilderness, 1 Samuel 21:1-15 / 1 Samuel 21:22.

David demonstrates his faith in God by asking Him to bring down the nations who were plotting and scheming against him, Psalm 56:7, that is, the Philistines, Saul, and his men.

'Record my misery; list my tears on your scroll—are they not in your record? Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this, I will know that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me? I am under vows to you, my God; I will present my thank offerings to you. For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.' Psalm 56:8-13

David asks God if He has his misery recorded and the list of his tears in His scroll, Psalm 56:8 / Revelation 5:8. The answer to this question is yes, He does. God has records of all David's misery and tears.

He knows what happened when David went to Gath, 1 Samuel 21:10. He knows what happened when David went to the cave of Adullam, 1 Samuel 22:1. He knows what happened when David went to Mizpeh, 1 Samuel 22:3.

He knows what happened when David went to the forest of Hereth, 1 Samuel 22:5. He knows what happened to David when he went to Keilah, 1 Samuel 23:5. He knows what happened to David when he went to the wilderness of Ziph, 1 Samuel 23:14, and He knows what happened to David when he went to the wilderness of Maon, 1 Samuel 23:25, and to En-Gedi, 1 Samuel 24:1-2.

The very fact that God knows where David has been and how he was feeling gives David the confidence to know that God is with him, Psalm 56:9, and that God will answer his prayers.

David once again for the third time praises God for His Word, Psalm 56:10. He has good reason to trust in God because of His Word, Psalm 56:10-11 / Psalm 138:2.

Notice again, he asks the question, 'What can man do to me?' Psalm 56:11. The answer again is nothing, and so he puts his trust in God Himself, and he isn't afraid, Psalm 56:11 / Romans 8:28-39 / 1 Corinthians 10:13.

It appears that David had sworn vows, Psalm 56:12, and by doing so, he placed himself under laws of faithfulness that he had made to God for himself, Genesis 28:20 / Numbers 6:2 / Numbers 30:2-3 / Deuteronomy 23:21 / 1 Samuel 1:11. His vows became laws to himself, so that he would remain faithful to the Lord.

At the time of writing, David was far away from God's altar, and so he offers these sacrifices in his heart; he offers his thanksgiving, giving offerings in his heart, Psalm 56:12 / Leviticus 7:12 / Psalm 26:7.

David knew that his life was in constant danger from the Philistines, Saul, and his men, but he thanked God for delivering him and stopping his feet from stumbling, Psalm 56:13.

He would walk before God in life, Psalm 56:13 / Job 33:30, being delivered from death, that is, he wants to continue to live so that he can enjoy living in God's grace.

CONCLUSION

David asked the same question using different words in his psalm, What can mere mortals do to me?' 'What can man do to me?' Jesus tells us Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell,' Matthew 10:28.

There would be something wrong with us if we weren't afraid of anyone who has the power to kill us, but Jesus here tells us not to be afraid because He and He alone has the authority to destroy both soul and body in hell. While the physical body goes back to the ground at death, Genesis 3:19, it is the soul that will be with God forever or eternally separated from Him in hell.

The 'soul' is man's unique self. It is the part of his being that, because it is rational and moral, determines the actions performed by his body, and which, therefore, renders him personally accountable for what he does.

And so, it is man's 'soul' which will ultimately be either saved or lost, depending on his response to the offer of salvation which was made first possible by the coming of Christ into the world.

If we fear and obey God, we don't need to fear men who want to kill our bodies because God will preserve our souls and raise us from the dead when Christ returns, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 / 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

CHAPTER 57

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David laments over the situation he finds himself in, that is, on the run from King Saul, but he was confident that God would continue to deliver the righteous and bring judgment on the wicked. Psalm 57:7-11 are identical to Psalm 108:1-5.

HEADING

'For the director of music. To the tune of 'Do Not Destroy.' Of David. A miktam. When he had fled from Saul into the cave.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

The psalm was to be directed to the 'tune of a do not destroy', no one knows what this tune was, but some suggest it reflects David's words to Saul, 1 Samuel 26:9.
The word 'miktam' means golden, hence why it's often referred to as the 'golden psalm'. However, there are others who believe that the word 'miktam' may have some musical meaning.

Still, others believe that the word means to cover. When we look at other psalms with the same heading, Psalms 56-60, they all appear to be written in times of distress, which leads some to believe that the word 'miktam' has the idea of covering the lips in the sense of secrecy. In other words, these are silent or secret psalms which were whispered during times of distress.
The historical setting was David's flight from Saul. On this occasion, he hid in a cave near the camp of Saul, 1 Samuel 22:1 / 1 Samuel 24:1-8.

'Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed'. Psalm 57:1

David begins by telling us that God is his 'refuge', Psalm 56:1, but notice David starts this Psalm by pleading for mercy twice, Psalm 57:1. This tells us just how desperate he is. But he's not pleading mercy from Saul; he's pleading mercy from God, Psalm 57:1.
He's not relying on Saul changing his mind; he's relying on God saving him from Saul. Not for one minute did David trust Saul, but he trusted God wholeheartedly.

He was probably around twenty years old when he wrote this psalm and he knew, as long as Saul was chasing him, like chicks to the hen, he would take refuge in the shadow of God's wings, Psalm 57:1 / Psalm 17:8 / Psalm 36:7.
God is bigger than any disaster we're going through right now and although He doesn't promise to remove those disasters from our lives. He does promise to give us shelter from them until those disasters have passed. The question is, who do you turn to when disaster strikes, and who is your shelter?

'I cry out to God Most High, to God, who vindicates me. He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me—God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.' Psalm 57:2-3

The world turns to drugs, alcohol, and antidepressants when times of disaster strike, but David turned to God in his time of disaster. David says, if we're facing a disaster right now, there are five things we need to do.

1. David says we need to 'speak to God'.

David cried out to God Most High, he spoke to God, Psalm 57:2, and he poured his heart to God in prayer. When disaster strikes and all hope seems to disappear, then speak to God about it, 1 Peter 3:12.
Prayer isn't for God's benefit; it's for our benefit, and when we cry out to God for help, it reminds us of our reliance upon Him to help us out. David says we won't get through any disaster if we don't first speak to God, Ephesians 3:20.
2. David says we need to 'remind ourselves of everything God has already done in our lives.'

David says it's 'God, who vindicates him', Psalm 57:2. That word, 'vindicate', means to complete or to finish. He's saying that God is not like men, who make huge promises and don't fulfil them.
He remembers how God helped in the past; he remembers how Saul promised time and time again that he wouldn't kill him. But he knows that God would once again deliver him from the hands of Saul. When we're going through any disaster and remember what God has done for us in the past, then we can be sure we are in safe hands.

3. David says we need to 'rely on God to send help.'

David says that 'God sends from heaven to save him' Psalm 57:3. Let me ask you, who does God send to help us when disaster strikes? Now God could and does send His people who are living here on earth to help those who are going through disasters.
But notice that David says, 'God sends help from heaven,' Psalm 57:3. In other words, this is divine help, and the only beings I know which would fit into this category are angels, Hebrews 1:14.
The Hebrew writer asks this question, and the answer is 'yes', God's angels are sent by God to serve us. How do the angels go about their work? That's for them to know, we're simply to have faith in our heavenly Father's promised care for His people.

4. David says we need to 'trust that God will deal with our enemies'.

David says God will 'rebuke those who hotly pursue him', Psalm 57:3. The idea here is that David's troubles wanted to swallow him up, but God would swallow up David's troubles.
5. David says we need to 'remember God's mercy and truth.'

The N.I.V. says, 'God sends forth his love and his faithfulness,' Psalm 57:3 / Psalm 40:11. But the K.J.V. has a more accurate translation of this verse where it says, 'God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.'
Notice that mercy and truth are personified here and are poetically represented as ministers of God, Psalm 57:3. They are pictured as standing in God's presence, ready to do whatever it takes to save a person's soul.
They, too, like the angels, are sent from heaven to save David from the hands of Saul and his men. David needed mercy to be saved from Saul, but David also needed truth. Many people had lied about him, and even Saul himself went about spreading lies about him.

And so, David realises he needs not only salvation from Saul, but he needed the truth about himself to be known. He wanted people to know that God wanted him to be king of Israel; this wasn't his idea. He wanted God to reveal to everyone the real character of David.

David says if we're going through a disaster of any kind, we must speak to God first and trust that He will send help to deliver us from our enemies. He wants us to remember that 'God is our refuge.'

You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates how God helps him in his time of need.

'I am in the midst of lions; I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts—men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.' Psalm 57:4

Not only is God our refuge, but David says that 'He's also our protector'. Now, remember when it comes to lions, David knew all about them, Psalm 57:4. He fought a lion as a youth when it attacked his sheep, 1 Samuel 17:34-37, but there's an important point we shouldn't miss here.
Notice that David says, 'the LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine,' Psalm 57:4 / 1 Samuel 17:37. In other words, he knew he couldn't escape that lion by his own power and his own ability, He needed God to rescue him from the lion.
Remember when Daniel was put in the lion's den because he prayed to God? Remember what he said to King Darius when he survived the night with the lions? 'My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions,' Daniel 6:22. Daniel survived the night with the lions because God protected him. Daniel was in the lion's den, but here David is in the lion's cave. And just like Daniel, he knew he couldn't escape these lions without God's protection.

David isn't speaking about literal lions here; he's describing his enemies. They are 'ravenous beasts, men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords,' Psalm 57:4. David knew his enemies really well; he knew what they were really like. He knew that they were looking for any opportunity and any excuse to devour him.
Do you know that we have an enemy who wants to devour us, too? 'Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour,' 1 Peter 5:8.
David knows if God can protect him from literal lions, he knows God can protect him from all these lion-like men. And as Christians, we too should have the confidence to know that our God will protect us from our enemies, 2 Timothy 4:17-18.
God protected Daniel from the lions, God protected David from the lions, God protected Paul from the lions, and He will certainly protect us when the devil and lion-like men attack us.

'Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. They spread a net for my feet—I was bowed down in distress. They dug a pit in my path—but they have fallen into it themselves.' Psalm 57:5-6

David has just been speaking about his enemies, but now he suddenly turns his attention to God. He saw Saul and his men, these lion-like men chasing him and hunting him like a dog.

He's constantly on the run, knowing that they have set traps for him and dug pits for him to fall into. He's feeling the pressure in his soul, but for a moment, he stops and thinks; he turns his attention to God.

He knows that Saul and his men have fallen into the very nets and pits that they set for David to fall into. He has only one thing on his mind, 'God, let your glory be over all the earth,' Psalm 57:5 / Psalm 8:1.
When we turn our attention away from our enemies and turn towards God, then the situation we're in will change our perspective. David didn't cry out, Why is this happening to me? He didn't throw himself a pity party and stay in that cave until Saul and his men had gone.

David's men wanted to kill Saul, but David spared his life. In other words, God allowed David to face these lions because He wanted David to learn to trust Him, and David learned that lesson.

David's enemies tried to trap him, but they ended up falling into their own trap, Psalm 57:6. God allowed David to face these lions because He wanted David to set an example for those who were watching him throughout his life. He set that example. God is God our refuge, and God is our protector.
You may notice at the end of verse six, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. As mentioned above, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates how God protected him from his lion-like enemies.

'My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.' Psalm 57:7-10

David finishes by reminding us that 'God is our deliverer'. He had no hesitation in celebrating the fact that God delivered him from Saul and his men. While David struggled with discouragement and fear, he knew that God would be there to save him.

Notice how sure David was that God would save him; he went from a double request for mercy to a double confession of steadfastness, Psalm 57:7. In other words, he went from fear to faith, from worry to calmness, from despair to security. His heart is now confident, and with a confident heart, he can't wait to sing praises to God, Psalm 57:7-9.

His heart is now awake, Psalm 57:8, and he wants to use the harp and lyre to wake the dawn with a song, Psalm 57:8 / 1 Samuel 16:23 / 1 Samuel 18:10 / 1 Samuel 19:9 / Psalm 33:2.
He wants to thank God in front of everyone, Psalm 57:9 / Psalm 18:49, while he proclaims the vastness of God's love, and the greatness of God's faithfulness, Psalm 57:10 / Psalm 36:5.
And notice again how David repeats himself, what he wrote in Psalm 57:7, he repeats here in Psalm 57:11, 'Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth'. He doesn't exalt himself; he doesn't exalt any man; he wants God to be exalted so that His glory can be seen all over the earth.

CONCLUSION

In this psalm, David openly admitted that he was living among the 'lions', and he openly spoke about those lion-like men who were his enemies. As Christians, we too are living amidst the lions, but we must never forget that we too have a Lion fighting for us.

When John, in a vision, is looking for someone who is worthy to open the scrolls, and it appears that no one can be found, he wept and wept, but then, out of nowhere, one of the elders says, 'Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.' Revelation 5:5.
When life gets tough, and all seems lost, when the lions of this life bring us to our knees, and all we want to do is weep. Then remember what Jesus, the Lion of Judah, has done; He has been victorious in defeating the lions of sin and death. I think it would be useful if congregations spoke about their troubles more openly.

We're very reluctant to speak about when we're facing the lions, because when we ask most Christians, how they're getting on, most of the time people say, 'I'm fine, thanks, I'm doing great.'

There's a huge television campaign on at the moment, which I'm sure you're aware of, which is trying to encourage people to talk more. This is aimed to help us with our mental health, but how much more important is it for Christians to speak about their problems more openly, to help with their spiritual health?

Wouldn't it be great if we openly spoke to each other about the lions we are facing? When we do that, we soon realise we're not the only ones who are facing those lions.

But not only should we openly speak about the lions we're facing, but we should also openly speak about how they delivered us from the mouth of those lions. We would praise God together more often, we would exalt God together more often, and we would sing of God's love and faithfulness together more often.

God's glory will shine brighter in this dark world, as we give Him all the glory for everything He has done in the past, continues to do in our lives today and will do in the future, Isaiah 12:2 / 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

CHAPTER 58

INTRODUCTION

This psalm speaks of the rulers of the land who had failed to render justice, and so, David called for the direct judgment of God on them. This is a psalm which invokes judgment, calamity, or curses upon an enemy; there are seven curses mentioned within the psalm.

HEADING

'For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A miktam.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
The psalm was to be directed to the 'tune of a do not destroy', no one knows what this tune was, but some suggest it reflects David's words to Saul, 1 Samuel 26:9.
The word 'miktam' means golden, hence why it's often referred to as the 'golden psalm'. However, there are others who believe that the word 'miktam' may have some musical meaning.

Still, others believe that the word means to cover. When we look at other psalms with the same heading, Psalms 56-60, they all appear to be written in times of distress, which leads some to believe that the word 'miktam' has the idea of covering the lips in the sense of secrecy. In other words, these are silent or secret psalms which were whispered during times of distress.

'Do you rulers indeed speak justly? Do you judge people with equity? No, in your heart you devise injustice, and your hands mete out violence on the earth. Even from birth, the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies. Their venom is like the venom of a snake, like that of a cobra that has stopped its ears, that will not heed the tune of the charmer, however skilful the enchanter may be.' Psalm 58:1-5

David begins by addressing the rulers and judges because of their unrighteous, corrupt judgments, Psalm 58:1, and as a result, evil prevailed throughout the land, Psalm 58:2 / Job 31:6 / Daniel 5:27 / Revelation 6:5. David appears to ask, why didn't they defend him or other innocent people instead of staying silent.
After asking these two questions, David goes straight to the source of their corruption, which was their hearts. Their corrupt hearts led them to create violence all over the earth, Psalm 58:2. They weighed out the evidence as in crooked scales, and they distorted their judgments because of prejudiced hearts and bribes, Psalm 58:2.
Notice David says, 'even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies,' Psalm 58:3. This is one of these verses which some people go to justify human beings being born sinners.
However, the first thing to notice with this verse is simply this: if these people were 'born astray', then they couldn't 'go astray from birth', Psalm 58:3. David is saying that babies are born into a sinful world with their eyes and ears wide open, Psalm 51:5.

We all know that babies are so inquisitive; they begin to learn immediately through taste, touch, sound, sight, and smell. They are watching, and they see evil all around them, constantly from birth. Yes, they don't know or understand what evil is when they are born, but evil is present; it's all around them, and they're influenced by it.

David is simply saying that the ones going astray 'speak lies', Psalm 58:3, so the going astray has to be accomplished, at the very least, only after the person has learned to speak. He isn't talking about newborn babies in this passage, he's talking about adults, James 1:14-15.
The words of the rulers and judges were very dangerous and just like a 'cobra', Psalm 58:4. Snake charmers never trust the cobra, no matter how skilled they are, because they are very unpredictable, no matter how skilful the charmer is, Psalm 58:6 / Isaiah 11:8 / Isaiah 8:19. These rulers were very dangerous and very unpredictable.

'Break the teeth in their mouths, O God; LORD, tear out the fangs of those lions! Let them vanish like water that flows away; when they draw the bow, let their arrows fall short. May they be like a slug that melts away as it moves along, like a stillborn child that never sees the sun. Before your pots can feel the heat of the thorns—whether they be green or dry—the wicked will be swept away. The righteous will be glad when they are avenged, when they dip their feet in the blood of the wicked. Then people will say, "Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth." Psalm 58:6-11

David now calls upon God to pronounce seven curses upon these rulers and judges.

1. David asks God to break their teeth, Psalm 58:6.
2. David asks God to tear out their fangs, Psalm 58:6.
Snakes and lions have their power in their teeth, and without them, they wouldn't survive. David wants God to make the rulers and judges as powerless as snakes and lions without teeth, Joel 1:6 / Psalm 3:7 / Psalm 17:12 / Psalm 34:10 / Psalm 35:17 / Psalm 57:4 / Job 29:17 / Proverbs 30:14.
3. David asks God to make them vanish away like water, Psalm 58:7.
He wants the rulers and judges to perish or be cut off, so that he could be saved from them, Job 6:15-19.
4. David asks God to make their arrows useless, Psalm 58:7.
He wants God to render his enemy's arrows useless, in terms of having no effect on him, Psalm 11:2.
5. David asks God to make them like slugs, which melt away, Psalm 58:8.
He wants his enemies to be like a passing snail, as it moves along, it leaves a slimy trail as if it's leaving a part of itself behind. He wants them to melt away like the slime of a snail.

6. David asks God to make his enemies like a stillborn child, Psalm 58:8.
The word 'stillborn' in Hebrews suggests an abortion. A 'stillborn' child isn't delivered alive, they are ripped out of the womb. David is asking that his enemies be as if they had never been born alive in the first place, Job 3:16. He wants God to rip off the face of the earth as if they had never existed.
7. David asks God to sweep away their pot, Psalm 58:9.
Most commentators agree that this seventh curse is difficult to understand. It appears that David considered how quickly a bunch of dry thorns burning in a fire under cooking pots, Ecclesiastes 7:6.
Just as a tornado takes away property and possessions, David appears to be asking God to let these corrupt rulers and judges be swept from the presence of the people, Job 27:21.
After God deals with those corrupt rulers and judges, the righteous, that is, God's people, will be glad, Psalm 58:10.
As victorious people, the righteous will dip their feet in their blood, Psalm 58:10 / Psalm 37:34 / Psalm 40:3 / Psalm 68:23.
After the corrupt rulers and judges are judged, the righteous will see this as their reward from God, Psalm 58:11 / 1 Timothy 4:8, and they will know that God truly is the judge of the earth, Psalm 58:11 / Genesis 18:25 / Revelation 20:11-15.

CONCLUSION

David asked God to curse his enemies with seven different curses; however, when we turn to the New Testament, we quickly discover that cursing people would be sinful.

Paul tells Christians that we should bless those who persecute us, not curse them, Romans 12:14. Jesus tells Christians to love, bless and pray for our enemies, Matthew 5:44-48 / Luke 6:27-36.
As Christians, we must remember to leave vengeance to God, and not take matters into our hands, Deuteronomy 32:35 / Nahum 1:2-3 / Romans 12:19. We can't bless, love and pray for our enemies if hatred resides in our hearts. Even if these activities don't change them, they will help us develop love like God's.
Our religion is worth little if it doesn't lead us to a higher love than that which is shown by worldly men, Proverbs 24:17. Our love should not be restricted simply to those who are like us. We should greet everyone in a kind manner, seeking opportunities to do good for all, Galatians 6:10.

CHAPTER 59

INTRODUCTION

This psalm begins by focusing on the dangers that lie in wait in the night, and then it turns to faith in God as our defence against evildoers and our refuge from wicked attacks. The historical background to this psalm is the time when David ran away from the court of Saul to his own house, 1 Samuel 19:10-17.

HEADING

'For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A miktam. When Saul had sent men to watch David's house in order to kill him.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
The psalm was to be directed to the 'tune of a do not destroy', no one knows what this tune was, but some suggest it reflects David's words to Saul, 1 Samuel 26:9.

The word ‘miktam’ means golden, hence why it’s often referred to as the ‘golden psalm’. However, there are others who believe that the word ‘miktam’ may have some musical meaning.

Still, others believe that the word means to cover. When we look at other psalms with the same heading, Psalms 56-60, they all appear to be written in times of distress, which leads some to believe that the word ‘miktam’ has the idea of covering the lips in the sense of secrecy. In other words, these are silent or secret psalms which were whispered during times of distress.
The background to this psalm was when King Saul was intent on killing David, and so, David began his life as a fugitive, 1 Samuel 19:11-12.

‘Deliver me from my enemies, O God; be my fortress against those who are attacking me. Deliver me from evildoers and save me from those who are after my blood. See how they lie in wait for me! Fierce men conspire against me for no offence or sin of mine, LORD. I have done no wrong, yet they are ready to attack me. Arise to help me; look on my plight! You, LORD God Almighty, you who are the God of Israel, rouse yourself to punish all the nations; show no mercy to wicked traitors.’ Psalm 59:1-5

As David’s life was in real danger from Saul’s men, he asks God to deliver him, Psalm 59:1 / Psalm 18:48, and bring judgment upon them, 1 Samuel 19:11-12. He knows he’s done nothing wrong; he’s done nothing which deserves the onslaught which was coming his way from his enemies.
He wants God to be his fortress, Psalm 59:1, that is, his high tower of strength, Psalm 18:2. David asks this of God four times in this psalm, Psalm 59:9 / Psalm 59:16-17.
This is understandable because Saul and his men wanted nothing less than David’s blood, Psalm 59:2, that is, they wanted him dead, Psalm 5:6 / Psalm 26:9 / Psalm 55:23.
His enemies lie in wait, Psalm 59:3 / Psalm 10:9; they’re waiting to carry out a surprise attack at David’s house, waiting for an opportunity to grab and kill him, 1 Samuel 19:11-12. David tells God that his enemies had no real reason to justify what they are trying to do, Psalm 59:4.
Despite David not being guilty of any offence and despite not committing any sin, his enemies are still ready to attack him, Psalm 59:4 / Psalm 7:8 / Psalm 17:2 / Psalm 35:24 / Psalm 43:1.
It’s no wonder he asks God to arise to help him, Psalm 59:4, that is, he asks God to get actively involved in helping him and see what happens, Psalm 7:6 / Psalm 35:23.
Notice the three names or titles he addresses God with, ‘LORD’, that is, Yahweh, ‘God Almighty’, that is, Elohim Sabaoth, and ‘God of Israel’, that is, Elohi Israel, Psalm 59:5.
Notice also that David wants God to punish ‘all the nations’, Psalm 59:5 / Psalm 2:1, and Saul and his men, that is, the ‘wicked traitors’ Psalm 59:5, who were trying to kill him. This implies that there was also a threat from those who were not of Israel.
You may notice at the end of verse five, some translations have the word, ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates how God was going to punish his enemies.

‘They return at evening, snarling like dogs, and prowl about the city. See what they spew from their mouths—the words from their lips are sharp as swords, and they think, “Who can hear us?” But you laugh at them, LORD; you scoff at all those nations.’ Psalm 59:6-8

Saul and his men were hunting David down like a dog; they were like a pack of wild dogs prowling around in the city, looking for anything they might eat, Psalm 59:6.
They sought to hunt David down and kill him; their words were sharp and dangerous, Psalm 59:7 / Proverbs 15:2 / Proverbs 15:28, just as sharp and dangerous as a sword, Psalm 59:7 / Psalm 57:4, and in their minds they thought that God didn’t know what they were doing, Psalm 59:7 / Psalm 10:11.

David knows that God can indeed hear them, and He laughs at them, Psalm 59:8 / Psalm 2:4 / Psalm 37:13. He laughs at the thought of David's enemies thinking He doesn't hear them or care about what they are doing. All who opposed God are scoffed at by God, Psalm 59:8. David has full confidence in God to defend him and protect him from all his enemies.

'You are my strength, I watch for you; you, God, are my fortress, my God on whom I can rely. God will go before me and will let me gloat over those who slander me. But do not kill them, Lord our shield, or my people will forget. In your might, uproot them and bring them down. For the sins of their mouths, for the words of their lips, let them be caught in their pride. For the curses and lies they utter, consume them in your wrath, consume them till they are no more. Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob.' Psalm 59:9-13

Notice how David describes his God, He is his strength, his fortress, Psalm 59:9. He is his God whom he can rely on, Psalm 59:10, and He is his shield, Psalm 59:11.
David knows how strong his enemies are and he knows he has no chance without God being his strength, fortress and shield, Psalm 5:12 / Psalm 18:2 / Psalm 33:20.
He has full confidence that God will go before him, Psalm 59:10 / Psalm 21:3 / Psalm 17:13 / Psalm 18:5, and allow him to gloat over his enemies, Psalm 59:10, that is, God will allow him to see the victory over his enemies, Psalm 54:7.
Notice David wants God to give him the victory, but he doesn't want God to kill them, he wants God to bring them down, Psalm 59:11. The reason he wanted them left alive was in order that his people wouldn't forget, Psalm 59:11, that is, they would be a living testimony that God worked among the people because He delivered David.
Whatever Saul and his men were saying, their words were damaging, they were sinful, proudful words, they cursed him and lied about him to turn the people against David, Psalm 59:12. It's possible David overheard what they were saying, and maybe he heard them boasting about his death.
David wants God to consume them in His wrath until they are no more, Psalm 59:13, that is, he wants this whole thing to come to an end, and he wants it finished with.
When God does this, then everyone will know that God rules over Jacob, Psalm 59:13 / 1 Samuel 17:46, that is, everyone will know that God is a righteous and just God, Isaiah 40:22 / Isaiah 40:28.
You may notice at the end of verse thirteen, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates how God will be glorified after consuming his enemies.

'They return at evening, snarling like dogs, and prowl about the city. They wander about for food and howl if not satisfied. But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. You are my strength, I sing praise to you; you, God, are my fortress, my God on whom I can rely.' Psalm 59:14-17

David repeats what he says earlier, Psalm 59:6, for the purpose of emphasis. We can almost imagine him looking out of his window, watching his enemies surrounding his house, like a pack of dangerous wild dogs, Psalm 59:14.
Saul's men are like hungry dogs searching for food, and they make lots of noise when they don't get enough, Psalm 59:15. While his enemies hunt David down like a dog, trying to fulfil their hunger to kill him, David just sings praises to God.
God is his strength, his love, his fortress, and his refuge in times of trouble, Psalm 59:16. He is confident that he will survive the night, Psalm 59:16 / Psalm 18:1 / Isaiah 21:12. God is the God he can rely on, Psalm 59:17 / Psalm 59:9.

CONCLUSION

David made it abundantly clear that he could do nothing on his own when it comes to dealing with enemies; he totally relied on God to do something about them for him. As Christians, it's important to rely on God for all things.

When we think about Jesus Himself, he was totally reliant on His Father at all times for everything, John 5:19-20 / John 6:38 / John 10:25 / John 12:49. If Jesus totally relied on His Father in all things, surely we have to rely on the Father much more.
When we pray to the Father and ask Him to supply our daily needs and forgive us of our sins, we demonstrate our reliance upon Him, Matthew 6:12-13 / 1 John 1:9.
When we realise we can't do anything to help ourselves in times of trouble and we give our worries over to Him and leave them with Him, we demonstrate our reliance upon Him, Matthew 6:31–34 / 1 Peter 5:7.
When we pray and ask for wisdom, in order that He guides our thoughts and the direction of our lives, we are demonstrating our reliance upon Him, Proverbs 3:5-6 / James 1:5.
When we read and study His Word, when we seek to know Him, obey Him, and be guided by His Word, we are demonstrating our reliance upon Him, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 / 1 John 5:2.

CHAPTER 60

INTRODUCTION

This psalm of David speaks of a military defeat suffered by Israel. Although the historical background isn't clear, 2 Samuel 8:1-8 records David's victories over Philistia, Moab, and Syria.
2 Samuel 10:1-19 records David's victories over Ammon and Syria. 1 Chronicles 18:11-13 records David's victories over Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek.

HEADING

'For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lily of the Covenant." A miktam of David. For teaching. When he fought Aram Naharaim and Aram Zobah, and when Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

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The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
The psalm was to be directed to the 'tune of the lily of the Covenant'; no one knows what this tune was, but it was to be used for teaching. The word 'miktam' means golden, hence why it's often referred to as the 'golden psalm'. However, there are others who believe that the word 'miktam' may have some musical meaning.

Still, others believe that the word means to cover. When we look at other psalms with the same heading, Psalms 56-60, they all appear to be written in times of distress, which leads some to believe that the word 'miktam' has the idea of covering the lips in the sense of secrecy. In other words, these are silent or secret psalms which were whispered during times of distress.
Some believe the historical background to this psalm was sometime during David's wars, possibly during his Aramean conflicts, 2 Samuel 8:3-5 / 2 Samuel 10:16-99 / 1 Chronicles 18:3-12.

'You have rejected us, God, and burst upon us; you have been angry–now restore us! You have shaken the land and torn it open; mend its fractures, for it is quaking. You have shown your people desperate times; you have given us wine that makes us stagger. But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner to be unfurled against the bow. Save us and help us with your right hand, that those you love may be delivered.' Psalm 60:1-5

David begins by reminding us of a time he and his army suffered some kind of defeat. Under normal circumstances, victory was always assured because God was with them, and the Israelites thought that if they lost a battle, it was usually a sign that God was displeased with them.

The military defeat that was experienced here happened because God rejected Israel, Psalm 60:1, but since no confession of sin is made in the psalm, we're not given any reason why the Lord didn't go with Israel into this particular battle, 2 Samuel 5:20 / Psalm 2:12 / Psalm 43:2.
Whatever the reason was for God rejecting and being angry with His people, David still felt moved to appeal to God to be restored, Psalm 60:1. Because of the defeat, Israel was shaken and no longer felt secure, but the same God who shakes the land can also mend its fractures, Psalm 60:2.
Israel went through desperate times, and it appears that David knows this is God's judgment against them, but he's struggling to understand why. In their desperation, they staggered about as if they had been drinking strong wine, Psalm 60:3 / Isaiah 51:17 / Isaiah 51:22.
Israel had been set up like a banner before the nations of the world as a nation of those who had committed themselves to the true God, Psalm 60:4 / Isaiah 5:26 / Isaiah 11:12 / Isaiah 18:3 / Isaiah 33:23 / Ezekiel 27:7. But in this defeat, they were questioning their relationship with God.
You may notice at the end of verse four, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates how Israel proudly displayed the banner which told the world they belonged to God.

David pleads with God to save and help His people; he wants God to deliver the people He loves, Psalm 60:5.

'God has spoken from his sanctuary: "In triumph I will parcel out Shechem and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim is my helmet, Judah is my sceptre. Moab is my washbasin, on Edom I toss my sandal; over Philistia I shout in triumph." Psalm 60:6-8

It's clear David understood the words of God, Psalm 60:6, it was God, through Abraham, who promised that Israel would take the land of promise and possess it as an inheritance, Genesis 12:7 / Genesis 13:15 / Genesis 17:8 / Psalm 105:8-11. In these verses, we read about how God made the land of Israel His special possession.

God would triumph and parcel out Shechem, Psalm 60:6 / Joshua 1:6 / Joshua 13:6-7 / Joshua 14:5 / Joshua 18:10 / Joshua 19:51 / Joshua 23:4 / Psalm 78:55 / Acts 13:19. God would measure off the Valley of Sukkoth, Psalm 60:6 / Deuteronomy 27:11-13 / Joshua 8:33.

God says Gilead is His, Psalm 60:7 / Numbers 32:26 / Numbers 32:29 / Numbers 32:39. Manasseh is His, Psalm 60:7 / 2 Samuel 8:3, Ephraim is His helmet, Psalm 60:7, that is, the strength of my head and Judah is His sceptre, Psalm 60:7, that is, symbolic of dominion and governance, Genesis 49:8-12.

God said that He would exalt Himself over the surrounding nations. Both Moab and Edom, Psalm 60:8-9, were noted for their pride, Isaiah 16:6 / Obadiah 3. Here God gives them places of humble service, Isaiah 15:1-9. Tossing the sandal, Psalm 60:8, was possibly a symbolic act of claiming possession, Ruth 4:7.

As for the Philistines, let them, if they dare, triumph over him as they had done, Psalm 60:8. He will soon force them to change their note. Though the Israelites suffered a defeat, God would eventually help them, and the nations would be subjected to their control, Isaiah 11:14.

> 'Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom? Is it not you, God, you who have now rejected us and no longer go out with our armies? Give us aid against the enemy, for human help is worthless. With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.' Psalm 60:9-12

David knows that Israel suffered defeat because God wasn't fighting for them, but he trusts that God will lead Israel to victory over the fortified city, Psalm 60:9, that is, the city of Petra, Isaiah 16:1. Petra was the capital city of Edom, and it was Joab and Abishai who led David to Edom to be victorious, 2 Samuel 9:1.

David knows that God will take them into the fortified city, despite the fact that He allowed them to be defeated, Psalm 60:10. He knows that any human help isn't enough, Psalm 60:11; in fact, he knows that any human help is useless, it's only God's help that would secure the victory, Psalm 60:12.

Although David began this psalm speaking about how Israel was defeated by their enemies, David ends the psalm by speaking of God giving them the total victory over their enemies, Psalm 60:12 / 2 Samuel 8:14 / 1 Chronicles 18:13. God pronounced His judgment that the nations that were involved in the conflict against Israel were subject to His work among the nations. Moab, Edom, and Philistia would be humiliated before God's people.

CONCLUSION

Although we're not told why, David explains how God allowed the Israelites to be defeated in battle. We can almost feel the disappointment in his words. Having the feeling of being let down by God isn't new for Christians.

We all go through periods of difficulties when we feel God hasn't heard our prayers or simply just abandoned us, Proverbs 13:12. The question is, how do we get through those days when we're feeling unloved, uncared for and abandoned?

1. Although we may not always understand why things are going the way they are going, we should be thankful for those days of difficulties, Habakkuk 3:17-19.

When we focus on God and what He has done for us in the past, we soon remember that He is still with us. When we pause to thank God, no matter what we're going through, this actually strengthens our faith in Him, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

2. Although we may not always understand why things are going the way they are going, we should keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, Hebrews 12:2.

When we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, we don't have time to look around at anything else which is happening in the physical world, Colossians 3:1-2.

3. Although we may not always understand why things are going the way they are going, we must remember that we don't see the big picture, Jeremiah 29:11.
When we admit that we can't control tomorrow, when we admit that only God sees the bigger picture, it's then that we start to trust that He will take care of us today and help us through tomorrow, Lamentations 3:22-23.

CHAPTER 61

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm of David, we find that he, for some reason, can't get to the tabernacle to assemble with God's people, but he reaffirms his commitment to keeping his vows.

HEADING

'For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David, for the director of music and a stringed instrument, is to be used. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

'Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.' Psalm 61:1-4

David begins by asking God to hear his cry and listen to his prayer, Psalm 61:1. It's clear that David understands that God hears his prayers and never takes God answering his prayers for granted, Psalm 5:1-2 / Psalm 17:1 / Psalm 17:6 / Psalm 39:12 / Psalm 71:2 / James 5:13.
David didn't literally go to the 'ends of the earth', Psalm 61:1, to pray. This is speaking about how he felt; he felt that he was at the end of the road, so to speak, he's exhausted all resources, 2 Samuel 17:22 / Psalm 42:1-11. In other words, he felt spiritually far away from God, Deuteronomy 28:49 / Psalm 46:9.
David's heart was beginning to grow faint, Psalm 61:2, that is, he was feeling overwhelmed and needed to be comforted, Psalm 42:3 / Psalm 42:6-7. He asks God to lead him to the 'rock', that is, higher than him, Psalm 61:2; he wants God to take him to His source of power.

For Israel, the Rock symbolised the love and protection of God, 2 Samuel 22:2-3 / Psalm 18:2. Who is that Rock? This Rock is Christ, Matthew 7:24-29 / Luke 6:48. Today, our Lord Jesus Christ is the true Rock for human souls.
For David God was his refuge, his place of safety and God was his strong tower, Psalm 61:3 / Psalm 18:2. He had a deep longing to dwell in God's tent, Psalm 61:4, that is, the tabernacle, Psalm 23:6 / Psalm 26:8 / Psalm 27:4. In the tabernacle, David would feel secure and be able to offer his sacrifices to God.
In the tabernacle, he would take refuge in the shelter of God's wings, Psalm 61:4 / Psalm 17:8. This is obviously a metaphor for a place of safety and security like a young bird finds safety and security under the wings of its mother, Psalm 36:7 / Psalm 57:1.
You may notice at the end of verse four, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said.

We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates God as his refuge, strong tower, and as he thinks about the safety in God's tabernacle and the shelter he would find under His wings.

'For you, God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name. Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations. May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him. Then I will ever sing in praise of your name and fulfil my vows day after day.' Psalm 61:5-8

David apparently had made some vows to the Lord, Psalm 61:5. These vows were voluntary vows which were basically promises to God, but once made, they were binding, Deuteronomy 23:21-23 / Numbers 30:2. They are made as a way of dedicating oneself to the commitment of the Lord, and so, a person was then made accountable for keeping the vow.
The 'heritage', Psalm 61:5, which God gave David, speaks of those who had committed themselves to God, and so, they were given to follow the leadership of David as king of Israel, Romans 8:16-17.
David asks God to increase the days and years of his life, as king over Israel, Psalm 61:6. David wanted to be 'enthroned in God's presence forever', Psalm 61:7.
Physically, this would not be possible, but spiritually this would be true because the Messiah would come through the lineage of David, 2 Samuel 7:11-16 / Ephesians 4:7-13.
Notice that 'love' and 'faithfulness' are personified here, Psalm 61:7. Some translations use the words, 'mercy and truth', Psalm 25:10 / Psalm 57:3 / Psalm 57:10 / John 1:17. Love and faithfulness are going to protect him.
As a result of God's intervention, Isaiah 38:20, David will ever sing praises of God's Name and fulfil his vows day after day, Psalm 61:8. In other words, singing praises to God and reminding himself to fulfil his vows to God would become a regular practice in his life.

CONCLUSION

David had made several vows to the Lord, which were binding. By the time Jesus came on the scene, people were breaking and abusing the vows they had made, Matthew 5:33-37. The thrust of Jesus' teaching was to correct the abuses of oaths common among men, not to forbid every type of oath.
Ultimately, God wants us to be people of our word. Our word should be our bond. We shouldn't feel a need to voluntarily make an oath. We shouldn't feel a need to say, 'I promise'.

A simple 'yes' or 'no' ought to be sufficient. When we affirm that we will do something, do it! Stick by our word regardless of the cost to ourselves, Psalm 15:4.

The only exception to this would be if our words would end up forcing us to commit sin. In that case, we should break our word and seek forgiveness for making such a foolish promise, to begin with.

Furthermore, when we don't want to do something, or simply cannot, then we declare such plainly. Don't say 'maybe' when we know the answer is 'no'. Don't say 'yes' when we don't mean it.

When we give our word, regardless of the situation, people are listening and watching to see if we mean what we say. It is difficult to trust a person when their words don't harmonise with their actions. It is better to say nothing than to lie, Matthew 12:36-37, but the best course of action by far is to speak the truth plainly and be a man or woman of our word.

CHAPTER 62

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find David, as he does with many of his psalms, speaking about a time when he was in conflict with those around him. The difference in this psalm is that David appears to be very calm as he pours out his heart to God about his troubles.

HEADING

'For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
Jeduthun was one of the musicians appointed by David to lead Israel's worship, 1 Chronicles 16:41 / 1 Chronicles 25:1-3. He also mentioned in the headings of Psalm 39 and Psalm 77.

'Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly, he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. How long will you assault me? Would all of you throw me down—this leaning wall, this tottering fence? Surely they intend to topple me from my lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse.' Psalm 62:1-4

David begins by reassuring himself that he will find rest in God because he knows his salvation comes from Him, Psalm 62:1. That is, he is patiently waiting for God and God alone and in his 'silence' as some translations tell us, he is fully confident that God will come to help him, Isaiah 26:3 / Philemon 4:6-7.

Because God is his rock, he was confident in God's strength, Psalm 62:2. God would keep him safe from all dangers, Psalm 18:2. God was his rock, salvation and fortress.

And He would protect David from all attempts of those who were trying to take his life, Psalm 62:2 / Psalm 27:5 / Psalm 59:9 / 1 Corinthians 15:1-2. David wouldn't be 'shaken' from his dedication to God because of the circumstances of his life.

Although David had great faith in God, he wasn't short of a few words to say to his enemies. He reprimanded them for their continuous attempts to assault him and bring him down, Psalm 62:3. He tells them, as the 'leaning wall', Psalm 62:3, is about to fall, so too are they, Isaiah 30:13.

His enemies have only one thing on their minds, and that is to topple David from his lofty place, Psalm 62:4; that is, they were intent on bringing him down, even if that meant lying about him.

They bless people with their mouths, but in their hearts, they curse people, Psalm 62:4. In other words, they were hypocrites, James 3:10. David's own son, Absalom, was exactly like this, 2 Samuel 15:1-6 / Psalm 28:3.

You may notice at the end of verse four, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates the fate of these hypocritical liars.

'Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly, he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honour depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.' Psalm 62:5-8

David began this psalm by reassuring himself that he will find rest in God because he knows his salvation comes from Him, Psalm 62:1. Here, he reassures himself that he will find rest, but his hope comes from God, Psalm 62:5. He fully expects to be delivered from his circumstances because he trusted in God.

Again, he repeats what he said, that God is his rock, his salvation, and his fortress, Psalm 62:6. God would protect David from all attempts of those who were trying to take his life, Psalm 18:2.

Earlier, he wrote that he would 'never be shaken', Psalm 62:2, but here he writes, 'I will not be shaken', Psalm 62:6. He appears to be more confident that nothing would shake him from his dedication to God, no matter what was happening in his life.

David trusts God and no one else because God is his salvation, his rock, and his refuge, Psalm 62:7. He totally relies on God, Psalm 46:1. David then goes on to encourage everyone to put their trust in God at all times as he does, Psalm 62:8.

When people pour out their hearts to God, that is, don't hold anything back, just give it all to God, 1 Peter 5:7, then God listens, and He will become their refuge, Psalm 62:8, that is, their place of safety, Psalm 42:4.

You may notice at the end of verse eight, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates who God is and what He means to him.

'Surely the lowborn are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie. If weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath. Do not trust in extortion or put vain hope in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them. One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: "Power belongs to you, God, and with you, Lord, is unfailing love"; and "You reward everyone according to what they have done." Psalm 62:9-12

After calling upon everyone to put their trust in God, he reminds them that the lowborn are but a breath, Psalm 62:9. That is, those who are in low positions in society and the highborn are but a lie, Psalm 62:9, that is, those who are in high positions in society, Isaiah 2:9 / Isaiah 5:15.

Both positions in society are like a breath; those of low status in society shouldn't envy those of high status simply because the life of both is brief, Psalm 62:9 / James 1:9-11.

Those in high positions in society are a lie, Psalm 62:9, doesn't mean they are liars; this means they shouldn't put their hope and trust in any power they may have because that can't be relied upon. In other words, we can't depend on ourselves or anyone else; our hope and our trust must be in God.

When weighed, the lowborn and highborn find that everything they put their hope and trust in is of no real value; they can't save anyone, Psalm 62:9 / Daniel 5:27. All distinctions that society may give to people vanish away as a breath with the passing of the people.

Riches pass with those who possess them, Psalm 62:10, and so, there's no spiritual opportunity that is presented to the rich by their riches. On the contrary, those who place their confidence in riches are led away from complete trust in God, Psalm 62:10 / 1 Timothy 6:17.

David heard God speak twice concerning the power of God; he knows he can only trust God and God alone, Psalm 62:11 / Job 33:14 / Job 40:5. Because all power belongs to God, David goes to God for his strength to rely on His strength rather than his own, Psalm 62:11.

David knows that God's love is unfailing, and if he puts his hope and trust in Him, he will be rewarded accordingly, Psalm 62:12 / Deuteronomy 32:46-47 / Proverbs 3:1-2 / Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

CONCLUSION

When we were younger, time seemed to go very slowly, especially if we were waiting for a special event happening, like our birthday or Christmas. My dear mum used to tell me, 'life goes faster when you are older,' and although at the time I didn't understand what she meant, I now know it's true. Yes, it's still twenty-four hours in one day, but for some reason, the days seem to go by faster when we're older.

David reminds us of the brevity of life; it doesn't matter if we're rich or poor, in a low position or a high position, life is short, James 4:13-15. Because life is so short, we need to make sure our hope and trust in God.

1. To put our hope and trust in God means that we must stop relying on ourselves, Proverbs 3:5 / Romans 11:33.
2. To put our hope and trust in God means that we always go to God in prayer first, Proverbs 3:6 / Psalm 55:17.
3. To put our hope and trust in God means that we must always put God first in our lives, Proverbs 3:9-10 / Matthew 6:33.
4. To put our hope and trust in God means that we must know that God cares for us and is able to meet our needs, Matthew 6:25-34 / 1 Peter 5:7.
5. To put our hope and trust in God means that we must always be honest with ourselves, Jeremiah 17:9 / Proverbs 3:11.

CHAPTER 63

INTRODUCTION

This psalm expresses David's close relationship with God; he seeks after God at all times, he trusts Him, and he is confident that God is at work and will continue to work in his life.

HEADING

'A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us it was a psalm of David, and the historical setting appears to point to either before he was king and fled from Saul, 1 Samuel 23:14-15, or more likely, while he was king but fled because of his son Absalom's revolt, 2 Samuel 15:24-17.

'You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips, my mouth will praise you. On my bed, I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.' Psalm 63:1-8

David begins by saying, you God, that is, 'Elohim', Genesis 1:1, is his God, that is, 'El', Psalm 63:1. David says he seeks God and thirsts for God with his whole being, like a land without any water, Psalm 63:1 / Psalm 42:2 / Isaiah 26:9.

When David went to the sanctuary, that is, the tabernacle, he beheld God's power and glory, Psalm 63:2. He's longing for spiritual fellowship with God. The reason David wants close fellowship with God is because of God's love, it's better than life itself, and his lips will continually glorify God because of His love, Psalm 63:3 / Job 2:4 / Acts 20:24.

In fact, David will praise God all the days of his life because of God's love, Psalm 63:4. The lifting up of hands, Psalm 63:4, doesn't always relate to prayer; here, David lifts his hands in relation to praising God, Psalm 28:2. As far as he is concerned, God always has and always will satisfy his every need for which David would praise God for, Psalm 36:8 / Isaiah 25:6.

In the evening when David lays in bed, he remembers God, he remembers Him all through the night, Psalm 63:6. This was David's time to meditate upon God and His Word, Psalm 1:2.

The word 'watches', Psalm 63:6, is a military word which speaks of the various times throughout the night, the soldiers would keep watch, Matthew 14:25 / Luke 12:38. Usually, David cries out to God for help, but here, he thanks God for being his help. He says he will sing in the shadow of God's wings, Psalm 63:7.

This isn't speaking about God's protection, Psalm 17:8 / Psalm 36:7 / Psalm 57:1 / Matthew 23:37; he's speaking about being in the presence of God, Psalm 61:4. David's relationship with God is seen in that he 'clings' to God, Psalm 63:8 / Genesis 2:24, and as a result, God's right hand, His strength, upheld him, Psalm 63:8.

'Those who want to kill me will be destroyed; they will go down to the depths of the earth. They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals. But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God will glory in him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced.' Psalm 63:9-11

Despite having a close relationship with God, David still had his problems; his enemies still wanted him dead, Psalm 63:9. He is probably referring to the time either before he was king and fled from Saul, 1 Samuel 23:14-15, or more likely while he was king but fled because of his son Absalom's revolt, 2 Samuel 15:24-17.
His enemies will go down to the depths of the earth, Psalm 63:9, that is, the deepest graves. His enemies would die by the sword, Psalm 63:10, that is, die in battle. Saul died by the sword, 1 Samuel 31:4, and Absalom died in battle, 2 Samuel 18:9-18.
They would become food for the jackals, Psalm 63:10; that is, after a battle, the jackals would come long and eat the remains of any dead people who were left on the ground, Judges 15:4.
Notice that David says, 'the king' will rejoice in God, Psalm 63:11. This appears to reinforce the idea that this was written when David was king, not Saul. In other words, David was the true king of Israel, not Absalom. Those who swear, Psalm 63:11, that is, trust in God, will glory in Him, but those who lie don't trust in Him, Psalm 63:11.

CONCLUSION

David had a really close relationship with God; he thirsted for God, sought God, and meditated upon God and His Word. As Christians, it's important to maintain a close relationship with God throughout our Christian lives, but this won't happen all by itself.

Any relationship is a two-way system, and so for us to maintain that relationship with Him, we must make the following efforts.

1. Our relationship with God will become stronger when we pray and spend time with God regularly, Psalm 139:2 / Matthew 6:9-13.
2. Our relationship with God will become stronger when we confess our sins and ask Him to forgive us our sins, Psalm 51:17 / 1 John 1:9.
3. Our relationship with God will become stronger when we continue to keep Him as our priority number one in our lives, Matthew 6:33 / Philippians 3:8-9.
4. Our relationship with God will become stronger when we spend some quality time with other Christians, in and outside of worship times, Psalm 95:1-2 / Hebrews 10:25.
5. Our relationship with God will become stronger when we continue to be obedient to Him and His Word, John 14:23 / 2 Timothy 2:15 / James 4:7-8.

CHAPTER 64

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is a psalm of lament, where David focuses on the wicked who were slandering him. Although he laments over what's happening in his life, he places his faith and trust in God to defeat the wicked.

HEADING

'For the director of music. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

'Hear me, my God, as I voice my complaint; protect my life from the threat of the enemy. Hide me from the conspiracy of the wicked, from the plots of evildoers. They sharpen their tongues like swords and aim cruel words like deadly arrows. They shoot from ambush at the innocent; they shoot suddenly, without fear. They encourage each other in evil plans, they talk about hiding their snares; they say, "Who will see it?" They plot injustice and say, "We have devised a perfect plan!" Surely the human mind and heart are cunning.' Psalm 64:1-6

David begins by asking God to hear his 'complaint', Psalm 64:1. The word 'complaint' implies proper speech, which leads to meditation, Job 7:13 / Job 9:27 / Job 10:1 / Job 21:4 / Psalm 55:2 / Psalm 142:2.
He asks God to protect him from those who wanted to take his life, Psalm 64:1 / Daniel 6:10, as they were a real threat to him. These wicked men were conspiring against David; they plotted and schemed to try and win others to side against David, Psalm 64:2 / 3 John 1-15. They conspire and plot among themselves in order to develop a united alliance against David to try and kill him, Job 15:8 / Job 29:4 / Psalm 55:14.
The words they used to get others to follow them were like swords and deadly arrows, Psalm 64:3. Their words were full of lies and had one purpose which that was to kill David, Psalm 52:2 / Psalm 57:4 / Psalm 59:7.
Their words ambush the innocent, they come very quickly, Psalm 64:4. They don't care about anyone, they have no fear of David or God, Psalm 11:2 / Psalm 58:7 / Psalm 18:20 / Psalm 18:23 / Psalm 55:19.
The metaphors of these words magnify the extent to which the wicked had planned in order to move against the king. Their tongue was a sharpened sword to cut the reputation of God's anointed.

They released poisonous words that caused the people to question the rightful reign of God's king. They devised traps into which they would capture the righteous in supposed contradictions.

The wicked encourage each other with their plots and schemes; they had snares set everywhere, Psalm 64:5, thinking that no one would see them, Psalm 10:8-9. The arrogant wicked are so proud of themselves and their plans that they

thought they had the perfect plan to bring David down, Psalm 64:6. They convince themselves that their minds and hearts were cunning, Psalm 64:6 / Psalm 7:15 / Psalm 38:12.

'But God will shoot them with his arrows; they will suddenly be struck down. He will turn their own tongues against them and bring them to ruin; all who see them will shake their heads in scorn. All people will fear; they will proclaim the works of God and ponder what he has done. The righteous will rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him; all the upright in heart will glory in him!' Psalm 64:7-10

Notice how earlier David said that the wicked had their swords and arrows, Psalm 64:3, but here, he says that God too has arrows, Psalm 64:7. David is confident that God is also armed and that He is more than capable of protecting and defending him from the wicked. God's arrows will strike David's enemies just as suddenly as their arrows, but God's arrows will strike them down, Psalm 64:7 / Psalm 7:15.

Notice, their tongues will turn against each other, and they will come to ruin, Psalm 64:8. In other words, they will reap what they sow, Galatians 6:7-8. God will deal with them as they have dealt with others, Psalm 18:25-26.

Those who see this happening will 'shake their heads in scorn', Psalm 64:8, that is, they will ridicule them. Some translations say that 'those who see them will flee away', Psalm 31:11. Everyone will be in fear about what God has done; they will know that God is a just God who punishes the wicked, Psalm 64:9.

Not only will the wicked fear God but the righteous will too, but their fear of God will lead to them rejoicing in Him, finding refuge in Him, and giving Him all the glory for what He has done, Psalm 64:10. Those who rejoice in the Lord are those who understand how God works in people's lives, and those who rejoice in God are those who totally trust God.

CONCLUSION

David described the wicked as having no fear of him or God, but after God had dealt with the wicked, all people would come to fear God because of what He did to the wicked.

The wise Solomon once said that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep his commandments, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. Solomon himself didn't live all the time by God's will, and so he writes from experience. He knew that if God isn't a part of our lives, then our lives would be meaningless.

Solomon also says, although he may not have fully understood it, that God will be the Judge, 2 Corinthians 5:10. This is why obedience is so important and why it's important to fear Him and obey His commands, Matthew 6:33. It took Solomon a lifetime to discover the supreme purpose of life.

To a young person, this might not sound as exciting as other adventures one might follow. But Solomon says he had tried everything that appeals to man. He tried everything that he thought would bring him supreme satisfaction, happiness, and pleasure.

But in the end, he found that letting our minds dwell on the Lord and His commandments was the most important thing we can do. After all the things he had experimented with, a relationship with God was the most satisfying.

The way we have lived will follow us to the final day of judgment when we shall give an account of how we have lived before God and our relationship with him, Hebrews 9:27 / Acts 17:30-31. God then will render His perfect judgment as to the final state we will live in.

Too many people wait until it's too late in life to make any changes. They have left God out of their daily lives, failing in the most important thing, their relationship with God, John 10:10.

CHAPTER 65

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of thanksgiving. David gives adoration to God for His care in providing the harvest for His people.

HEADING

'For the director of music. A psalm of David. A song.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David was a song for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

'Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. You who answer prayer, to you all people will come. When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions. Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.' Psalm 65:1-4

David begins by speaking about the praise which awaits God in Zion, Psalm 65:1, that is, Jerusalem, 1 Chronicles 15:1 / 1 Chronicles 16:1 / 2 Chronicles 1:4, for providing for their needs.
We can imagine the excitement of God's people coming together to fulfilling their vows, Psalm 65:1, offer praise to God and offer their sacrifices to Him for answering their prayers, Psalm 65:2.
These vows were made to God by an individual who placed a law on themselves and it was binding as a law of God until the vow was fulfilled, Psalm 22:25 / Psalm 50:14 / Psalm 56:12. David says our sin is too much for us to bear, Psalm 65:3 / 1 Corinthians 10:13, and so, God will cleanse us, Psalm 65:3 / 1 John 1:7-9.
The answer as to how they obtained forgiveness for their sins and transgressions, Psalm 65:3, was seen in the animal sacrifices, Isaiah 43:3 / Psalm 51:2. These sacrifices pointed to Someone greater who would sacrifice Himself in order that we can be forgiven, Hebrews 7:27 / 1 John 2:2.
Those who live near the courts, Psalm 65:4, that is, near the tabernacle, Matthew 21:12, are blessed. Because God chose them to live near the courts of the tabernacle, they can approach God in complete confidence, Psalm 15:1 / Psalm 23:6 / Psalm 27:4 / John 6:44 / Ephesians 1:3-4 / 1 Peter 1:2-3.
It's those people who see the benefit of being chosen by God, and it's those people who will be satisfied as God meets their every need, Psalm 65:4 / Psalm 36:8.

‘You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations. The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.’ Psalm 65:5-8

David continues in his thanksgiving to God by thanking Him for answering their prayers in such a wonderful way, Psalm 65:5. God not only answered their prayers but also provided atonement for His people’s sins.
Although God had a special covenant relationship with Israel, He was still the king of all the world, Psalm 65:5.
What the Israelites eventually failed to realise was that God accepted anyone who came to Him through obedient faith, Jonah 3:10.
God’s awesome and righteous deeds are seen in His ability to still the roaring seas and to still the turmoil of the nations, Psalm 65:5-7. God’s authority goes way beyond Israel; His authority reaches the whole earth, Psalm 65:8 / Psalm 107:29 / Mark 4:39.
God isn’t only the God of the inhabitants of the world, He’s also the Creator and controller of all the physical world, Hebrews 1:3. The evidence of His power is clearly manifested in the physical world, Romans 1:20.
His power is seen when the morning dawns and the evening fades, Psalm 65:8, that is, the sunrise in the east and the sunset in the west. As a result, the earth rejoices every day, Psalm 19:1-7 / Job 38:7.

‘You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the wilderness overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.’ Psalm 65:9-13

David tells us that God cares for the land and richly provides everything the land needs, Psalm 65:9, that is, water, and food, Isaiah 55:10-11 / Psalm 8:4. He provides the furrows, Psalm 65:10 / Job 31:38 / Job 39:10, and levels its ridges so that the water softens the ground and can produce its crops, Psalm 65:10-11.
The grasslands, that is, the uncultivated places, places where there are rocks and sand, Isaiah 35:1 / Matthew 3:1, and the hills, are clothed with gladness, Psalm 65:12 / Joel 1:19 / Joel 2:22.
We can almost imagine David looking out over the meadows and seeing them filled with flocks of sheep, Psalm 65:13. We can almost imagine him looking out over the valleys and seeing them filled with grain.
Notice that the meadows and valleys shout for joy and sing, Psalm 65:13. This isn’t literal, of course, but it gives us the idea that even they recognise the power of God. They rejoice, along with God’s people, in praise and adoration for what God does.
Since Israel was a rural community of farmers, great emphasis was placed on God’s provision for crops at the time of harvest. Because the nation depended on consistent rainfall, the farmers were dependent on God’s store of water that was in the clouds.

He could either release or retain the water of the clouds. When He released the rain, man, animals, and earth all rejoiced over the graciousness of God who showed favour to man.

CONCLUSION

In this Psalm, David simply praises God and gives thanks to God for everything He provides for all of the world, and he invites us to do the same, Psalm 95:2-3. Even though we may lose sight of the many blessings God provides for us every day, as Christians, we have much to be thankful for.
1. As Christians, we should be thankful for His love for us, 1 Chronicles 16:34 / Psalm 106:1 / Lamentations 3:22-23.

Love is who God is, and whether we are Christians or not, He just can't help but love us, Matthew 5:45 / John 3:16 / 1 John 4:8.

2. As Christians, we should be thankful for His provision, Psalm 28:7 / Daniel 2:23.

God deeply cares for His people, He provides for our every need and longs to hear from us in prayer, Philippians 4:6 / Ephesians 5:19-20.

3. As Christians, we should be thankful for His forgiveness, Isaiah 12:1 / Psalm 103:2-3.

All too often, we forget that we have been saved from our sin, Acts 2:38, but we should be thankful that even after we become Christians and we sin, He still provides a way for us to stay saved, 1 John 1:7-9.

4. As Christians, we should be thankful for His creation, Psalm 136:3-9.

When was the last time we paused from our busy lives to admire God's creation? When was the last time we paused to look at the stars above or the butterfly in our garden and gave thanks to God for creating it for our enjoyment? Job 12:7-10 / Psalm 148:1-6.

When we take a moment to stop and remember His love, His provision, His forgiveness and His creation, our response will always be filled with praise and thanksgiving, Psalm 116:12-14.

CHAPTER 66

INTRODUCTION

Although the author is unknown, this is a psalm which begins by focusing on God's people as a whole worshipping God and finishes with the psalmist giving his own personal worship to God. Their worship is heartfelt because God has answered their prayers.

HEADING

'For the director of music. A song. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm is a song for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

‘Shout for joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious. Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing the praises of your name.” Psalm 66:1-4

The psalmist begins by asking the earth, that is, Israel, to shout for joy, sing the glory of God’s Name and make glorious praise, Psalm 66:1-2 / Luke 15:6 / Luke 15:9.
The psalmist then goes on to tell Israel how to praise God. They tell them to ‘say to God, how awesome are your deeds’, Psalm 66:3 / Psalm 65:1. When we think about God’s awesome deeds, we can’t help but tell God personally how awesome He is.
Because God’s deeds are awesome, His enemies cringe before Him, Psalm 66:3, that is, His enemies are brought to submission. God had the power to subdue His enemies, and His enemies would have no choice but acknowledge His awesome deeds and submit to His reign, Deuteronomy 33:29 / Psalm 18:44 / Psalm 81:15 / Job 31:28 / Philippians 2:10-11.
The psalmist says that all the earth bows down to God and they sing praises to His Name, Psalm 66:4. The earth does this because they recognise that God alone has the right to be worshipped and He is the only One worthy of praise, Psalm 66:4 / Psalm 22:27 / Isaiah 45:23 / Romans 14:11.
The deliverance of Israel from captivity was evidence to all the world that God was working with and for the Israelites in order to bring them forth as a nation. As a result, the world should rejoice in the fact that God’s work among men was manifested in His deliverance of Israel.

You may notice at the end of verse four, some translations have the word, ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate God’s awesome deeds and how the whole earth will submit to His rule.

‘Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for mankind! He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot—come, let us rejoice in him. He rules forever by his power, his eyes watch the nations—let not the rebellious rise up against him.’ Psalm 66:5-7

The psalmist invites everyone to come and see what God has done, not only for Israel but for all of mankind, Psalm 66:5 / Psalm 46:8. The psalmist uses Israel’s exodus from Egyptian captivity as the illustration of God’s deliverance of His people, Psalm 66:6.
This was the time when God demonstrated His power to bring Israel through the Red Sea, Exodus 14:21, and or the time He led His people through the River Jordan, Joshua 3:14-17.
The passing through the Red Sea is mentioned eight times throughout the psalms, Psalm 18 / Psalm 66 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 77 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 106 / Psalm 136, and it was certainly a time when they rejoiced, Exodus 15. God rules forever by His power, and He keeps an eye on the nations, and they would be rather foolish to rise up against Him, Psalm 66:7 / Psalm 11:4.
You may notice at the end of verse seven, some translations have the word, ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate God’s awesomeness and wonder if anyone would be stupid enough to go up against God’s power.

‘Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.’ Psalm 66:8-12

The psalmist now repeats what they said earlier in asking all people to praise God; notice they say, 'our God', Psalm 66:8, that is, the God of Israel. It is God who preserved Israel's lives and kept their feet from slipping, Psalm 66:9. In other words, it was God who gave them life and kept them secure.

Despite God leading His people into the Promised Land, Israel was tested by God, Psalm 66:10, especially when they fell into sin. They were refined like silver, Psalm 66:10 / Isaiah 1:25 / Isaiah 48:10 / Zechariah 13:9 / Malachi 3:3 / 1 Peter 1:7.

There was a time when Israel enjoyed freedom, Psalm 9:15 / Lamentations 1:13, but then they lost that freedom and became burdened with afflictions, Psalm 66:11 / Deuteronomy 33:11 / 1 Kings 12:10 / Job 40:16.

God permitted people to ride over their heads, Psalm 66:12, that is, they faced heavy defeats in battles, and were no longer victorious, Psalm 44:5 / Isaiah 51:23. The words 'fire' and 'water', Psalm 66:12, are used as metaphors to speak about exasperating trials, Isaiah 43:2.

The psalmist acknowledges that it was God who was doing all these things; they acknowledge that God allowed Israel to experience all of these difficult times. God not only allowed them to go through those trials, but He also brought Israel to a place of abundance. In other words, there was a purpose for their trials and suffering, Deuteronomy 8:7 / Exodus 3:8 / Leviticus 20:24 / Numbers 13:27.

'I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfil my vows to you—vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble. I will sacrifice fat animals to you and an offering of rams; I will offer bulls and goats.'
Psalm 66:13-15

Notice how the pronouns in this section change from the plural to the singular. Because God has performed so greatly, the psalmist brought their offerings to the Lord in thanksgiving, Isaiah 1:11 / Isaiah 5:17 / 2 Corinthians 4:15. It appears that the psalmist had promised God that they would offer burnt offerings in gratitude for what God had done for them personally when they were in some kind of trouble, Psalm 66:13.

These vows were made in the time of trouble, Psalm 66:14 / Leviticus 3:1-17, and were kept in thanksgiving for God's deliverance. The psalmist has a lot to be thankful for, as seen in the many sacrifices He promises to offer God, Psalm 66:15 / Psalm 22:13.

You may notice at the end of verse fifteen that some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely it means to pause.

As mentioned above, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate how best to express their gratitude to God for helping them in their time of trouble.

'Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!'
Psalm 66:16-20

The psalmist now calls upon everyone who fears God to come and listen to what God has done for them personally, Psalm 66:16. They tell those who came to listen to them that they cried out to God and praise was on their tongue, Psalm 66:17. In other words, they offered a sacrifice of praise for what God has done for them, Romans 9:1-3 / Romans 10:1.

Notice they say that if they had cherished sin in their heart, God wouldn't have listened to them, Psalm 66:118. If they had held sin in high regard in their lives, their route of prayer to God would cease, Job 27:9 / Job 31:27 / Proverbs 15:29 / Proverbs 28:9 / Isaiah 1:15 / Isaiah 15:1-9 / Isaiah 58:3-7 / Jeremiah 11:11 / Jeremiah 14:12 / Zechariah 7:13.

However, God did hear their prayer, Psalm 66:19, and the result was simply praise, Psalm 66:20 / John 9:31. God was moved not to reject their prayer, but He chose instead to show the psalmist how much He loved them, Psalm 66:20.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist praised God for helping them in their time of trouble. They made a vow and were determined to fulfil those vows by offering not only many physical sacrifices but also verbal sacrifices of praise.

As Christians, we no longer offer animal sacrifices, but we still have to offer sacrifices, Hebrews 13:15-17. We all must offer the continual sacrifice of praise to God because our praise is now our offering to God.
1. The first sacrifice we're to offer God is 'the fruit of our lips'.

Our sacrifice is praising God with our lips. Our sacrifice is the confession of our lips of who He is. Are we making our offering? We still need to come to God with our offerings.

But are we remembering to offer worship with the fruit of our lips? Are we confessing Him to people we know? Are we acknowledging Jesus to the world? The fruit of our lips must not be filthy, improper words. We must have lips that offer the sacrifice of praise.

2. The second sacrifice we must offer is 'doing good and sharing the things we have with others'.

These are sacrifices that please God. Are we offering these sacrifices? Are we doing good toward others? Are we giving the possessions and wealth that God has so generously given to us? Our possessions are not for us to spend on ourselves selfishly; we have things to do good for the kingdom of God and to share with others.

3. The third sacrifice we must offer is to 'obey your leaders and submit to them'.

I believe these leaders are the shepherds of local congregations; they are watching over our souls, which fits Paul's instructions in Acts 20:28. They have to give an account regarding their charge and shepherding over us, and it's our responsibility to yield to them and to obey them. We need to let them shepherd us with joy, not with pain and groaning.
Shepherds are to help us; they are an advantage for our souls. Why would we want to treat them badly or ignore their guidance and instructions? We need to work together with our shepherds for the goal of expanding God's kingdom in the hearts of the people.

CHAPTER 67

INTRODUCTION

Although the author of this psalm is unknown, the psalmist calls upon the people of the world to give praise to God. We don't know the historical setting for this psalm, but it appears that the praise given to God was because He provided the harvest from the crops.

HEADING

‘For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm. A song.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm is a song to be sung with a stringed instrument for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the ‘director of music’ is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

‘May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us.’ Psalm 67:1

The psalmist begins by sharing the Aaronic blessings of Numbers 6:24-26, where the High Priest of Israel would pronounce this blessing upon the people of God, Psalm 67:1 / Psalm 4:6. In the New Testament, all Christians are priests and part of a royal priesthood, Romans 15:16 / 1 Peter 2:9-10.
You may notice at the end of verse one, some translations have the word ‘selah’; although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate the words of this Aaronic blessing.

‘So that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth.’ Psalm 67:2-4

The psalmist asked for the Aaronic blessing for the sake of others; they want all the earth to know the ways of God, Psalm 67:2. They want all the earth to know about God’s salvation, Psalm 67:2 / Matthew 28:19-20.
They call upon the people to praise God, then they pray that ‘all’ the peoples praise God, and they ask God to bring the nations to Himself, Psalm 67:3 / Psalm 22:27 / Psalm 66:4 / 2 Peter 3:9.
It is God who rules the people with equity, Psalm 67:4, that is, God is a righteous judge. It is God who guides the nations of the earth, Psalm 67:4, that is, it’s God who would instruct them in what to do, he would guide them in paths of prosperity, happiness, and salvation.
You may notice at the end of verse four, some translations have the word, ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. As mentioned earlier, it’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate all the earth simply praising God.

‘May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. The land yields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us. May God bless us still, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.’ Psalm 67:5-7

The psalmist continues to invite the people, all the peoples to praise God, Psalm 67:5. The Israelites were to praise God because the land yielded it’s crops, Psalm 67:6 / Leviticus 26:4 / Leviticus 26:20 / Deuteronomy 32:22 / Judges 6:4 / Job 20:28 / Psalm 78:46 / Psalm 85:12 / Ezekiel 34:27 / Zechariah 8:12 / Deuteronomy 11:17 / Habakkuk 3:17 / Haggai 1:10.

If the Lord is gracious and brings rain to produce a bountiful harvest, then the surrounding nations looking at the situation of Israel would recognise that God was working for His people. When the other nations saw the special blessing of rain on the crops of the Israelites, they perceived that Israel's God was working for them.

Notice the psalmist says 'God, our God blesses us', Psalm 67:6. This is an expression of their relationship with God; God is their God. This is also an acknowledgement of who God is and what God is doing. The special blessing of saving them from famine would be an occasion for the nations to give praise to God.
When the people praise the Lord, the earth will give an increase in crops because of God's special blessing. When we recognise that God does for us, then truly we will acknowledge that we too are blessed by God.

Although the psalmist recognised that they are blessed by God, they ask God to bless them still, Psalm 67:7. In other words, they understand that God will bless them with prosperity, peace, and salvation. The reason God blessed Israel and would continue to bless them was that He wants all the earth to fear Him, Psalm 67:7 / Psalm 22:27.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist called upon all the peoples of the earth to praise God four times in this short psalm. As Christians, we too have many reasons to praise God, but we often forget about the benefits which come from praising Him, Psalm 107:8-9.
1. When we praise God, we receive strength when we need it most, Psalms 103:1-5.
2. When we praise God, we focus on Him and not our troubles, 2 Chronicles 20:1-30.
3. When we praise God, we receive peace and joy, Isaiah 61:3.
4. When we praise God, we are reminded of our freedom, Galatians 5:1.
When we praise God, even in the midst of our despair and difficulties, great things can happen not only for us but for others around us.

When Paul and Silas found themselves in the Philippian jail, they were praising God, but remember, it wasn't only Paul and Silas' chains which were broken while they were in prison, the other prisoners' chains broke too, Acts 16:16-40.

CHAPTER 68

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of David which appears to deal with different subjects. Some commentators believe it's a collection of short psalms that were sung by the priests as they went to the sanctuary.

Others believe it's connected with the coming of the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6, celebrating not only that event, but also God's faithfulness to give Israel victory over her enemies, and to make Jerusalem secure enough to bring the ark into the city.

HEADING

‘For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. A song.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm is a psalm of David, a song for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the ‘director of music’ is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

‘May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him. May you blow them away like smoke—as wax melts before the fire, may the wicked perish before God. But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful. Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before him—his name is the LORD. A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun scorched land.’ Psalm 68:1-6

David begins by asking God to arise, so that Israel would be victorious over their enemies, Psalm 68:1. None of His enemies could stand against God; they scattered and fled from Him, Psalm 68:1.
Since Moses said those words when the ark of the covenant led Israel from Mount Sinai, Numbers 10:35, it’s possible that David uses the same words when the ark came to Jerusalem.
Because none of Israel’s enemies could stand against God, they are described as smoke, which is blown away and wax which has melted, Psalm 68:2. In other words, David asks God that the wicked would disappear quickly.
While the wicked disappear, the righteous will be glad and rejoice, they will be happy and filled with joy because of what God has done for them, Psalm 68:3. The righteous will sing to God and praise His Name, Psalm 68:4. This indicates how well they know God. The KJV adds ‘Jah,’ or ‘Yah’, which is a contracted form of the word Yahweh. This was Israel’s name for God.
David gives two reasons why the righteous will rejoice, first, because He is extolled, that is praiseworthy, Psalm 68:4 / Isaiah 57:14 / Isaiah 62:10, He rides on the clouds in glorious triumph over the earth. Second, He revealed Himself to humanity in the name Yahweh, showing His loving kindness to His people, Psalm 68:4.
God is a Father to the fatherless, and a defender of widows, Psalm 68:5, that is, He is the Father to all those who are defenceless, orphans and widows are especially defenceless, and so, they deserve special attention by God, James 1:27.
God sees all those who are weak and needy and provides a dwelling place for the homeless, Psalm 68:6. He frees those in bondage but consigns to parched land those who rebel against His will, Psalm 68:6.

‘When you, God, went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, the earth shook, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel. You gave abundant showers, O God; you refreshed your weary inheritance. Your people settled in it, and from your bounty, God, you provided for the poor. The Lord announces the word, and the women who proclaim it are a mighty throng: “Kings and armies flee in haste; the women at home divide the plunder. Even while you sleep among the sheep pens, the wings of my dove are sheathed with silver, its feathers with shining gold.” When the Almighty scattered the kings in the land, it was like snow fallen on Mount Zalmon.’ Psalm 68:7-14

David now turns his attention to Israel's exodus from Egypt, their receiving of the word at Mount Sinai, and their wandering in the wilderness because of their sin, Psalm 68:7.
God's presence with Israel and His care for them are seen in that He went out before them when Israel was making their way to Canaan, Exodus 19:16-19.
You may notice at the end of verse seven, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates how God led Israel through the wilderness.

Because God was with Israel in the wilderness, the earth shook, Psalm 68:8, which means God protected them. When Israel was at Mount Sinai, they experienced the revelation of His power and glory. Mighty mountains shook at the very presence of God, Judges 5:5.
It appears that God caused the heavens to pour down rain in the wilderness when Israel was wandering there for forty years, Psalm 68:8 / Judges 5:4. This pouring of rain was a sign that God was caring for His people in a desert place, Psalm 68:9.
The promised land of Canaan was the inheritance that was given to Israel, Psalm 68:9-10. When the nations heard the 'word', Psalm 68:11, that is, they heard of the wonders of God that He worked through Israel, they fled before them, Psalm 68:12. If they didn't willingly flee, they were defeated by God working through the army of Israel.
Notice it was the women who were the first to make the proclamation of what God had done, Psalm 68:11 / Matthew 28:1-10 / Luke 24:1-10. The announcement was that God has won a great victory over His enemies, that is, 'kings and their armies', Psalm 68:12, and the woman benefited even though they didn't directly fight; they remained home and divided the spoils, Psalm 68:12.
The women who stayed behind with the sheepfolds, Psalm 68:13, when the battles were raging, divided the spoil of conquered enemies. The army of Israel returned to the women victorious, like wings of a dove, loaded with the spoils of war, gold, and silver, Psalm 68:13.
The exact location of Mount Zalmon in Palestine isn't known, Judges 9:48; however, Israel's defeat of the armies of the Canaanites was so easy with God's help that it was like the natural snowfall on Zalmon, Psalm 68:14.

'Mount Bashan, majestic mountain, Mount Bashan, rugged mountain, why gaze in envy, you rugged mountain, at the mountain where God chooses to reign, where the LORD himself will dwell forever? The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands; the Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary. When you ascended on high, you took many captives; you received gifts from people, even from the rebellious—that you, LORD God, might dwell there. Praise be to the Lord, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death. Surely God will crush the heads of his enemies, the hairy crowns of those who go on in their sins. The Lord says, "I will bring them from Bashan; I will bring them from the depths of the sea, that your feet may wade in the blood of your foes, while the tongues of your dogs have their share."
Psalm 68:15-23

David now turns his attention to thanking God for his daily blessings. Mount Bashan, Psalm 68:15, was a mountainous area in northeast Galilee. Notice that David personifies these mountains as those who were envious of where God dwells, Psalm 68:15-16.
Despite Israel not having many chariots, Psalm 68:17 / Deuteronomy 17:16, God still protected them from their enemies. God's power was simply too much for them; His power was greater than tens of thousands and thousands of chariots, Psalm 68:17.
Notice the words, 'when you ascended on high, you took many captives; you received gifts from people,' Psalm 68:18. The apostle Paul quotes these words in Ephesians 4:8-10, and when we read Paul's words, we have to imagine a Roman triumph, a great procession entering Rome led by a victorious king, returning from a great war, riding on a white horse.

Behind him, there is a train of people, those who have been taken captive during the war and all the spoils the victorious king has gained and now brings with them. As the procession goes along, he gives gifts to men; some captives were set free, whilst others were executed.

It's a picture of the victorious Christ who gave gifts to His people. God has blessed all Christians with at least one gift, if we read further on in the passage, we see that some gifts are mentioned: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

In Psalm 68:18, we have a picture of David looking forward to the future. It's prophetic, David says, 'received gifts', Psalm 68:18, but Paul says, 'gave gifts', Ephesians 4:8. This is David looking forward and Paul looking at the fulfilment of this passage.
But who are the captives? Psalm 68:18. From the Psalm, it's clear that they were the enemies of Israel who were defeated when Jerusalem was captured. In Ephesians 4:8, the captives are the enemies of Christ, namely, Satan, sin, and death. In other words, Christ had victory over Satan, sin and death and gives gifts of the Spirit to those who have been identified with Him, Colossians 2:13-15.
And please notice that Paul doesn't mention the word 'hell'. He speaks about Christ 'descending to the lower, earthly regions', Ephesians 4:9. What does this mean? 'Descended to the lower, earthly regions' isn't a reference to hell, but His birth. We find the Psalmist using similar words in Psalm 139:15.
In other words, Paul is referring to Christ's coming to earth as a baby; he's speaking about Christ coming into Mary's womb. Paul is saying that Jesus, who went up to heaven, that is, in His ascension, is the same Jesus who earlier came down from heaven. Paul isn't speaking about Christ going to 'hell', he's speaking about Christ's birth as a human.

David now praises his Lord and Saviour for providing for Israel throughout their history, Psalm 68:19. When they obeyed His commands, they were blessed. You may notice at the end of verse nineteen, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.
As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates God's great victory over Israel's enemies.

It was God who saved them from death at the hands of their enemies, Psalm 68:20-21, just as the Messiah would crush the head of Satan, Genesis 3:15; God would crush the heads of Israel's enemies.
The words, 'hairy crowns', Psalm 68:21, may be a reference to the soldiers who allowed their hair to grow when they were in conflict with an enemy. It was shaved when they returned home. In other words, God would inflict punishment on the wicked who opposed His people.
God will bring them from Bashan, Psalm 68:22, that is, He will deliver and save His people from there, Numbers 21:33-35. God will bring them from the depths of the sea, Psalm 68:22, that is, He would intervene when His people were in danger, Exodus 14:22.
The words, 'your feet may wade in the blood of your foes', Psalm 68:23, relate to God crushing their enemy's heads; it speaks of complete victory over the enemy, Genesis 3:15. The words, 'the tongues of your dogs have their share', Psalm 68:23, speak of the tongues of dogs that would be employed in licking up the blood of the enemies. The point of these verses is simply to tell us how God totally destroyed His enemies.

'Your procession, God, has come into view, the procession of my God and King into the sanctuary. In front are the singers, after them the musicians; with them are the young women playing the timbrels. Praise God in the great congregation; praise the LORD in the assembly of Israel. There is the little tribe of Benjamin, leading them, there the great throng of Judah's princes, and there the princes of Zebulun and of Naphtali. Summon your power, God; show us your strength, our God, as you have done before. Because of your temple at Jerusalem, kings will bring you gifts.'
Psalm 68:24-29

David now speaks about how he and Israel could bring back the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem after God had wiped out their enemies, 2 Samuel 6. This was God's procession, David's God and David's King's procession; all the glory went to God for what He has done and is doing, Psalm 68:24.
With the procession of the singers and players, the Lord is pictured as going into the sanctuary, Psalm 68:24-26, that is, the tabernacle. Benjamin, the small tribe, and Judah, the southern kingdom, with Zebulun and Naphtali, the northern kingdom, represent all of Israel, Psalm 68:27. Here we see the respect David has for King Saul because Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin.
Although David was grateful for all the victories God gave Israel, he asks God to show them His strength, Psalm 68:28, suggesting that David was aware that there were many more battles ahead.
Despite the many battles which lie ahead, David is confident that kings will bring gifts to Israel, Psalm 68:29.
Remember the 'temple', Psalm 68:29, wasn't built in David's lifetime, so the word should read 'tabernacle'.

'Rebuke the beast among the reeds, the herd of bulls among the calves of the nations. Humbled, may the beast bring bars of silver. Scatter the nations who delight in war. Envoys will come from Egypt; Cush will submit herself to God. Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth, sing praise to the Lord, to him who rides across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens, who thunders with mighty voice. Proclaim the power of God, whose majesty is over Israel, whose power is in the heavens. You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God!' Psalm 68:30-35

Notice how David personifies the beast and the bulls, Psalm 68:30. These animals represented the raging nations that were against Israel. Reeds are usually associated with the River Nile, and so David asks God to keep them safe from the Egyptians and Cush, that is, Ethiopia, Psalm 68:31.
He wants God to keep them safe until both Egypt and Cush come with their gifts, which speaks of total submission to Israel, Psalm 68:31. From Egypt and Cush came those who submitted to Solomon, Jeremiah 13:23 / Amos 9:7.
David conquered the enemies of Israel, but Solomon reigned over them. Through trade, foreign nations came to admire the wisdom of Solomon and the greatness of his kingdom.

Solomon increased the wealth of Israel because of his relationship with foreign nations. Because David knew these things would happen, he invited the kingdoms of the earth to worship God, Psalm 68:32.
You may notice at the end of verse thirty-two, that some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates the kingdoms worshipping God in submission to Him.

God is described as the one 'who rides across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens', Psalm 68:33. God is victorious, He is majestic, Psalm 18:10. The highest heavens and ancient heavens, Psalm 68:33, are a reference to God's dwelling place, where angels serve Him. His voice is powerful like thunder, Psalm 68:33 / Psalm 29:3.
When Israel's enemies acknowledge God's power and care for His people, Psalm 68:34 / Psalm 29:1, they would benefit from doing so. David says that God is awesome in His sanctuary, Psalm 68:35 / Psalm 45:4 / Psalm 65:5 / Psalm 66:5. He gives His people power and strength, Psalm 68:35. In other words, God is worthy of praise because He is more than able to protect His people.

CONCLUSION

David mentions God as being in the highest heavens, the ancient heavens. The word ‘heavens’ often confuses people, as most people believe there is only one heaven.

I think it would be useful to look at what the Bible says about heaven. We know that ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth’. In Genesis 1:1, Moses uses the word ‘heavens’ in the plural. The Bible tells us there are actually three heavens.
Speaking about himself, the apostle Paul says in ‘I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago, was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body, I do not know—God knows,’ 2 Corinthians 12:2.
So, we have three ‘heavens’.

1. The heaven which is God’s spiritual, eternal home.

This isn’t physical and isn’t created.

2. The heaven where the stars and planets are.

This is physical and is created.

3. The heaven surrounding the earth where the atmosphere is, and the birds fly.

This is physical and is created.

The word ‘heavens’ is used in different ways in the Bible.

1. It refers to one of the two heavens that God created.

2. It’s also used of the third heaven. This is the uncreated heaven where God has always been from eternity.

The two heavens were created by God, Genesis 1:1. So God existed before the heavens and the earth. These aren’t the heavens He has always lived in; these are the heavens where the atmosphere is, and the birds fly and the heaven where the stars are.
The third heaven is where God has always lived; it isn’t physical, it hasn’t been created, ‘God is spirit’, John 4:24. He doesn’t need a physical place to live in. He doesn’t need pictures or images or temples, churches or shrines to live in, Acts 17:24-25.

CHAPTER 69

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David pours his heart out to God because of the suffering he was enduring due to his enemies. He asks God to curse his enemies and puts his hope in God to save him.

HEADING

‘For the director of music. To the tune of “Lilies.” Of David’

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a psalm for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
It was a song to be sung to the 'tune of Lilies', 1 Kings 7:22 / 1 Kings 7:26 / 2 Chronicles 4:5 / Hosea 14:5. A lily was probably some kind of musical instrument which looked like or was shaped like a lily. Or it may refer to the general beauty of the composition.

'Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God. Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal.' Psalm 69:1-4

David begins by asking God to save him, Psalm 69:1 / Psalm 32:6 / Psalm 42:7. He feels he's about to drown in the waters of suffering, Psalm 69:1-2 / Psalm 40:2 / Jeremiah 38:6. Years later, Peter, in a similar fashion, cried out to Jesus to save him, Matthew 14:30.
He feels that he is sinking in the miry depths, where there is nowhere solid to place his feet, Psalm 69:2. Jesus must have felt that way just before he went to the cross of Calvary, Matthew 26:37.
David is at the end of his tether, calling out to God for help because he's spent so much time crying, Psalm 69:3 / Psalm 6:6. The feeling of being drained was all too familiar to Jesus, too, Matthew 26:41.
His throat is parched, Psalm 69:3, probably because of the amount of pleading he's been doing for God to save him. His eyes are failing, Psalm 69:3, probably because of all the tears he's shed looking for God, Psalm 6:7 / Psalm 31:9 / Psalm 38:10 / Psalm 62:5 / Job 17:7.
It's clear that David is feeling overwhelmed because of the circumstances he finds himself in. Even his enemies hate him for no reason, and his enemies have no reason to go against him, Psalm 69:4.
His enemies had only one thing on their minds, and that was to destroy David, Psalm 69:4. Jesus experienced these same circumstances, John 15:25. He even had to restore something which he didn't steal, Psalm 69:4. This gives us a feel of the kind of injustice David faced; it gives us the idea that David has been set up.

'You, God, know my folly; my guilt is not hidden from you. Lord, the LORD Almighty, may those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me; God of Israel, may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me. For I endure scorn for your sake, and shame covers my face. I am a foreigner to my own family, a stranger to my own mother's children; for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me. When I weep and fast, I must endure scorn; when I put on sackcloth, people make sport of me. Those who sit at the gate mock me, and I am the song of the drunkards.' Psalm 69:5-12

David acknowledges that God knows him well enough to know what David was like, Psalm 69:5. His enemies may be accusing him of all kinds of things, and although he didn't do the things they were accusing him of, he asks God to examine his ways, Psalm 38:2-4 / Psalm 40:12.

In all this despair, he confessed his sins, thinking that such might have brought on the opposition he was facing, Psalm 69:6. Some may have taken advantage of his confession, assuming that such was a sign of weakness. However, he knew that God knew he was not guilty of those things of which he was accused.

David asks God that those who put their hope in Him not be disgraced because of him, Psalm 69:6. He's clearly concerned for those who might suffer because of the situation he is in. David didn't want those who seek God to feel embarrassed because of him, Psalm 69:6 / Psalm 25:3 / Psalm 25:5 / Psalm 37:9 / Isaiah 40:31.

He didn't want his relationship with those close to him to be broken or damaged in any way; he didn't want to feel ashamed, Psalm 69:7-8 / Psalm 44:15-16. When his enemies had persecuted him, even those who were closest to him shunned him.

His nearest relatives treated him as if he were a stranger and a foreigner, Psalm 69:8 / Psalm 50:20 / Job 19:13-19.

David feels that when God is insulted, he is insulted, Psalm 69:9. The apostle Paul writes that Jesus felt the same, Romans 15:3.

Because of his zeal for God and His house, others turned away from him, Psalm 69:9. It appears that his commitment intimidated others, and as a result, brought persecution upon him. We see the same thing happening to Jesus when he drove out the moneychangers from God's house, John 2:17.

David's Zeal was seen in that he was the one who suggested building the temple, 2 Samuel 7:1-3, but despite his zeal, his son Solomon was the one who actually built it, 1 Chronicles 22:1-5.

Notice David wept, fasted, endured scorn, and put on sackcloth, Psalm 69:10-11. These were all signs of repentance from his sins, Psalm 30:11 / Psalm 35:13 / Isaiah 22:12 / Daniel 9:3.

However, even after repenting, people still made sport of him, Psalm 69:11, that is, they didn't approve of what he was doing. The KJV uses the words, 'I have become a proverb to them', which means his life of commitment to the Lord became contemptible to those who were religious, but they behaved contrary to the will of God, 1 Kings 9:7.

David's problems didn't end there. Those who sit at the gate, Ruth 4:1 / Job 29:7-8, that is, the elders mocked him, Psalm 69:12. Even the drunkards mock him with songs about him, Psalm 69:12. He was treated with contempt by the lowest of society, Psalm 9:14 / Job 29:7 / Isaiah 14:31 / Isaiah 28:6.

'But I pray to you, LORD, in the time of your favour; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation. Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink; deliver me from those who hate me, from the deep waters. Do not let the floodwaters engulf me, or the depths swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me. Answer me, LORD, out of the goodness of your love; in your great mercy turn to me. Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble. Come near and rescue me; deliver me because of my foes.' Psalm 69:13-18

Because of everything that David is experiencing, it's understandable that he now turns his attention to God. He prays to God and asks Him to show him favour and love in God's time, not his own, Psalm 69:13 / Isaiah 61:2 / 2 Corinthians 6:2.

He still feels like he's sinking, and so, he asks God to answer his prayer and save him from the mire, and to save him from the deep waters of those who hate him, Psalm 69:14 / Psalm 69:2-3.

David felt he was drowning in the floodwaters; he felt the depths would swallow him up, and he felt the pit would close its mouth over him, and he would be left in darkness, Psalm 69:15. David is asking God to save him from all these overwhelming calamities.

He appeals to God's goodness and mercy, Psalm 69:16 / Psalm 63:3 / Psalm 51:1. He pleads, as God's servant, that God won't hide His face from him, Psalm 69:17, that is, he doesn't feel God's presence, and so, he's pleading for God to be compassionate with him, Psalm 27:9.

David is in serious trouble and asks God to come near to him and rescue him, Psalm 69:18 / Isaiah 43:3 / Isaiah 44:22. He wants God to deliver him because of his foes, Psalm 69:18, that is, because he had so many foes, they were overwhelming him and wanted to destroy him, Psalm 13:4.

David knows that he only had one option, and that was to turn to God in prayer. As he was sinking deeper into the social rejection of the people, he reached up to the only one who could help. It was a time when David had to depend on the mercy of God for deliverance. Since no one would take pity on him, he trusted that God would have mercy.

'You know how I am scorned, disgraced, and shamed; all my enemies are before you. Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none. They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst. May the table set before them become a snare; may it become retribution and a trap. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever. Pour out your wrath on them; let your fierce anger overtake them. May their place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in their tents. For they persecute those you wound and talk about the pain of those you hurt. Charge them with crime upon crime; do not let them share in your salvation. May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.' Psalm 69:19-28

David continues to appeal to God because of those who scorned, disgraced, and shamed him because of his commitment to God, Psalm 69:19. The effects of his enemy's attitude toward him have left him broken-hearted and helpless, Psalm 69:20.

He looked for sympathy from them but received none, he looked for comfort and received none, Psalm 69:20 / Job 2:11 / Job 42:11 / Isaiah 51:19 / Jeremiah 16:5. Instead of helping David, they gave him gall for food, Psalm 69:21, which is a bitter herb, Hosea 10:4.

They also gave him vinegar to drink, Psalm 69:21, that is, sour vinegar, the same vinegar Jesus was offered, Matthew 27:34 / John 19:28-29. John tells us this was offered to Jesus in order to fulfil this Scripture, Matthew 27:34 / Matthew 27:48 / Mark 15:23 / John 19:29.

David goes on to ask God to bring judgment upon his enemies, who come in the form of seven curses.

1. Their food, Psalm 69:22.

While David was hurting, his enemies were relaxing, eating their food, and so, David prays that their relaxing time would become a trap for them, Psalm 33:5 / Job 36:16. These words are quoted by the apostle Paul, Romans 11:9-10.

2. Their eyes, Psalm 69:23.

While David's eyes were failing from crying, he prays that God would make his enemies blind, Romans 11:10.

3. Their bodies, Psalm 69:23.

While David was feeling the physical effects of his enemy's actions, he prays that God would bend their backs permanently.

4. The coming wrath of God, Psalm 69:24.

While David was feeling angry at what his enemies were doing to him, he prays that God would unleash His fierce anger upon them.

5. Their houses, Psalm 69:25.

While David lived alone because of what his enemies were doing and saying against him, he prays that God would permanently remove them from their homes. Jesus quotes these words in sadness over Jerusalem, Matthew 23:38, and Peter quotes these words as descriptive of the desolation of Judas, Acts 1:20.

6. That their guilt increase, Psalm 69:26-27.

While David felt the guilt of his own sin and knew it was God who was hurting him, Psalm 41:5-8, he prays that God would charge them with sin to the point where they couldn't receive salvation, Romans 1:28.

7. That their names be blotted out of the book of life, Psalm 69:28.

Some commentators believe the blotting out of the book of life refers to their lives being seriously shortened, Job 5:26 / Psalm 55:23 / Proverbs 3:2 / Proverbs 9:11 / Proverbs 10:27.

While David's enemies wanted him dead, he prays that God remove them from Israel, and in doing so, they would lose all privileges which came from being a part of God's people, Exodus 32:32 / Numbers 25:4 / Numbers 32:14 / 1 Samuel 28:18 / Philemon 4:3 / Revelation 3:5.

'But as for me, afflicted and in pain—may your salvation, God, protect me. I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hooves. The poor will see and be glad—you who seek God, may your hearts live! The LORD hears the needy and does not despise his captive people. Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and all that move in them, for God will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah. Then people will settle there and possess it; the children of his servants will inherit it, and those who love his name will dwell there.' Psalm 69:29-36

David began this psalm by speaking about how gloomy his life was, and then he called upon God to judge his enemies, Psalm 69:1. In these final verses, David turns his attention to God once again, in hope that God would come to help him.

Despite being afflicted, despite being in pain, he turns to God for salvation and protection, Psalm 69:29. He intends to praise God's Name in song and glorify God with thanksgiving, Psalm 69:30.

The praise from David's lips will certainly please God, more than any animal sacrifice, it will please God more than the sacrifice of an ox or a fully grown bull, Psalm 69:31 / Psalm 40:6-8 / Psalm 51:16-17 / 1 Samuel 15:22.

David knows that what he is going through wasn't going to go to waste; he knows that he himself would become a living object lesson for others who seek God, in order that they may know how their hearts can live.

God hears the prayers of the poor, and He doesn't despise those who are in prison for His sake, Psalm 69:32-33 / Psalm 34:6 / Job 5:15 / Psalm 10:14 / Psalm 12:5 / Psalm 35:10 / Psalm 68:10. David is saying that when God delivers him and those who remained committed to God, then this would be proof that God was working in their lives.

David knows that heaven and earth aren't big enough for all the praise which God deserves, even the seas and everything which lives in them will praise God for what He has done, Psalm 69:34 / Psalm 8:8 / Psalm 148:1-14 / Isaiah 55:12.

David prays that God will save Zion, Psalm 69:35, that is, Jerusalem, Psalm 51:18, and Judah, in order that people can settle there and possess it, Psalm 69:35 / 2 Samuel 2:1-11. David is confident that he and all those who have committed themselves to God, all those who love God's Name, will inherit the land and dwell in it, Psalm 69:36.

CONCLUSION

In a time of great despair, David wisely turned to God. In a time when he was at his lowest, lonely and without any hope, he turned to God for hope. As Christians, we too turn to God for hope in times of despair; however, we turn to a living hope and just like David prayed for, we will have an inheritance, 1 Peter 1:3-4.

Peter tells us that God has given us new birth through the resurrection of Christ, which means we are a new person. But God's mercy, we've been born into two things: a living hope and an inheritance.

It's important to note that hope isn't a dead hope but a living one. Our hope isn't based upon riches, governments or science or other futile things; our hope is built upon the resurrection of Jesus.

Part of this living hope is the inheritance that's promised for us, but what makes our inheritance special is that it won't spoil or fade as all other material things do in this world.

Our inheritance is eternal and is kept in heaven, which means it's permanent. The devil can't steal our salvation, although we can give that up, but he can certainly steal our joy in Christ Jesus if we allow him to.

The devil can try and steal our joy if we allow him to, but he can't steal our hope in Christ Jesus. When we, like David, go through painful trials, we must always turn to our living hope to help us through those times of despair, 1 Peter 1:6-9.

CHAPTER 70

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David appears to be in some kind of predicament where he needed urgent help from the Lord. He knew that the Lord would deliver him, but he pleaded that God not take His time in responding to his appeal. The words in this psalm are more or less the same as the words David uses in Psalm 40:13-17.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of David. A petition.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a petition, that is, an appeal of David. It was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

'Hasten, O God, to save me; come quickly, LORD, to help me. May those who want to take my life be put to shame and confusion; may all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace. May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!" turn back because of their shame. But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who long for your saving help always say, "The LORD is great!" But as for me, I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; LORD, do not delay.' Psalm 70:1-5

David begins by asking God to quickly come and help him, Psalm 70:1, because he felt that his enemies sought to take his life and so he asks the Lord to put them to shame, be confused and disgraced, Psalm 70:2. If we apply this to Christ, this would be referring to the times when Christ's life was in danger, Matthew 26:18 / John 7:6 / John 18:6. The words, 'Aha! Aha! Psalm 70:3, are words of reproach and contempt. They are used when a person rejoices over a fallen enemy, Psalm 35:21 / Psalm 35:25 / Ezekiel 25:3.

If we apply these words to Christ, they would be referring to taunts and reproaches of his enemies after He was arrested, Matthew 27:29-31 / Mark 15:29-30.

David now calls all those who seek God, those who long for God's salvation, to rejoice and be glad; he wants them to glorify the Lord together by saying 'the LORD is great', Psalm 70:4. David felt 'poor and needy', Psalm 70:5. These are words which imply poverty and sorrow. If we apply these words to Christ, we know that He owned nothing except the clothes He wore. He had nowhere to lay His head, Luke 9:58. He was rich but became poor for our sake, so that we can be rich, 2 Corinthians 8:9. He was certainly a man of sorrows, Isaiah 53:3.

David once again asks God to come quickly to help him; he doesn't want any delays. He wants God to help him now, Psalm 70:5. David felt secure in knowing that God cared for him, and so he asks God to be his helper and deliverer, Psalm 70:5 / Psalm 18:2. He asks God to help him without any delay.

When we think of Christ, these words show a strong confidence in God, the Father, in the midst of His afflictions and sorrows, with earnest pleading, coming from the depth of those sorrows, that God would intervene for Him, Matthew 27:46 / John 19:30 / Luke 23:46.

CONCLUSION

David expressed no doubt that the Lord would come to his rescue; it was just a matter of when. There were those who were seeking to kill him, and so, he felt that if the Lord didn't come soon, he would be killed. The situation was whether the help from the Lord would arrive in time.

As Christians, we often find ourselves in desperate situations where we need God to answer our prayers right there and then. Although there are times when we have to wait for our prayers to be answered, we mustn't lose sight of a few important truths.

1. God wants us to call on Him for help when we're going through desperate times, Psalm 50:15 / Psalm 91:14-16 / Psalm 145:18-20 / Isaiah 41:17 / Isaiah 65:24 / Jeremiah 33:3 / Micah 7:7.
2. God wants us to know that when we're going through desperate times, we can rely on Him to help us, Matthew 6:25-27 / Matthew 6:30-31 / John 15:5 / Philippians 2:13 / Philippians 4:19 / 1 Peter 5:7.
3. God wants us to know that when we're going through desperate times, we can totally trust Him, Proverbs 3:5-6 / Proverbs 28:26 / Isaiah 41:13 / Jeremiah 17:5-7 / Jeremiah 32:27 / 2 Corinthians 1:20.

Desperate times come to us all. David's world felt like it was closing in on him, and he felt his situation was hopeless. However, he turned to God to save him, and we, too, would be wise to follow his example. Our God isn't only able to save, He's able to completely save His people in desperate times, Hebrews 7:25.

CHAPTER 71

INTRODUCTION

The author of this psalm is anonymous, although some commentators suggest it was David; whoever it was, we find that they are a person who had depended upon God all the days of their life. They had spent all their life serving God in some capacity, and in their old age, they are thankful that God looked after them throughout it all.

'In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame. In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me; turn your ear to me and save me. Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel. For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth. From birth, I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you.' Psalm 71:1-6

The psalmist begins by telling us that they have put their trust in the LORD, and they are confident that they would never be put to shame, Psalm 71:1 / Psalm 22:4-5 / Psalm 25:2.
They ask God to act righteously on their behalf and that God's righteousness would work in their favour, Psalm 71:2 / Psalm 31:1, that is, God would rescue them and protect them, Psalm 17:6.
The psalmist isn't a person who wavered throughout their life; they remained consistently faithful to the Lord. As it is with many of us, the psalmist appears to have fallen, and even after being restored, they are left with the scars of guilt from their suffering, Psalm 18:2 / Psalm 31:2.
The psalmist knows the power of God's commands and is fully confident that God is their rock and fortress. Psalm 71:3. They now tell us the reason for their suffering, they were suffering because of the wicked, those who were evil and cruel, Psalm 71:4.
They wanted God to rescue them from their hands. Their hope is in the Sovereign LORD, Psalm 71:5, that is, Adonai Yahweh, the Master and God of Israel, Psalm 29:7 / Psalm 40:4.
Their hope has been in God since the days of their youth, since they were born, Psalm 71:6, and based upon this fact, the psalmist asks God to continue to help him, Psalm 22:9-10. Because God was the One who brought them from their mother's womb, they will continually praise God, Psalm 71:6 / Psalm 22:25.

'I have become a sign to many; you are my strong refuge. My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendour all day long. Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone. For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together. They say, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him." Do not be far from me, my God; come quickly, God, to help me. May my accusers perish in shame; may those who want to harm me be covered with scorn and disgrace. As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long—though I know not how to relate them all. I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone.' Psalm 71:7-16

The past deliverances that God had provided for the psalmist were evidence that God would do the same in the future, Psalm 71:7. God's past protection of them was a sign to everyone of the wondrous works of God in the lives of faithful believers, Isaiah 8:18 / Luke 2:34.
Despite what they were experiencing, God was still their strong refuge, Psalm 71:7. Because God was still their strong refuge, the psalmist says that they will praise God with their words and speak of God's splendour, Psalm 71:8 / Psalm 35:28.
As they are now old, and their strength is failing, the psalmist asks God to continue to be faithful towards them, Psalm 71:9 / Psalm 22:1 / Psalm 22:11 / Psalm 22:19 / Psalm 35:22 / Ecclesiastes 12:1-6.
Because of their old age, their enemies tried to take advantage of them by conspiring against them, Psalm 71:10. The enemies had assumed that their age was a sign of weakness and that God was no longer with them, Psalm 71:11 / Psalm 41:7 / Psalm 41:9 / Psalm 35:4 / Psalm 40:14 / Psalm 70:2.
Their enemies thought that God wouldn't rescue them, and so, this was the perfect time to plan their attacks against them, Psalm 71:11 / Psalm 41:7-8 / Luke 23:35-37. The psalmist is in desperate need of God's help and asks God to come quickly to help them, Psalm 71:12 / Psalm 38:22 / Psalm 40:13.

The psalmist tells God the kind of help they want; they want God to strike their enemies with shame, scorn, and disgrace, Psalm 71:13. They want their enemies to be totally defeated and totally discredited, Psalm 71:7.
As far as the psalmist is concerned, they will continue to put their hope in God, Psalm 71:14. Despite all the pressure and accusations from their enemies, they continued to place their faith in God to rescue them, Psalm 42:5 / Psalm 42:11 / Psalm 43:5.
Despite all the pressure and accusations from their enemies, the psalmist will speak of God's righteousness and salvation all day long, Psalm 71:15 / Romans 12:1-2. They know there are no limits to God's mercy, Psalm 40:5 / Psalm 71:8.
Although the psalmist was old and their strength was going, they were confident in God's strength, Psalm 71:16, that is, God's mighty acts, Deuteronomy 3:24 / Psalm 106:2 / Job 26:14 / 2 Corinthians 12:9.
They not only want to speak about God's righteousness and salvation, but they are also determined to speak of God's righteous deeds, and His righteous deeds alone, Psalm 9:1 / Psalm 26:7 / Isaiah 64:6.

'Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvellous deeds. Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come. Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things. Who is like you, God? Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. You will increase my honour and comfort me once more. I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, Holy One of Israel. My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you—I whom you have delivered. My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long, for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion.' Psalm 71:17-24

The psalmist's faithfulness started in their youth, and because they allowed God to guide their life, they knew that God would bless them even in their old age, and they would still speak about God's marvellous deeds, Psalm 71:17.
In their old age, when they have grey hair, they ask that God would continue to be present in their life, Psalm 71:18.
The reason for this was that they wanted to speak of God's power to the next generation, Psalm 71:18.
They now consider how great God is. God's righteousness is so great it reaches the heavens, and what God has done is greater than anyone could ever do, Psalm 71:19.
No wonder they ask the question, 'Who is like you, God?' Psalm 71:19. They know that no one and nothing can compare to God, Exodus 15:11 / 2 Samuel 7:22 / Psalm 35:10 / Psalm 89:8 / Isaiah 40:18.
The psalmist totally understands that living a life that is faithful to the Lord doesn't mean that they will have no troubles, Psalm 71:20 / 2 Timothy 3:12. They not only understand that being faithful wouldn't take away their troubles, but they also know that God will help them through their troubles, Psalm 71:20 / 1 Corinthians 10:13.
They know that God has the power to restore their life, even from the depths of the earth, Psalm 71:20 / Psalm 130:1 / Ephesians 4:9. Despite being old, the psalmist is confident in asking God to increase their honour and continue to comfort them, Psalm 71:21 / John 5:21 / Romans 4:17 / 1 Corinthians 15:36 / Ephesians 2:1.
They praise God with the harp, Psalm 71:22 / 1 Samuel 10:5 / 2 Samuel 6:5 / 1 Kings 10:12 / Isaiah 5:12, because of His faithfulness, Psalm 71:22. They will use the lyre to praise God, who is the Holy One of Israel, Psalm 71:22 / Psalm 78:41 / Psalm 89:18 / Isaiah 1:4 / Isaiah 5:19 / Isaiah 5:24 / Isaiah 10:20 / Isaiah 12:6.
They will also use their lips to sing praises to God because God delivered them from their enemies and has been to shame and confusion, Psalm 71:23-24 / Psalm 3:7-8 / Psalm 6:9-10 / Psalm 7:17 / Psalm 17:15 / Psalm 22:30-31 / Psalm 26:12 / Psalm 42:11 / Psalm 43:5 / Psalm 52:8-9 / Psalm 71:13.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist was blessed to have been brought up from a very young age to know God and to be taught by others about God. There is power and impact in a godly parent.

When we think about Eunice, she had a little boy named Timothy. She was a spiritually single married and her husband was a Greek, who didn't care about the things of God, but Eunice was determined to give her boy a chance to know the Lord. And God saw her faith in the midst of ungodliness; in fact, not only did God see it, but little Timothy saw it too, 2 Timothy 1:5.
We must remember that faith isn't hereditary; faith is learned through models, and nobody knows if faith is sincere better than our kids. So we need to be the godliest adults our kids know because what we're doing is God's work.

We don't know if Timothy's dad was a bad man, but he wasn't the man to make a spiritual deposit in his boy's life, and she is determined that her boy is going to know about the Lord, even if dad won't help. And she made a spiritual deposit on her son that blessed him the rest of her life, 2 Timothy 3:15.
Now I know that some are Christians today because of a grandmother like Lois. But remember what Solomon once said, 'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it,' Proverbs 22:6.
Raising our kids in the Lord doesn't always turn out well for the parent or the child. Raising a child in the Lord and teaching them about the Lord doesn't guarantee they will become Christians or even stay faithful all the days of their lives.

Sometimes we need to let them make their own decisions so that they can gain wisdom for themselves. Sometimes we need to allow our kids to go off the path so that they can develop their own faith, Luke 15:11-32.

CHAPTER 72

INTRODUCTION

This is the first of two psalms written by Solomon, Psalm 127, being the other. This psalm has an immediate historical application but also relates to the Messiah in the future tense, Isaiah 11:1-5 / Isaiah 60-62.
The psalm speaks about an ideal earthly reign, such as an ideal social and economic environment. We must note that this didn't happen during the reign of Solomon, but did in the church of Jesus. In the kingdom of Christ, Christ reigns over all things, including His church, Philippians 2:5-11.

HEADING

'Of Solomon.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this was written by Solomon.

‘Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. May he judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. May the mountains bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness. May he defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; may he crush the oppressor. May he endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. May he be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth. In his days may the righteous flourish and prosperity abound till the moon is no more.’ Psalm 72:1-7

Solomon begins by asking God to bless him as the king of Israel and to bless him with wise judgments and a reign which displays the righteousness of God, Psalm 72:1 / 1 Kings 3:5-9.
He knows that God will bless him with his requests, and so, he reveals that he will rule with righteousness and ensure that justice is carried out, especially among those who were afflicted, Psalm 72:2.
Mountains often represent human governments in the Bible; this is possibly what Solomon is speaking of here, Psalm 72:3. The mountains may refer to the national government, and the hills may represent the local governments. Both appear to rule with righteousness, Psalm 72:3.
Solomon and his government are determined that they will defend the afflicted and save those children in need, Psalm 72:4. Those who were afflicted were usually the ones who were denied justice, and the children were the ones who were usually neglected.
This is something which some rulers and judges of Israel totally ignored, and didn’t carry out, Jeremiah 5:28 / Isaiah 1:23 / Zechariah 7:10. Solomon and his government are determined that they will protect Israel from any oppressors, they will crush them, Psalm 72:4.
As a result of Solomon’s reign, Solomon, his government and all the people would fear the Lord throughout all generations, Psalm 72:5. God’s presence would be with His people, and He would pour down His blessings upon His people just as the rain falls on a field and as showers water the earth, Psalm 72:6 / Isaiah 44:3 / Isaiah 55:10 / Hosea 14:5 / Hebrews 6:7.
God’s people will flourish, and there will be prosperity, Psalm 72:7, that is, peace till the moon is no more, Psalm 72:1, that is, it will last beyond comprehension.

‘May he rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. May the desert tribes bow before him, and his enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts. May all kings bow down to him, and all nations serve him.’ Psalm 72:8-11

Solomon now looks beyond his own reign and looks forward to the reign of Christ, who would have a far greater dominion than Solomon, Psalm 72:8.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It is true that Solomon ruled over all of the Middle East from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea, but not to the ends of the earth. Furthermore, the expression ‘from sea to sea’ actually refers to the whole planet Earth. The ancient idea was that the earth was set in the middle of a great ocean; thus, ‘from sea to sea’ meant the whole earth. Zechariah applied the exact words of this verse to the Dominion of Messiah, Zechariah 9:10, of which dominion alone are they truly descriptive.’
The desert tribes would bow before him, and his enemies would lick the dust, Psalm 72:9. These words speak of certain defeat, Genesis 3:14-15. The prophet Nathan foretold this when he spoke to David in 2 Samuel 7.

When he prophesied to David, he spoke about both David's immediate son and successor, that is, Solomon, and David's ultimate Son and Successor, that is, the Messiah, 2 Samuel 7:11-16. The fulfilment in Solomon's day is described in 1 Kings 10:23-25.

Because Solomon had married many kings' daughters, he received many tributes from them, Psalm 72:10. bring many kings of the world into the border of his power.

Tarshish was a Phoenician colony on the south coast of Spain, Psalm 48:7, but there's no evidence that Solomon's dominion ever extended to the westernmost nation of Europe.

Sheba and Seba, Psalm 72:10, might well have been under Solomon's dominion. Sheba was in southern Arabia and Seba was in Ethiopia, Genesis 10:7 / Isaiah 43:3 / Isaiah 45:14. We must note, though, that all of the places mentioned here, at one time or another, have paid tribute to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because not all kings bowed down and served Solomon, Psalm 72:11, he is obviously speaking about a greater King. In reference to the present reign of Jesus, all nations should serve Him, Philippians 2:5-11, but they don't.

Jesus now reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords, 1 Timothy 6:15. He now reigns over all things, Ephesians 1:23. He upholds all things by the word of His power, Hebrews 1:3, but not all kings bowed down and served Christ either, so this must be speaking about a future time, Revelation 6:15-17.

'For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight. Long may he live! May gold from Sheba be given him. May people ever pray for him and bless him all day long. May grain abound throughout the land; on the tops of the hills may it sway. May the crops flourish like Lebanon and thrive like the grass of the field. May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. Then all nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed. Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvellous deeds. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen. This concludes the prayers of David, son of Jesse.' Psalm 72:12-20

Earlier, Solomon prayed for righteousness and justice for the needy and the afflicted, Psalm 72:1-2. This would be perfectly fulfilled in the greater King, Christ. Jesus, the Messiah, would not only rule with righteousness and justice, but He would also actually save the needy and afflicted, Psalm 72:12.

Those who are oppressed and those who receive violence will be rescued because their blood is precious, Psalm 72:13-14. This is the picture of a redeeming King who would care for the needs of His people. He wouldn't let His people be oppressed, 1 Samuel 26:21 / 2 Kings 1:14 / Psalm 116:15.

All human life is precious to Him, and because of His benevolence toward those who are under the sovereignty of His reign, He would be praised. Notice the words, 'long may he live!' Psalm 72:15.

Most commentators believe that this should read, 'He shall live', that is, the Christ shall live forever. As gold from Sheba was brought in order to give honour to Solomon, Psalm 72:15, so the people of the world will bring themselves as gifts for the honour and glory of the redeeming King Jesus, Romans 12:1-2.

In return, the King would bestow great blessings upon the earth, Psalm 72:16, that is, grain, and He would bless His people. Solomon speaks of the greater King, Jesus, how His Name would endure forever and ever and how the nations will be blessed through Him and call Him blessed, Psalm 72:17.

The only one who ever lived on earth in whom men can be blessed is Jesus Christ, the Messiah. All spiritual blessings in the heavenly places are only found in Christ, Ephesians 1:3.

Solomon appears to understand that this King wasn't only the fulfilment of the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7:11-16. He was also the fulfilment of the great promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.

No wonder Solomon is moved to praise God for His marvellous deeds, Psalm 72:18. The thought of God's marvellous deeds motivates Solomon to the point where he wants all the earth to be filled with God's glory, Psalm 72:19 / Numbers 14:21.

Notice the double 'amen', Psalm 72:19. This shows us how intense Solomon's desire was for the whole earth to be filled with God's glory. We know that Solomon wrote this psalm, but the words, 'this concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse', Psalm 72:23, don't mean that David wrote it; it simply means that this is the end of Book 2 of the Psalms.

The words simply mark the conclusion of this portion of David's psalms in Books 1 and 2, for there are other psalms of David in the following Books. These words conclude the second book of the five books of the Psalms.

CONCLUSION

In this psalm, Solomon made many references to a greater King than he was, that is, Christ. It has been said that there are more than three hundred distinct prophecies in the Old Testament relating to the Messiah. The Jews in the time of Christ were earnestly looking for this deliverer.

When the apostles preached Christ to the Jews, they proved by the prophecies that he was the Messiah or 'anointed one.' The Old Testament clearly foretells both the tribe and family from which the Messiah was to come, Genesis 49:10 / Hebrews 7:14.

The Christ was to come from the family of Jesse, the father of David and was to be a descendant of King David himself, Psalm 89:3-4 / Isaiah 11:1 / Acts 13:23. The very place of birth of the Messiah was foretold in the Old Testament, Micah 5:2 / Matthew 2:1. It was prophesied that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, Isaiah 7:14 / Matthew 1:20 / Matthew 1:23.

It was prophesied that the Messiah would be preceded by a forerunner who would prepare the way for him, Isaiah 40:3 / Malachi 3:1 / Malachi 4:5. The fulfilment of these prophecies is to be found in the life and work of John the Baptist, Matthew 3:1-3 / Luke 1:17.

Probably the finest and most complete description of the Messiah is found in Isaiah 53:3-7. It was from this chapter that Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch as they rode along the way between Jerusalem and Gaza, Acts 8:26-40.

There are many prophecies that relate to the last days of Christ upon the earth. The Messiah was to enter Jerusalem riding upon a donkey, Zechariah 9:9. The fulfilment of this is described in Matthew 21:9. As he was suspended on the cross 'There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall,' Matthew 27:34. This was a fulfilment of Psalm 69:21.

That Christ was to be buried with the rich was foretold by Isaiah, Isaiah 53:9. Matthew gives the fulfilment in detail, Matthew 27:57-60. But the Messiah was not to remain in the grave, Psalm 16:10.

What is the significance of the amazing correspondence between these prophecies and their fulfilment?

1. They prove the inspiration of the Bible.

2. They show that the New Testament cannot be completely understood without knowledge of the Old Testament.

3. They prove that Jesus is the Christ and that as the Christ, his commands must be obeyed, and his promises may be relied upon.

CHAPTER 73

INTRODUCTION

This psalm marks the beginning of Book 3 in the Psalms. Book 3 includes Psalms 73-89. This psalm asks the age-old question, why do the wicked prosper, while the righteous suffer?
The answer to the question is that God has created an environment in which free moral individuals can interact and prosper according to their own abilities. Sadly, this also means that people can become very selfish and take advantage of those who are trying to live their lives to please God.

Although there is no heading for this psalm, the first verse of the KJV tells us that it was written by Asaph. Asaph was the singer and musician during the reign of David and Solomon, 1 Chronicles 15:17-19 / 1 Chronicles 16:5-7 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. 1 Chronicles 25:1 and 2 Chronicles 29:30 tell us that Asaph was a prophet in his musical compositions.

'Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.' Psalm 73:1-3

Asaph begins by telling us that God has been good to the nation of Israel, Psalm 73:1 / Psalm 51:10, God has always demonstrated His goodness to Israel, especially to those who were pure in heart, Psalm 73:1. Despite knowing that God has been good to Israel, Asaph says because God is so good, it almost made him slip, he almost lost his foothold, Psalm 73:2.
The reason he almost slipped was that he considered certain individuals in society, and wondered why the wicked prospered, while he was oppressed and in poverty, Psalm 73:3 / Romans 8:28. In other words, he thought that this was unfair, that God was good to those who were arrogant, to those who were wicked, Psalm 14:1 / Ecclesiastes 7:16.

'They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills. Therefore, pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; their evil imaginations have no limits. They scoff and speak with malice; with arrogance, they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. Therefore, their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. They say, "How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?" This is what the wicked are like—always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.' Psalm 73:4-12

As far as Asaph is concerned, he thinks that the wicked have no struggles, Psalm 73:4 / Isaiah 58:6; they are healthy and strong, Psalm 73:4 / Job 21:23-26, they don't have any burdens, and they never get ill, Psalm 73:5.
In other words, he felt that the wicked were rewarded equally with the righteous. In fact, he felt that in some ways, the wicked were more blessed than those who were pure in heart.

Because the wicked wear pride as a necklace, Psalm 73:6, that is, they were arrogantly proud. The more proud they get, the more wicked they become, Isaiah 3:16.
They became more violent, callous, and evil, Psalm 73:7-8 / Psalm 17:10, they became scoffers, who spoke with malice, they arrogantly think they are better than others and use language to bring others down, Psalm 73:8.
The wicked use their 'mouths to lay claim to heaven', Psalm 73:9, that is, they speak as if they were in heaven itself, Revelation 13:6. They use their tongues as though they 'possessed the earth', Psalm 73:9, that is, as if they had some kind of authority.
The wicked have others who are just like them, and they 'drink up waters in abundance', Psalm 73:10, that is, they just keep taking and taking and taking, Psalm 75:8 / Isaiah 51:17.
In their arrogance, they ask 'How would God know? Does God know anything?' Psalm 73:11. In other words, the wicked claim that God doesn't see anything; it's as though God were blind. They believed that they could do whatever they liked because God wasn't able to do anything against them.

It's clear that Asaph is extremely frustrated with what is happening concerning the wicked. He feels that a wicked way of life was possibly a good life, Psalm 73:12.
After all, they appear to be getting rewarded by God because their wealth just keeps on growing, Psalm 73:12. Asaph feels that the wicked are actually being rewarded by a God who knows nothing.
The words of these verses portray the nature and life of the wicked who prosper. They are well-fed and have a life without trouble; they go unchecked with their oppressive conduct and unscrupulous dealings.

They have more than one could desire, they speak with arrogance, and because they're arrogant in their speech, people often turn to them for leadership and counsel. They continue to prosper, regardless of their unrighteous behaviour.

'Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. All day long, I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments. If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children. When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! They are like a dream when one awakes; when you arise, Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.' Psalm 73:13-20

We can almost feel the frustration in Asaph's words. He felt that it was a waste of time keeping a pure heart; he felt that it was a waste of time being clean before God, that is, being innocent before God, Psalm 73:13 / Psalm 26:6.
He felt that his life was harder than the wicked because he had to go through afflictions and punishment every morning, Psalm 73:14 / Job 7:18. He could have told God's people how he was feeling, but he didn't want them to get confused with what seemed unfair, Psalm 73:15.
He didn't want them to experience everything he was going through; he didn't want them to feel the way he was feeling. Although he tried to understand why the wicked were prospering and getting away with their evil ways, Psalm 73:16, he couldn't get his head around it.
It troubled him deeply until he entered God's sanctuary, and it was there he came to understand what will eventually happen to the wicked, Psalm 73:17 / Job 15:20-21. It appears that a visit to God's sanctuary has actually put things into perspective for Asaph.
Notice that Asaph said earlier that he felt his feet were on slippery ground, Psalm 73:2, but now he knows that it's actually the wicked's feet who are on slippery ground, Psalm 73:18.
He began by thinking that the wicked had a better way of life because they appeared to be blessed more than he was, but now he knows they are destined for ruin, they will be destroyed and swept away in terrors, Psalm 73:18-19 / Luke 16:19-31.
Asaph now understands that the way the wicked live is actually like a dream, Psalm 73:20. It's as if Asaph himself has woken up to the realities of the wicked way of life. He knows when God arises, Psalm 73:20, that is, awakes, God will deal with the wicked.

'When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward, you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.' Psalm 73:21-28

Asaph now goes on to confess his sins to God, Psalm 73:21. Because he had lost sight of God's justice and the wicked's destiny, he acknowledges he was grieved, embittered, senseless and ignorant, Psalm 73:21-22 / Psalm 7:9.
He says he was a brute beast before God, Psalm 73:22 / Psalm 51:4 / Isaiah 1:7 / Jeremiah 7:30 / Jeremiah 18:10, that is, he acknowledges that he didn't think of eternity; he only thought of the here and now.

After confessing his sins to God, he now acknowledges that He is with God and God is with him, Psalm 73:22. He also says that God will guide him in his life and afterwards, God will take him into glory, Psalm 73:24. In other words, while the wicked come to destruction, Psalm 73:17-19, he will come to glory, 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.
Asaph is now in a better place, mentally and spiritually. He knows where God is, and he knows that he has no one like Him in heaven, Psalm 73:25. His hope is in God, and he knows that the earth has nothing in it which can give him the hope he desires, Psalm 73:25.
He knows his own human weaknesses; therefore, he relies on the strength of God, Psalm 73:26 / Psalm 18:2 / Psalm 61:2, and God will be his portion forever, Psalm 73:26 / Numbers 18:20.
Asaph now fully understands and accepts that those who are far from God, those who are unfaithful to God, will perish, they will be destroyed, Psalm 73:27 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9. He also understands that he's better off being near to God, James 4:4, who is his refuge, Psalm 73:28.
He now wants to proclaim to everyone that God can be trusted; he wants to tell everyone about God's goodness and what he has learned from his visit to God's sanctuary, Psalm 73:28.

CONCLUSION

We can't help but be impressed with the mental and spiritual journey Asaph makes in this psalm. What a difference a visit to God's sanctuary made to him, where he comes to understand life more clearly and allows God to put things into perspective.

Job asked God this very same question, why do the wicked prosper? Job 21:7-9. Jeremiah asked the very same question in Jeremiah 12:1. Maybe, like Asaph, we need to go to God and allow Him to put things into perspective for us. Instead of focusing on what others have got, maybe we should focus on what we have, Ephesians 1:3, and who we've got in our lives, that is, God.
We often take our eyes off God and look at what's happening around us, Matthew 14:30, but God asks us to seek him with everything we've got, Jeremiah 29:13. When we read and study His word, He will help us put things into perspective, Matthew 6:33 / Romans 8:28.

CHAPTER 74

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is a psalm of lament by Asaph. He appears to be lamenting over the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in 586 B.C. Asaph, just as Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations, shows deep sorrow over the loss of the city and the fall of God's people.

HEADING

‘A maskil of Asaph.’

Asaph was the singer and musician during the reign of David and Solomon, 1 Chronicles 15:17-19 / 1 Chronicles 16:5-7 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. 1 Chronicles 25:1 and 2 Chronicles 29:30 tell us that Asaph was a prophet in his musical compositions.

No one really knows what the word ‘maskil’ means; some believe it’s a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.

‘O God, why have you rejected us forever? Why does your anger smoulder against the sheep of your pasture? Remember the nation you purchased long ago, the people of your inheritance, whom you redeemed—Mount Zion, where you dwelt. Turn your steps toward these everlasting ruins, all this destruction the enemy has brought on the sanctuary. Your foes roared in the place where you met with us; they set up their standards as signs. They behaved like men wielding axes to cut through a thicket of trees. They smashed all the carved panelling with their axes and hatchets. They burned your sanctuary to the ground; they defiled the dwelling place of your Name. They said in their hearts, “We will crush them completely!” They burned every place where God was worshipped in the land. We are given no signs from God; no prophets are left, and none of us knows how long this will be. How long will the enemy mock you, God? Will the foe revile your name forever? Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand? Take it from the folds of your garment and destroy them!’ Psalm 74:1-11

Because Jerusalem had been destroyed and Israel had fallen, Asaph begins by asking God, ‘Why has He rejected His people forever?’ Psalm 74:1 / Psalm 44:9 / Psalm 13:1, that is, ‘why is God no longer with them’, Psalm 79:13 / Psalm 95:7.

He also asks God, ‘Why does His anger smoulder against the sheep of His pasture?’ Psalm 74:1. That is, ‘why is God now working against His people?’, Deuteronomy 29:20 / Deuteronomy 32:22 / Jeremiah 15:14.

He asks God to remember the nation He purchased long ago, the people of God’s inheritance, the people He redeemed, Psalm 74:2 / Isaiah 43:3, at Mount Zion, Exodus 12:3 / Exodus 16:1-2 / Exodus 16:9 / Leviticus 4:15 / Numbers 27:17.

He asks God to ‘turn His steps’, Psalm 74:3, that is, to turn and help His people because the sanctuary had been destroyed, Psalm 74:3. The enemy had set up their standards, Psalm 74:4, that is, their military signs.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These verses describe the destruction of the holy temple itself. The conquering enemy soldiers assaulted the sanctuary just like a company of woodsmen chopping down a grove of trees. ‘The interior walls of Solomon’s Temple were panelled with cedar and decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees and flowers.’ It was more than the mere instinct of vandals, however, that motivated all that chopping. 1 Kings 6:21-29 reveals that all that carved work was overlaid with pure gold,’ Exodus 28:11 / Exodus 28:21 / Exodus 28:36 / Exodus 39:6 / Exodus 39:14 / Exodus 39:30 / Zechariah 3:9 / 2 Chronicles 2:14.’

He asks God to defend His sanctuary because those who came were armed; they were like men wielding axes and hatchets, ready to destroy the sanctuary, Psalm 74:5-6 / Exodus 29:10 / Exodus 29:44 / Exodus 33:7 / Leviticus 3:8 / Leviticus 3:13 / Leviticus 10:7 / Leviticus 10:9.

The enemy burned the sanctuary to the ground and defiled God’s dwelling place, Psalm 74:7. They were determined to crush God’s people completely, Psalm 74:8. The total destruction of the temple happened in 586 B.C. at the end of the reign of Zedekiah, 2 Kings 25:9 / 2 Chronicles 36:19.

The enemy burned ‘every place where God was worshipped in the land’, Psalm 74:8. Some translations use the word ‘synagogue’, Psalm 74:8; however, we know that the synagogue didn’t exist until Israel was taken into Babylonian captivity.

This clearly tells us that Israel worshipped God in other places, not just the tabernacle. This probably means that there were places where they could hear God's Word being read out and learn from them at the same time, Deuteronomy 17:9-12 / Deuteronomy 33:10 / Leviticus 10:8-11.

The damage caused by Israel's enemies was more than just physical; they were also spiritual. Asaph says that they no longer see signs and they no longer have any prophets, Psalm 74:9. No wonder, he asks God how long they will be in this spiritual condition, Psalm 74:10.

He asks God how long Israel's enemies will mock God, and revile His Name? Psalm 74:10. He asks God how long it will be before He moves into action and destroys them? Psalm 74:11.

Nebuchadnezzar and his army totally destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and so, Israel had reaped the result of her apostasy, 2 Kings 25:9, and ended up being taken into captivity.

This is his brethren who have been taken into captivity, this was his city which had been destroyed, this was God's dwelling place which had been destroyed. This is why Asaph calls upon God to take His right hand, the hand of power and authority, out of His garment and destroy their captors, Psalm 74:11.

'But God is my King from long ago; he brings salvation on the earth. It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave it as food to the creatures of the desert. It was you who opened up springs and streams; you dried up the ever-flowing rivers. The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon. It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter.' Psalm 74:12-17

Asaph says that God is his King from long ago, Psalm 74:12, and then he thinks about the great wonders that God did in the past in order to gain strength that He would do the same for Israel in the future.

God divided the Red Sea, Psalm 74:13 / Exodus 14:21. He broke the heads of the monsters in the waters, Psalm 74:13 / Job 30:29 / Isaiah 13:22. He crushed the heads of the Leviathan, Psalm 74:14, whose name means 'twisting one'.

Most commentators see the Leviathan as a reference to Egypt, Psalm 89:8-10 / Psalm 104:26 / Job 26:12-13 / Isaiah 27:1 / Isaiah 51:9. He humbled the powers of Egypt, Job 41:1.

He opened springs and torrents of water, Psalm 74:15 / Deuteronomy 21:4 / Exodus 17:6 / Numbers 20:11 / 1 Kings 8:2 / Amos 5:24. He dried up the waters of the Jordan in order that Israel pass into the Promised Land, Psalm 74:15 / Joshua 3:15-16.

Asaph knows that God is all-powerful, and if He is powerful enough to do all these things, Psalm 74:16-17, then He is more than powerful enough to deliver Israel in their time of distress.

'Remember how the enemy has mocked you, LORD, how foolish people have reviled your name. Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts; do not forget the lives of your afflicted people forever. Have regard for your covenant, because haunts of violence fill the dark places of the land. Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace; may the poor and needy praise your name. Rise up, O God, and defend your cause; remember how fools mock you all day long. Do not ignore the clamour of your adversaries, the uproar of your enemies, which rises continually.' Psalm 74:18-23

After speaking about the awesome power of God, Asaph now calls upon God to remember the ways of the ungodly, Psalm 74:18 / Isaiah 36:4-10 / Isaiah 36:13-20 / Isaiah 37:10-13 / Isaiah 37:23, and their blasphemy of His name, Psalm 74:18 / Psalm 14:1.

He called upon God not to allow His defenceless nation to be consumed by those who had no respect for Him, Psalm 74:19. He asks God to protect His people, that is, God's 'dove', Psalm 74:19, from the wild beast. The dove is a name of endearment for one who is loved, Psalm 68:10. He asks God not to forget His people, Psalm 74:19.

Notice he also asks God to 'regard His covenant', Psalm 74:20. Asaph should know it wasn't God who needed reminding of the covenant, it was Israel, they wouldn't be in this mess if they hadn't broken it with idolatry, Deuteronomy 4:13 / Deuteronomy 5:2 / Deuteronomy 26:18-19.

Nevertheless, Asaph asks God to regard His covenant, in order that God would deliver them from the trouble they are in now, Genesis 9:15 / Leviticus 26:42 / Ezekiel 16:60 / Luke 1:72.

He wants God to save them from the haunts of violence in the 'dark places', Psalm 74:20, which could refer to the caves where some of the Israelites were hiding from the Babylonians. Those who were oppressed, the poor and the needy, were obviously victims of the Babylonian onslaught, Psalm 74:21.

Asaph didn't want the righteous to go away with unanswered prayers. And so, the arrogance of those who had reproached God should stir God into action. In the case of Israel's deliverance from captivity, God did take action; He delivered His people from Babylonian captivity, Ezra 1:1-6.

Asaph now asks God to arise, because he is concerned about God's glory; he wants God to rebuke the fools who mock God all day long, Psalm 74:22 / Psalm 3:7. He wants God to arise against his adversaries and enemies, those who were continually trying to destroy His people, Psalm 74:23 / Psalm 137:7.

CONCLUSION

Asaph poured his heart out to God because of what the Babylonians had done, not only to God's people and God's city but also to God's temple. Jerusalem, which once stood in all its splendour, was now in ruins. God 'lived' there in the temple, but this also lay in ruins.

Nebuchadnezzar had come in and totally destroyed it all, along with killing many Jews in the process. The young men were taken into captivity, and the Babylonians raped the young Jewish women.

The prophet Jeremiah saw all of this, and he knew exactly what had happened, but he also recognised that God's own people weren't so innocent; they broke God's laws time and time again, and they became as evil as the false gods they ended up worshipping, and so God had to punish them, 2 Chronicles 36:14-17.

No wonder when we read his lamentations, we find a man who is heartbroken, but amongst all the heartbreak and sorrow, there's a glimmer of hope. He knew that God actually does care about His people, and so he prays that one day, his people could return to their beloved city, Lamentations 3:21-26.

All too often, when we suffer, we think that God doesn't care for us anymore; however, if we learn anything from Asaph and Jeremiah, it's simply this: God really does care. He hasn't forgotten us, even though we may forget Him at times, Isaiah 49:15.

CHAPTER 75

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, Asaph praises God and encourages everyone who is suffering to be patient and wait on God to deliver them from their troubles. He knows that God will deliver them, but only when God decides that this will happen.

HEADING

‘For the director of music. To the tune of “Do Not Destroy.” A psalm of Asaph. A song.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the ‘director of music’ is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
The psalm was a song which was to be directed to the ‘tune of do not destroy’; no one knows what this tune was.
Asaph was the singer and musician during the reign of David and Solomon, 1 Chronicles 15:17-19 / 1 Chronicles 16:5-7 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. 1 Chronicles 25:1 and 2 Chronicles 29:30 tell us that Asaph was a prophet in his musical compositions.

‘We praise you, God, we praise you, for your Name is near; people tell of your wonderful deeds. You say, “I choose the appointed time; it is I who judge with equity. When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.’ Psalm 75:1-3

Despite the troubles Asaph and God’s people were enduring, Asaph begins by emphasising twice, that he and God’s people will praise God, Psalm 75:1. He knows that God’s Name is near, Psalm 75:1 / Exodus 34:14-15 / Isaiah 30:27 / Jeremiah 23:23 / Acts 2:21, that is, he knows that God is present, and they praise God because of His wonderful deeds, Psalm 75:1.
Asaph now thinks of things from God’s perspective. It is God who will choose when to deliver His people from their troubles and when their troubles will come to an end, Psalm 75:2.
It is God who will judge with equity, Psalm 75:2 / Genesis 18:25. This is a lesson we all must learn: God has His own timetable, and we must be patient for Him to do what is right at the time He appoints, Galatians 4:4 / Revelation 6:10.
Asaph compares the earth with a building supported by pillars, Psalm 75:3 / Judges 16:26 / 1 Samuel 2:8 / 1 Timothy 3:15. God declares that when the earth and everyone in quakes, it is Him who holds the pillars firm, Psalm 75:3. In other words, God’s judgments are powerful and they are firmly established, Psalm 107:26 / Job 30:22 / Isaiah 64:7 / Nahum 1:5.
You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates when God will deliver His people from their troubles.

‘To the arrogant I say, ‘Boast no more,’ and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up your horns. Do not lift your horns against heaven; do not speak so defiantly.’” No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt themselves. It is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another. In the hand of the LORD is a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices; he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs.’ Psalm 75:4-8

The wicked people are arrogant and proud, Psalm 75:4 / Psalm 14:1, and God warns those who boast to stop boasting and stop relying on their own strength, Psalm 75:4.
The word 'horn', Psalm 75:4-5, refers to strength and these boastful people were boasting about their own strength, Job 16:15 / Daniel 7:7-8 / Daniel 7:11 / Daniel 7:21 / Daniel 8:5 / Daniel 8:8-9 / Daniel 8:21.
God warns them not to speak defiant words of rebellion against Him, Psalm 75:5. God also warns the boastful, those who rely on their own strength, no matter where they are from, not to exalt themselves, because it is God who judges with justice, Psalm 75:6-7.
It is God who brings down the proud, and it is God who exalts the humble, Psalm 75:7 / Matthew 23:12 / Luke 14:11 / Luke 18:14 / Philippians 2:3-4 / James 4:10 / 1 Peter 5:5-6.
Asaph now uses the metaphor of a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices, Psalm 75:8. This speaks of God's certain judgment, Job 21:20 / Psalm 60:3 / Isaiah 51:17 / Revelation 14:10. God has a 'cup' in His hand for the people to drink, and the wicked will be forced to drink it, Psalm 75:8.
Foaming wine is a wine which has fermented, and the wicked are forced to drink every last bitter drop, Psalm 75:8 / Isaiah 25:6. In other words, the wicked people will suffer all that there is in the justice of God.

'As for me, I will declare this forever; I will sing praise to the God of Jacob, who says, "I will cut off the horns of all the wicked, but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up." Psalm 75:9-10

After speaking about the judgment which awaits those who are wicked, Asaph declares that he will sing praises to God and rejoice in the judgments of God, Psalm 75:9-10 / Psalm 24:6. The righteous will give glory to Him for His protection of the righteous.
God Himself has the last word and declares that He will bring down the proud and the wicked who relied on their own strength. He says that not only will he bring the proud and wicked down, but His judgments will also exalt the strength of the righteous, Psalm 75:10. In His time, God will cut off the powers of the wicked in order to exalt the power of the righteous.

CONCLUSION

Asaph had to learn that God has his own timetable, and as Christians, this is one challenge we all face. Solomon, in his wisdom, reminds us over and over again that there is a time for everything, Ecclesiastes 3:1.
The problem we have as Christians is remembering that God knows best. He knows the exact time we need things, even though we feel like we need things done yesterday.

When we remember that God is good and faithful, we will learn to trust in his timetable more than our own. When we put our faith and trust in God to accept that He knows better, then we can have confidence that all things will work out well for us according to His plan and purpose, Romans 8:28.

CHAPTER 76

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, Asaph praises God for giving Israel a victory over their enemies. Although we can't be certain of the historical background of this psalm, many commentators believe it's referring to the deliverance from the attack of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, during the reign of Hezekiah, 2 Kings 19:35-37 / Isaiah 37:36-38.

HEADING

'For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of Asaph. A song.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
The psalm was a song and was to be used with a stringed instrument. Asaph was the singer and musician during the reign of David and Solomon, 1 Chronicles 15:17-19 / 1 Chronicles 16:5-7 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. 1 Chronicles 25:1 and 2 Chronicles 29:30 tell us that Asaph was a prophet in his musical compositions.

'God is renowned in Judah; in Israel, his name is great. His tent is in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion. There he broke the flashing arrows, the shields and the swords, the weapons of war.' Psalm 76:1-3

Asaph begins by declaring that God is known in Judah and that His name is great in Israel, Psalm 76:1, because He delivered His people, Acts 17:23. His tent is in Salem, which is Jerusalem, Genesis 14:18 / Hebrews 7:1-2, and His dwelling place is in Zion, Psalm 76:2. This is where David built his own public worship place, 2 Samuel 6:17 / Psalm 2:6 / Psalm 9:11 / Psalm 48:12 / Psalm 65:1.
God broke the flashing arrows, shields, Psalm 76:3 / Psalm 5:12 / Psalm 33:20 / Ephesians 6:16, and swords when David conquered Jerusalem. God totally disarmed the enemy, and then David set Jerusalem up as the centre of Israel and brought peace to the city, 2 Samuel 5:6-10. The victory that took place was the work of God, and so, God was Israel's defence.
You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates the victory God gave Israel.

'You are radiant with light, more majestic than mountains rich with game. The valiant lie plundered, they sleep their last sleep; not one of the warriors can lift his hands. At your rebuke, God of Jacob, both horse and chariot lie still. It is you alone who are to be feared. Who can stand before you when you are angry? From heaven you pronounced judgment, and the land feared and was quiet—when you, God, rose up to judge, to save all the afflicted of the land.' Psalm 76:4-9

Asaph describes God as a radiant light, Psalm 76:4 / 1 John 1:5, more majestic than mountains with rich game, Psalm 76:4. In other words, Asaph knew God was more glorious and majestic than these places.
These valiant men came confidently to invade Jerusalem, Psalm 76:5 / Colossians 2:8, but God made them useless by attacking them when they were asleep, Psalm 76:5.
The words, 'sleep their last sleep', Psalm 76:5, refer to the time when the angel of God swept over the army of Sennacherib and brought death to one-hundred and eighty-five thousand men.
When the morning came after all the warriors of Sennacherib had died, none of them could raise their hands in battle against Israel, Psalm 76:5 / Isaiah 37:36. At God's rebuke, both horse and chariot lie still, Psalm 76:6 / Psalm 65:12-13 / Psalm 114:3-7 / Habakkuk 3:8-11.
As a result of God's work through the angel, Asaph tells us that it is God and God alone who should be feared, Psalm 76:7. That is, Israel should fear Sennacherib and his army, but God alone because He is far more powerful.
Not only should God be feared, but He must also be revered because when God is angry, man has no strength to stand against Him and therefore, man should be afraid, Psalm 76:7-8.
God pronounced His judgment from heaven, and the land feared and became quiet, Psalm 76:8. In other words, everything respected God, especially when He is angry.
When God arose to judge, He also saved all those who were afflicted in the land, Psalm 76:9. God has always cared for the poor and needy, and He not only cares for them but He also judges those who bring affliction upon them, Psalm 76:9.
You may notice at the end of verse nine, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates the judgments of God upon the Assyrians.

'Surely your wrath against mankind brings you praise, and the survivors of your wrath are restrained. Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfil them; let all the neighbouring lands bring gifts to the One to be feared. He breaks the spirit of rulers; he is feared by the kings of the earth.' Psalm 76:10-12

Asaph now speaks about how God's wrath against mankind will actually bring about praise for God, Psalm 76:10 / Jeremiah 11:23 / Jeremiah 44:14 / Micah 7:18 / Zephaniah 2:7 / Acts 2:23 / Romans 8:28.
The survivors of God's wrath are restrained, Psalm 76:10, that is, God will clothe Himself with the leftovers of man's wrath against Him and His people, 1 Samuel 17:39 / 1 Samuel 25:13 / Psalm 45:3. No matter how strong man's efforts are against God, He will overcome them, Exodus 9:16 / Isaiah 45:24.
Asaph calls upon the people to make voluntary vows to the Lord, Psalm 76:11, because God delivered them from the Assyrians, but they must also fulfil them, Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 / Psalm 22:25 / Psalm 50:14 / Psalm 56:12 / Psalm 66:13.
He calls upon all the neighbouring lands to bring their gifts to God, Psalm 76:11. This was a way of giving thanks, bringing praise and honour to God for what He has done, Psalm 45:12 / Isaiah 16:1 / Isaiah 18:7 / Isaiah 60:5.
It's God who breaks the spirit of rulers, Psalm 76:12, that is, He humbles them. God should be feared by all the kings of the earth, Psalm 76:12. God and God alone is worthy of all this praise, and everyone should praise Him and give Him the reverence and honour that only He deserves.

CONCLUSION

Because God destroyed the Assyrian army, Asaph encourages everyone to fear the Lord. Fearing the Lord is taught throughout the Scriptures, Psalm 89:7 / Hebrews 12:28-29, but what kind of fear are we speaking about? It's not the

kind of fear the Israelites were experiencing from the Assyrians; it's the kind of fear which brings about godly reverence and awe for God.

As Christians, we don't need to fear God's anger if we are obedient to Him, Ecclesiastes 12:13 / Romans 2:5-9, He loves us and if we love Him, we have nothing to fear from Him, 1 John 4:18.

Godly fear brings us into a loving relationship with Him, Luke 4:8 / Hebrews 12:28. Godly fear leads us to live the kind of lives which pleases Him, Deuteronomy 10:12-13 / James 1:14-15.

The reason many people sin, including Christians, is that they don't take that godly fear seriously. Some don't take God seriously, and as a result, they don't take their sin seriously, Galatians 6:7-8. Having godly fear brings blessings, whereas having no fear of God brings condemnation.

CHAPTER 77

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of Asaph that contrasts times of sorrow with times of song. It begins with a lament but ends with joy and praise. Asaph tells us that if we focus on our troubles, we will just sink into them, but if we focus on God, then we will be lifted up with hope and joy.

HEADING

'For the director of music. For Jeduthun. Of Asaph. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

The psalm was for Jeduthun, who was one of the musicians appointed by David to lead Israel's worship, 1 Chronicles 16:41 / 1 Chronicles 25:1-3. He also mentioned in the headings of Psalm 39 and Psalm 62.

Asaph was the singer and musician during the reign of David and Solomon, 1 Chronicles 15:17-19 / 1 Chronicles 16:5-7 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. 1 Chronicles 25:1 and 2 Chronicles 29:30 tell us that Asaph was a prophet in his musical compositions.

‘I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. I remembered you, God, and I groaned; I meditated, and my spirit grew faint’. Psalm 77:1-3

Asaph begins by crying out to God because of the distress he was going through, and wonders if God has abandoned him, Psalm 77:1 / Psalm 3:4. The good news is that when he sought the Lord, in his distress, Psalm 77:2 / Psalm 50:15, He knows that He heard his cry, Psalm 5:1 / Psalm 17:6.
Asaph stretched out his untiring hands in prayer, Psalm 77:2 / Psalm 143:6, that is, he prayed all night long. He appears to be struggling emotionally, but then he remembered times when he sang in the night, Psalm 77:6. However, at the time of writing this psalm, Asaph was in distress, and he was searching for answers from God, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.
He couldn’t find any comfort because of his distress, Psalm 77:2. In other words, he’s feeling overwhelmed, Jeremiah 31:15. Despite remembering God, he still groaned, he meditated and was getting weaker, Psalm 77:3 / Psalm 119:15 / Psalm 119:23 / Psalm 119:27 / Psalm 119:48 / Psalm 119:78 / Psalm 119:148.
You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates and tries to make sense of how he’s feeling.

‘You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak. I thought about the former days, the years of long ago; I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated, and my spirit asked: “Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favour again? Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he, in anger, withheld his compassion?” Psalm 77:4-9

Because of his distress, Asaph’s eyes couldn’t close, and he was so troubled he couldn’t speak, Psalm 77:4, that is, in his anguish, he earnestly was trying to seek God.
He reminisces back to when he was younger, when he sang songs to God and meditated in his heart, Psalm 77:5-6 / Job 35:10 / Psalm 42:8, about why God doesn’t answer his prayers as he did back then.
His inner being asks if the Lord will ‘reject him forever?’ Psalm 77:7. In other words, he feared the worst; he feared that he wouldn’t ever receive God’s love and mercy ever again, Psalm 77:8-9.
He fears that God has forgotten to show him mercy, and he wonders if God, in His anger, has withheld His compassion, Psalm 77:9 / Psalm 25:6 / Isaiah 16:11 / Isaiah 63:15 / Luke 1:78 / 1 John 3:17. He fears that God has failed in His promise to take care of him in his time of distress.
You may notice at the end of verse nine, some translations have the word ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. As mentioned earlier, it’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates whether God has abandoned him or not.

‘Then I thought, “To this I will appeal: the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand. I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds.” Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. With your mighty arm, you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.’ Psalm 77:10-15

After reflecting upon his own circumstances, Asaph now turns his thoughts toward God and what God has done in the past. Instead of focusing on all the negative things which were happening in his life, he now focuses on the positive things of God.

We don't know if God ever did answer Asaph's prayer, but at this point, he appears to be happy just thinking about all the great things God has done in the past. Instead of focusing on his circumstances, He chose to remember God's past dealings with His people.

He appealed in his mind to remember the years when God stretched out His right hand, Psalm 77:10, that is, when God's power and strength were clearly shown. He is determined to remember the miracles God did and all His works, Psalm 77:11-12, and to meditate and speak about God's mighty deeds, Psalm 77:12.
God's ways are holy, and there is no god as great as Him, Psalm 77:13. God is the One who performs miracles and clearly displayed His power among the peoples, Psalm 77:14 / Exodus 6:6 / Exodus 15:16 / Psalm 10:15.
It was God who redeemed His people time and time again, Psalm 77:15 / Isaiah 43:3. They were descendants of Jacob and Joseph, Psalm 77:15 / Genesis 47:29-31 / Genesis 50:24-25.
This metaphor is significant in reference to salvational contexts in the New Testament. By a strong arm, God had physically redeemed His people out of Egyptian captivity, Exodus 15:16 / Isaiah 63:12. They were redeemed by God because they couldn't redeem themselves.
You may notice at the end of verse fifteen that some translations have the word 'selah'; although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates how God worked in and through His people's lives in the past.

'The waters saw you, God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed. The clouds poured down water, the heavens resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth. Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked. Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.' Psalm 77:16-20

Asaph now speaks of the sovereignty of God over the natural world, that is, the waters and the clouds, Psalm 77:16-17. The waters are probably a reference to the time when God displayed His power over the Red Sea. The sea was afraid and fled from God, Habakkuk 3:10-11 / Revelation 20:11.
Most commentators aren't sure what the clouds actually refer to, but Asaph describes the rain, thunder and lightning, Psalm 77:17-18, which all describe the power of God, Exodus 19:16 / Job 36:26-33 / Job 37:1-5 / Psalm 29:1-11.
The arrows flashing back and forth, Psalm 77:17, may be referring to the lightning strikes which come during times of thunder, Psalms 18:14 / Psalm 144:6.
God's presence was so powerful that even the earth trembled and quaked, Psalm 77:18 / Psalm 29:1-11. God's power led Israel safely through the Red Sea, Psalm 77:19. In other words, God cleared the path for them to go through.
Even though there were no footprints, Psalm 77:19, Israel knew that it was God who led the way; they knew that God was using Moses and Aaron to lead them through, Psalm 77:20 / Exodus 13:17-14:31.

CONCLUSION

When Asaph focused on himself, his life was in a dark place, and he had no reason to hope for a better future. However, when he focused on God and what God had done in the past, he remembered all the great things God had done for His people in the past, and he had hope for a better future.

When we find ourselves in times of distress, and there appears to be no relief from our suffering, we will be blessed to remember what God has done in the past, not only for us but for other Christians.

When we meditate upon God's Word and read how Jesus voluntarily died for us in order that we can be saved, surely that alone should help put our suffering into perspective. We should remember what Christ did for us every time we partake of the Lord's Supper, Luke 22:19 / 1 Corinthians 11:24.
It's easy to focus so much on our suffering that we just want to give up, but when we remember that we were once dead in our sins, but are now made alive in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:1-10, when we remember that Christ is coming back, 1 Corinthians 11:26, then we will begin to focus again and not give up, 1 Corinthians 15:57.

CHAPTER 78

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is a psalm of Asaph, and he begins by telling us about the history of Israel being delivered from the Egyptians up to the point in history where the first kings were appointed over the nation. This psalm is the second-longest psalm we find within the book, Psalm 119, which is longer, but this psalm is the longest of the historical psalms.

HEADING

'A maskil of Asaph'.

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

No one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.
Asaph was the singer and musician during the reign of David and Solomon, 1 Chronicles 15:17-19 / 1 Chronicles 16:5-7 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. 1 Chronicles 25:1 and 2 Chronicles 29:30 tell us that Asaph was a prophet in his musical compositions.

'My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded

our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.' Psalm 78:1-8

In order to prevent apostasy in the future, Asaph calls upon the fathers of Israel to listen to his teaching and word, Psalm 78:1 / Psalm 5:1. He is going to speak to them in the form of a parable, and the parable will give them an example of the fathers who didn't teach their children, Psalm 78:2-3.

The 'hidden things' Psalm 78:2, or 'dark sayings' as the KJV renders it, Psalm 49:4, imply that the teaching was going to be direct, Matthew 13:34-35. Asaph is speaking about the wondrous works and commandments of God, Psalm 78:3-4.

In the Old Testament, God 'established a law,' Psalm 78:5, which says that the testimonies should be preserved and taught to their children and their children's children, Psalm 78:5-6 / Exodus 25:16 / Exodus 25:21 / Deuteronomy 4:9 / Deuteronomy 6:7 / Deuteronomy 11:19-19 / Psalm 71:18.

Israel's ancestors were 'stubborn and rebellious', Psalm 78:8, especially in the wilderness, as they passed through it to the Promised Land, Exodus 32:7-9 / Exodus 33:3 / Exodus 34:9 / Acts 7:51-53.

One difference between Israel and the nations that surrounded them was the fact that Israel's law originated with God, while the laws of the surrounding nations originated in their own minds.

The problem was that Israel started to move away from God's laws and began to embrace the laws of those surrounding nations. The result of this was apostasy; they left God and forsook His commands, and they became so much like the surrounding nations that people couldn't tell the difference between God's people and anyone else.

'The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows, turned back on the day of battle; they did not keep God's covenant and refused to live by his law. They forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them. He did miracles in the sight of their ancestors in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan. He divided the sea and led them through; he made the water stand up like a wall. He guided them with the cloud by day and with light from the fire all night. He split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.' Psalm 78:9-16

Asaph now speaks about Ephraim, Psalm 78:9, who was the younger of the two sons of Joseph, Genesis 48:8-20. He, as his brother Manasseh, was chosen to be the father of two tribes of Israel, Isaiah 7:2 / Isaiah 7:5 / Isaiah 7:8-9 / Isaiah 7:17 / Isaiah 11:13 / Isaiah 28:1. It was Ephraim who eventually led the northern kingdom into apostasy, which eventually led to the northern tribes being taken into exile by the Assyrians.

Asaph tells us that they went into exile because they cowardly turned their backs in battle and they didn't keep the covenant of God, Psalm 78:9-10 / Deuteronomy 4:13 / Deuteronomy 4:23 / Deuteronomy 17:2.

They also refused to be obedient to the law of God, and they forgot the wonders of God's work throughout their history, Psalm 78:11. Asaph also tells us they forgot all about the miraculous plagues of God that He brought on Egypt, Psalm 78:12 / Exodus 5:1-12:31.

They forgot all about how God divided the Red Sea in order to free Israel from Egyptian captivity, Psalm 78:13 / Exodus 14:15-22. They forgot all about how God led them with a cloud and fire, Psalm 78:14, while they were in the wilderness, Exodus 13:21-22.

They forgot all about how God gave them water to drink from a rock, Psalm 78:16 / Exodus 17:1-6 / Numbers 20:7-11. 1 Corinthians 10:4 tells us that the Rock was Christ Himself.

'But they continued to sin against him, rebelling in the wilderness against the Most High. They willfully put God to the test by demanding the food they craved. They spoke against God; they said, "Can God really spread a table in the wilderness? True, he struck the rock, and water gushed out, streams flowed abundantly, but can he also give us bread? Can he supply meat for his people?" When the LORD heard them, he was furious; his fire broke out against Jacob, and his wrath rose against Israel, for they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance. Yet he gave a

command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. Human beings ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat. He let loose the east wind from the heavens and by his power made the south wind blow. He rained meat down on them like dust, birds like sand on the seashore. He made them come down inside their camp, all around their tents. They ate till they were gorged—he had given them what they craved. But before they turned from what they craved, even while the food was still in their mouths, God's anger rose against them; he put to death the sturdiest among them, cutting down the young men of Israel. In spite of all this, they kept on sinning; in spite of his wonders, they did not believe. So he ended their days in futility and their years in terror. Whenever God slew them, they would seek him; they eagerly turned to him again. They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer. But then they would flatter him with their mouths, lying to him with their tongues; their hearts were not loyal to him, they were not faithful to his covenant. Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time, he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.' Psalm 78:17-39

Asaph reminds them of how God was very patient with Israel from the time they left Egypt until they got to the Promised Land, Psalm 78:17. It was during this time that they really tested God's patience, Exodus 16:2. It was during this time they moaned and spoke against God about their food, Psalm 78:18-20 / Numbers 11:4.

God heard them moaning and became furious with them, and was ready to unleash His wrath upon them, Psalm 78:21-22 / Numbers 11:1 / Numbers 11:10. However, God, in His patience, heard them moaning but still supplied manna and quail, Psalm 78:23-24 / Exodus 16:4-5 / Exodus 16:14 / Exodus 16:31 / Numbers 11:7-9 / Numbers 11:31-32 / John 6:31.

Notice Asaph calls the bread, 'the bread of angels', Psalm 78:25. Remember, angels are spiritual beings, so they don't eat bread as we do. He's saying that the bread miraculously came from heaven. The word 'angels' can also mean 'strong or mighty', and it can be applied in general to people, Judges 5:22 / Lamentations 1:15 / Job 24:22 / Jeremiah 46:15.

Just as God miraculously supplied the quail, He miraculously drove them away by causing an east wind to blow them into the sea, Psalm 78:26 / Numbers 11:31. There was so much meat, it was like the sand on the seashore, Psalm 78:27, that is, there was an abundance of food for Israel to eat, Psalm 78:28-29 / Genesis 22:17 / Genesis 32:12 / Genesis 41:49 / Joshua 11:4 / 1 Samuel 13:5 / Revelation 20:8.

Israel was still not satisfied, and so God's anger rose against them, Psalm 78:30-31 / Numbers 11:33. Despite several Israelites being killed by God, despite all the wondrous deeds God had done among them, they continued to sin, and they refused to believe, Psalm 78:31-32 / Psalm 78:22-23 / John 12:37.

Israel had so many trials as a result of their unbelief throughout the forty years of wilderness wanderings that the people referred to the time in the wilderness as 'years of terror', Psalm 78:33.

It appears that every time God struck out against them, they would turn back to God, but after a while, they would turn away from Him again, Psalm 78:34. However, Israel remembered that God is their Rock, Psalm 78:35 / Deuteronomy 32:4 / Deuteronomy 32:15 / Deuteronomy 32:31 / Psalm 18:2.

When they did remember that God was their Rock, it appears to help them think about their security and how they can only really trust God and not themselves. They also remembered that God Most High was their Redeemer, Psalm 78:35 / Psalm 25:22 / Job 5:20 / Isaiah 41:14 / Isaiah 43:14 / Isaiah 44:6 / Isaiah 44:24 / Isaiah 47:4 / Isaiah 59:20. They remembered that it was God who delivered them from Egyptian bondage and gave them their freedom. Despite remembering who God was and what He had done for them, they still tried to flatter God, and they lied to God, Psalm 78:36.

Asaph tells us that Israel's heart wasn't loyal to God; they weren't faithful to His covenant, Psalm 78:37. This tells us that Israel was caught up in a cycle of sin, as God had to discipline them over and over again.

Every time God showed them mercy and forgave their sins, they would obey for a little while and then turn their back on Him again, Psalm 78:38. This tells us that when Israel confessed their sins and were repentant of their sins, they weren't sincere; they were expressing worldly sorrow, 2 Corinthians 7:10.

God knew that Israel was composed of men whose lives were but a breath of existence on earth, Psalm 78:39, and so, because of this, He had compassion on them nationally, because individual generations came and went.
He didn't hold the nation of Israel responsible for the rebellion of any one generation that went into apostasy. Though the children reaped the consequences of their sinful fathers, each generation of the children was responsible for itself, Ezekiel 18:20.

'How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the wasteland! Again and again, they put God to the test; they vexed the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember his power—the day he redeemed them from the oppressor, the day he displayed his signs in Egypt, his wonders in the region of Zoan. He turned their river into blood; they could not drink from their streams. He sent swarms of flies that devoured them, and frogs that devastated them. He gave their crops to the grasshopper, their produce to the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail and their sycamore-figs with sleet. He gave over their cattle to the hail, their livestock to bolts of lightning. He unleashed against them his hot anger, his wrath, indignation, and hostility—a band of destroying angels. He prepared a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death but gave them over to the plague. He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt, the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham. But he brought his people out like a flock; he led them like sheep through the wilderness. He guided them safely, so they were unafraid; but the sea engulfed their enemies.' Psalm 78:40-53

Israel, over and over again, rebelled against God; they grieved Him, they tested Him, and they vexed Him when they were in the wilderness, Psalm 78:40-41. They totally forgot about how God displayed His miraculous power in bringing them out of Egypt, Psalm 78:42-43.
They should have learned that God is all-powerful; they should have learned that God was the One who protected them. They should have learned that God is Who He claimed to be through the wonders He did in Zoan, Psalm 78:43 / Psalm 78:12.
In Egypt, God turned the water into blood, Psalm 78:44 / Exodus 7:20. God sent swarms of flies, Psalm 78:45 / Exodus 8:24, and sent frogs, Psalm 78:45 / Exodus 8:6.
God sent grasshoppers to destroy the crops, Psalm 78:46 / Exodus 10:12-14, and locusts to destroy the produce, Psalm 78:46 / Exodus 10:1-20 / 1 Kings 8:37 / 2 Chronicles 6:28 / Isaiah 33:4 / Joel 1:4 / Joel 2:25. God sent hail to destroy the vines, Psalm 78:47 / Exodus 9:22-26, and cattle with lightning, Psalm 78:48 / Exodus 9:22-25.
Notice that God sent 'a band of destroying angels', Psalm 78:49, or 'evil angels' or 'destroying angels' as some translations render it. Many commentators believe this is referring to the killing of the firstborn; however, there is a problem with this interpretation.
Poole, in his commentary, says the following.

'By sending evil angels, the sending, or the operation or effects of evil angels, or of the angels or messengers of evil things, either of the angels whom God employed in producing these plagues, or of Moses and Aaron, who were to the Egyptians messengers of evil, and by whom these judgments were sent to and inflicted upon them.'

I personally believe what Poole says, that this is a reference to Moses and Arron being messengers of God. It doesn't relate to the killing of the firstborn for three reasons.

1. In the context of the psalm, Asaph is still speaking about the plagues, not the killing of the firstborn.

2. Asaph himself tells us that 'He', that is God, 'struck down all the firstborn of Egypt', in the very next verse, Psalm 78:50.
3. The Exodus account clearly tells us that it was God Himself who would go through and went through Egypt, killing the firstborn, not an angel or a band of angels, Exodus 11:4-5 / Exodus 12:29-30.
The 'tents of Ham', Psalm 78:51, is the dwelling place of Ham, which were located in Egypt, Genesis 10:6 / Psalm 105:23 / Psalm 105:27 / Psalm 106:22. God brought His people out of Egypt like a flock, Psalm 78:52, meaning God was their shepherd.

God protected them, He led them and provided for them, Psalm 78:52 / Psalm 23:1-2. God guided them safely, and they weren't afraid, despite the sea engulfing the Egyptians, Psalm 78:53 / Exodus 14:27-28 / Exodus 15:10.
Asaph is telling the fathers that Israel had no excuse for not keeping their faith in God. They knew God existed, they knew all the miraculous wonders He performed in Egypt, and they knew God was working directly in their lives.

'And so he brought them to the border of his holy land, to the hill country his right hand had taken. He drove out nations before them and allotted their lands to them as an inheritance; he settled the tribes of Israel in their homes. But they put God to the test and rebelled against the Most High; they did not keep his statutes. Like their ancestors, they were disloyal and faithless, as unreliable as a faulty bow. They angered him with their high places; they aroused his jealousy with their idols. When God heard them, he was furious; he rejected Israel completely. He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent he had set up among humans. He sent the ark of his might into captivity, his splendour into the hands of the enemy. He gave his people over to the sword; he was furious with his inheritance. Fire consumed their young men, and their young women had no wedding songs; their priests were put to the sword, and their widows could not weep.' Psalm 78:54-64

Asaph tells the fathers that God brought their ancestors to His holy border, Psalm 78:54. that is, the border of the Promised Land. God also drove out the many Canaanite nations before them, and He allotted their lands as an inheritance, Psalm 78:55 / Joshua 13:7 / Joshua 18 / Joshua 19.
It would have been impossible for Israel to secure the land if God hadn't worked through the Israelite soldiers. After they settled in the Promised Land, Israel's cycle of sin continued; they tested God, rebelled against Him, and didn't keep His statutes, Psalm 78:56 / Judges 2:10-13. They were disloyal, faithless, and as unreliable as a faulty bow, Psalm 78:57 / Hosea 7:16.
Their idolatrous actions made God angry and jealous; they worshipped idols in the high places, Psalm 78:58 / Leviticus 26:30 / 1 Kings 3:2 / 1 Kings 12:31-32 / 2 Kings 17:32 / 2 Chronicles 33:17.
God was furious and rejected Israel completely, Psalm 78:59. As a result of their idolatry, God abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh, Psalm 78:60. They committed spiritual adultery by giving honour to other gods, Psalm 78:60, which they had created in their own image.
It was God who sent 'the ark of his might into captivity', Psalm 78:61. This is referring to the time when the Philistines overran the tabernacle, killed the priests, and captured the ark of the covenant, 1 Samuel 4:3-11.
For this reason, God rejected them and gave them up for captivity, Psalm 78:61 / 1 Samuel 15:23 / Hosea 4:6. When the ark was taken, thirty thousand of God's people died by the sword, Psalm 78:62 / 1 Samuel 4:10-22. The ark represented the presence of God among His people, and so when the ark was removed, God's presence was removed from among them, 1 Samuel 4:20-22.
Their young women had no wedding songs, Psalm 78:63 / Jeremiah 7:34 / Jeremiah 16:9 / Jeremiah 25:10, that is, there were no marriage celebrations, because the men were at war, Isaiah 4:1 / Jeremiah 31:22.
The priests were put to the sword, Psalm 78:64; that is, they were killed in the war, 1 Samuel 4:11. Their widows didn't weep, Psalm 78:64, that is, they couldn't publicly mourn for their husbands who had been killed in the war because it was too dangerous to do so, Job 27:15.

'Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, as a warrior wakes from the stupor of wine. He beat back his enemies; he put them to everlasting shame. Then he rejected the tents of Joseph; he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loved. He built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that he established forever. He chose David, his servant, and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep, he brought him to be the shepherd of his people, Jacob, of Israel, his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skilful hands he led them.' Psalm 78:65-72

Asaph tells us that the Lord awoke as from a sleep, Psalm 78:65-66. This probably refers to the time of David's victories, 1 Samuel 5, and Solomon's peace. This was a time when God intervened in order to spare Israel and bring them to their greatest days of glory during the reign of Solomon.

It was during this time that he rejected the tents of Joseph and didn't choose the tribe of Ephraim, Psalm 78:67, but chose the tribe of Judah, Psalm 78:68. He chose David of the tribe of Judah as ruler and king.
He chose a place within the limits of Judah, Psalm 78:69, that is, Mount Zion, as the place where His worship was to be celebrated, which fulfilled the prophecy of Jacob concerning Judah, Genesis 49:8-10.
God chose David, his servant, Psalm 78:70 / 1 Samuel 16:11 / 2 Samuel 7:8, the shepherd boy who would shepherd Jacob's people and Israel His inheritance, Psalm 78:71.
He would shepherd them with integrity and lead them skilfully, Psalm 78:71 / Psalm 137:5 / Psalm 144:1. David truly was a man after God's own heart, 1 Samuel 13:14 / Acts 13:22.

CONCLUSION

Within Asaph's talk to the fathers, he spoke about 'a band of destroying angels', Psalm 78:49, which many people believe refers to them killing the firstborn of Egypt. They believe that these 'destroying angels' are also called 'angels of death'.
It may come as a surprise to some that there is no such angel mentioned in the Scriptures, and the Scriptures nowhere describe any of God's angels as an 'angel of death' or 'the death angel.'

There are a few Bible references which people use to back up their claim that there is 'an angel of death'. The main example given for proof of an 'angel of death' is found in Exodus when the final plague came upon Egypt, where the firstborn sons of the Egyptians would die, Exodus 11:4-5 / Exodus 12:29.
After a careful reading of these passages, you will notice there is no mention of any angel, never mind any mention of an 'angel of death', and if you read them carefully, you can't miss the fact that it's God Himself who carries out this judgement. The text says, 'I (God) will go out', 'The Lord Stuck down'.

Another example that people use to claim that the 'angel of death' exists is found in 2 Kings 19:35. Again, we don't need to be a Bible scholar to read that this text clearly tells us, 'the angel of the Lord' carried out this act, but notice, there is no mention of the phrase, 'angel of death'.
Another example that people use to claim that the 'angel of death' exists is found in 2 Samuel 24:15-16. As with the other text, we see here that it is 'the angel of the LORD' which causes all these deaths, but nowhere is this angel ever called 'the angel of death'.
If we're going to use 'phrases', let's use Biblical phrases, not phrases which are completely misleading and unscriptural. Someone once said, 'Let's call Bible things by Bible names.'

CHAPTER 79

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm of Asaph, he appears to be lamenting over the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and his army in 586 B.C. 2 Kings 25 / 2 Chronicles 36:11-21 / Jeremiah 39:1-14 / Jeremiah 52.

HEADING

‘A psalm of Asaph.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

Most commentators agree that the Asaph mentioned here is another Asaph. This Asaph was probably a descendant of the earlier Asaph who worked during the reign of Josiah, 2 Chronicles 35:15.

‘O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple, they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble. They have left the dead bodies of your servants as food for the birds of the sky, the flesh of your own people for the animals of the wild. They have poured out blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there is no one to bury the dead. We are objects of contempt to our neighbours, of scorn and derision to those around us.’ Psalm 79:1-4

Asaph begins by speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem. The Babylonian army had totally destroyed Judah and Jerusalem, 2 Chronicles 36:17-21 / Psalm 2:1 / Psalm 2:8 / Psalm 78:55.
The army defiled God’s temple, and Jerusalem was in ruins, Psalm 79:1 / 2 Chronicles 36:19, and there were dead bodies all over the place, Psalm 79:2. Their bodies were left as food for the birds and wild animals because there was no one around to bury them, and there was blood flowing everywhere, Psalm 79:3 / 2 Chronicles 36:17-18 / Psalm 74:5-7.
As a result of the fall, Israel’s surrounding neighbours treated them with contempt, Psalm 79:4 / Psalm 44:13, they were objects of their scorn and derision, Psalm 79:4. The picture Asaph paints here is deplorable; the Babylonian army took no time to bury dead bodies.
They destroyed the city, tore down the walls of the city, and burned the temple, carrying away all the bronze, silver, and gold of both the king’s house and temple. It was a total devastation of both city and people, 2 Kings 25 / 2 Chronicles 36:11-21 / Jeremiah 39:1-14 / Jeremiah 52.

‘How long, LORD? Will you be angry forever? How long will your jealousy burn like fire? Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name; for they have devoured Jacob and devastated his homeland. Do not hold against us the sins of past generations; may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need. Help us, God, our Saviour, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name’s sake. Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?” Before our eyes, make known among the nations that you avenge the outpoured blood of your servants. May the groans of the prisoners come before you; with your strong arm, preserve those condemned to die. Pay back into the laps of our neighbours seven times the contempt they have hurled at you, Lord. Then we, your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever; from generation to generation we will proclaim your praise.’ Psalm 79:5-13

After reflecting upon all the destruction, it’s no wonder that Asaph asks God a series of questions. It’s interesting to note he doesn’t ask God why they are suffering, but how long the suffering will go on, Psalm 79:5 / Psalm 74:1 / Psalm 74:10 / Psalm 77:7-9.
He asks God, ‘Will He be angry forever?’ Psalm 79:5. The answer to that question would be ‘no’, God will eventually deliver them. He also asks God, ‘How long will His jealousy burn like fire?’ Psalm 79:5 / Psalm 78:58.

He's asking if God's fire will continually burn like fire; the answer to that question is 'no', God will deliver them, Isaiah 13 / Jeremiah 25:12 / Jeremiah 50-51.

Although Asaph didn't know the answer to these questions, he asks God to bring about the judgment against the Babylonians, Psalm 79:6, which He fulfilled by raising up the Medes and Persians. Babylon devoured Jacob and was in turn devoured, Psalm 79:7 / Daniel 5:31 / Daniel 2:39.

The Babylonian Empire was eventually overthrown by the Medo-Persian Empire in 538 B.C. The king of the Medo-Persian Empire then allowed the Jews to return and rebuild both the city and temple in Jerusalem, Ezra 1-10 / Nehemiah 1-13. Asaph knew that Israel couldn't deny their sinfulness, and he knew that repentance and forgiveness were necessary on the part of the remnant.

He knew that repentance was necessary before all that he requested concerning the judgment of the enemies of Israel could be realised, Exodus 20:5 / Exodus 34:7 / Leviticus 20:5 / Leviticus 26:39-40 / Numbers 14:18 / Numbers 14:33 / Romans 5:12.

He pleads that God's mercy will come quickly, Psalm 79:8, that is, he wants God to intervene as soon as possible because they are in desperate need. It appears that the only thing which will bring Israel to humbly bow down to God is the destruction of their city, their temple, and their people.

He asks God their Saviour to help them for the glory of God's Name, in other words, he asks that God's Name be honoured through delivering them from the hand of the Babylonians, Daniel 9:19 / Matthew 6:9 / Matthew 6:13 / John 12:28.

He also asks God to forgive them their sins for God's Name's sake, Psalm 79:9 / Exodus 30:15 / Exodus 32:30 / Leviticus 4:20 / Leviticus 5:26 / Leviticus 16:6 / Leviticus 16:11 / Leviticus 16:24 / Ezekiel 45:20 / Daniel 9:24.

At the time of this prayer, the temple was destroyed, and so, there was no place to offer their sacrifices, and so, Asaph asks God to forgive them, even though they couldn't sacrifice any animals, Genesis 22:8-14.

The nations around ask the question, 'Where is their God?' Psalm 79:10, and then he goes on to ask God to silence the nations and demonstrate His presence by acting as the avenger of blood on behalf of His people, Psalm 79:10 / Numbers 35:16-21.

Israel was prisoners in Babylon, and he asks God to hear their groans and intervene on their behalf before they are sentenced to die, Psalm 79:11. Just as they groaned to God whilst prisoners in Egypt, God heard their groans when they asked Him to intervene, Exodus 2:24 / Exodus 6:5.

Israel's neighbours had shown contempt towards God, and so, Asaph asks God to pay them back sevenfold, Psalm 79:12. In other words, he wants God to deal with the Babylonians seven times worse than they treated Israel, Genesis 4:15 / Genesis 4:24 / Proverbs 6:31 / Isaiah 30:26 / Matthew 18:21-22 / Luke 17:4.

Asaph, after asking God to deliver His people from the hands of the Babylonians, ends by demonstrating great faith in God. He completely trusts that God is their shepherd and they are His sheep, Psalm 79:13. He knows when God intervene to help His people, they will praise Him from one generation to the next, Psalm 79:13.

CONCLUSION

In this psalm, Asaph wrote about the horrors which took place when the Babylonians destroyed the city and the temple and took many of God's people into captivity. God used the Babylonians to teach Israel a great lesson because they disobeyed the Lord and served other gods.

After delivering them from Egypt, God was very clear with them: if they obeyed Him, then they would be blessed; however, if they disobeyed Him, then God would curse them, part of which included a nation which God would bring to rule over them, Deuteronomy 28:36.

It didn't take long for Israel to begin to disobey God, and it didn't take long for Israel to get into a cycle of sin, Judges 21:25 and Israel very quickly got involved in idolatry, 2 Kings 21:3-7.

Because they disobeyed God and began to worship idols, God raised up the Babylonians to take them into captivity for seventy years, Jeremiah 29:10. This happened in three waves.

1. In 605 BC, the Babylonians first gained power in Judah, 2 Kings 24:1.

Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, captured it, and took some of God's people captive to Babylon, Daniel 1:1-7.

2. After Judah rebelled against the Babylonians in 597 BC, Jerusalem was conquered a second time by the army of Nebuchadnezzar.

This time, over ten thousand skilled men were taken as captives to Babylon, 2 Kings 24:10-17.

3. In the year 586 BC, another Judean rebellion was crushed by Nebuchadnezzar.

This time, he set fire to the city and destroyed the temple. The remaining Judeans were taken into exile to Babylon, 2 Kings 25:1-21.

The good news is that the Jews learned their lesson whilst in Babylonian captivity for seventy years; they never again committed idolatry after they were delivered.

CHAPTER 80

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of lament where Asaph laments over some kind of trouble that God's people were facing because of their sins. In the psalm, Asaph is assured that God will once again return and help His people as He has done in the past.

HEADING

'For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lilies of the Covenant." Of Asaph. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
It was a covenant song to be sung to the tune of Lilies. A lily was probably some kind of musical instrument which looked like or was shaped like a lily. Or it may refer to the general beauty of the composition. The phrase may refer to the general beauty of the composition, to the tune, or even to a six-stringed instrument known as the Shoshannim.

Most commentators agree that the Asaph mentioned here is another Asaph. This Asaph was probably a descendant of the earlier Asaph who worked during the reign of Josiah, 2 Chronicles 35:15.

'Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us. Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. How long, LORD God Almighty, will your anger smoulder against the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful. You have made us an object of derision to our neighbours, and our enemies mock us. Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.' Psalm 80:1-7

Asaph begins by asking God to hear His people, Psalm 80:1. He acknowledges that God is the Shepherd of Israel who leads Joseph, Psalm 80:1, that is, His people, like a flock, Psalm 80:1 / Genesis 49:24 / Psalm 23 / Isaiah 40:11.
The name Joseph often represents all of Israel, Ezekiel 37:16 / Ezekiel 37:19 / Amos 5:6 / Amos 5:15 / Amos 6:6 / Zechariah 10:6 / Psalm 81:5 / Obadiah 1:18.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

1. 'Thou leadest Joseph like a flock' was a common reference to God as the leader of all Israel. 2. This came about because of the vital part Joseph had in preserving the life of the nation from the famine and for his favourable location of Israel in the Nile Delta. 3. Ephraim and Manasseh seem to be mentioned here because Joseph, their father, had been referred to in the previous verse, and it was natural in speaking of the people to refer to his sons.' Benjamin was mentioned because he was the brother of Joseph, and all three of these constituted the whole Rachel branch of the Twelve Tribes.'

God sits enthroned between the cherubim, Psalm 80:1, which is a reference to the ark of the covenant. Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh, Psalm 80:2, were all grouped around the tabernacle and moved whenever the tabernacle was moved, Numbers 2:18-24 / Numbers 10:22-24.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'The two half-tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh represented northern Israel, and the tribe of Benjamin represented southern Israel, where they remained faithful to the house of David. How beautifully all of this fits! God is the 'Shepherd of Israel,' who leads Joseph like a flock, not merely part of Joseph, standing for Israel, but all Israel, as represented by the three descendants of Jacob through Rachel.'

Asaph asks God to awaken His might, to come and save His people, Psalm 80:2. Asaph asks God to act now and display His strength so that He can deliver His people once again.
He asks God to restore His people, and show them His favour, that is, make His face shine upon them, Psalm 80:3 / Numbers 6:24-26. In other words, he wants the glory of God to shine on His people.
Asaph asks the LORD Almighty how long He will be angry against the prayers of His people? Psalm 80:4. This is the prayer of a man who is just pouring their heart out to God. The people were in prayer, but Asaph was asking for answers to their prayers, Psalm 80:4.
When Asaph speaks about the feeding of bread of tears and drinking tears by the bowlful, Psalm 80:5, he's expressing the great sorrow that God's people were going through, Psalm 42:3.

Israel's enemies were making a laughing stock out of Israel, because they were victorious in a battle with Israel, Psalm 80:6, whereas before Israel was usually victorious when God was with them. Asaph, once again, pleads with God to restore His people, show favour to them and save them from their enemies, Psalm 80:7.

'You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. Its branches reached as far as the Sea, its shoots as far as the River. Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes? Boars from the forest ravage it, and insects from the fields feed on it.' Psalm 80:8-13

Notice Asaph pictures Israel as the vine, Psalm 80:8 / Deuteronomy 32:32-33 / Isaiah 5:1-7 / Isaiah 27:2-6 / Jeremiah 2:21 / Jeremiah 12:10 / Ezekiel 17:5-10 / Hosea 10:1 / Joel 1:7 / Matthew 20:1 / Matthew 21:33 / Mark 12:1, whom God delivered out of Egypt, Psalm 80:8.

Israel was God's vine, and it was God who planted them in Canaan, Psalm 80:8. It was God who prepared the ground for Israel to be planted there, Israel planted their roots in Canaan and filled the land, Psalm 80:9. They grew as big as the mountains and as big as the mighty cedars, Psalm 80:10.

Under David and Solomon's reign, Israel reached as far as the Sea, Psalm 80:11, that is, the Mediterranean Sea, and it reached the River, Psalm 80:11, that is, the Euphrates River. This was the fulfilment of God's promise to them, Exodus 23:31 / Deuteronomy 11:24 / 1 Kings 4:21.

Asaph asks God why He has broken its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes? Psalm 80:12. He appears to acknowledge that it was God who had broken down the walls, that is, God was no longer their protection. It was God who allowed Israel to be plundered by their enemies, Psalm 80:13.

Asaph wants God to return to make Israel strong again so that they can defend themselves against their enemies. Israel's enemies are described as wild boars who came in and ravaged the land, Psalm 80:13.

Although the N.I.V. uses the word 'insects', Psalm 80:13, the word should be 'wild beasts', and refers to animals such as lions and wolves, Psalm 50:11 / Isaiah 66:11. Asaph describes their enemies as wild and out of control.

'Return to us, God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see! Watch over this vine, the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised up for yourself. Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire; at your rebuke, your people perish. Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself. Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. Restore us, LORD God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.' Psalm 80:14-19

Once again, Asaph pleads with God to return to help His people, Psalm 80:14. He asks God Almighty to look and see what's happening to His people, Psalm 80:14 / Jeremiah 14:8. It was God who planted the vine, Psalm 80:15, that is Israel, and it was God who raised them up, Psalm 80:15 / Psalm 80:8.

Notice Asaph acknowledges that Israel was cut down and burned at God's rebuke, Psalm 80:16. It was God who was rebuking His people, and it was God who was allowing His people to perish, Psalm 80:16. Israel is in a desperate place, and so Asaph asks God to rest His hand on the man at His right, Psalm 80:17, that is, he wants God to be with them and bless them.

The reference to the 'son of man', Psalm 80:17, who is at God's right-hand side, is probably a reference to Christ, Ephesians 1:20-23 / Hebrews 8:1. With the strength of the Son of man, God's people would once again be faithful to Him, they would be revived, Psalm 80:18, and would call upon God's Name, Psalm 80:18.

Asaph ends his psalm by asking God to restore His people, for the third time. He asks LORD God Almighty, Psalm 80:19, that is, the God of Hosts, to show favour to His people and save them from their enemies, Psalm 80:19.

CONCLUSION

Asaph reminded us that Israel was God's vine, whom He brought out of Egypt and planted in the Promised Land. In John 15, Jesus and His disciples had just celebrated the Passover.
The disciple Judas has left the group to set up the betrayal. Jesus and the eleven remaining disciples left Jerusalem and went down into the Kidron Valley and up the slope of the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane.

As they walk along the trail, Jesus and the disciples pass through the vineyards that surround the city. Along the trail are gnarled grapevines that show the scars from recent pruning.

They can see in the distance the temple at Jerusalem, above and around the gate, seventy cubits high, which led from the porch to the holy place, a richly carved vine was extended as a border and decoration.

The branches, tendrils, and leaves were of finest gold, the stalks of the bunches were of the length of the human form, and the bunches hanging upon them were of costly jewels.

This vine must have had an uncommon importance and a sacred meaning in the eyes of the Jews. With what majestic splendour must it likewise have appeared in the evening.

Jesus picked up a cutting and turned to His disciples and said, 'You know how Israel is pictured as a vine which is to produce refreshing fruit. Well, she failed. I am the authentic Vine. I am the true and genuine Vine as opposed to a mere copy or symbol. I am the fulfilment of all that this symbol suggests. I am the Vine, the true One,' John 15:1 / John 15:5.
The word 'true' is also used for that which is the ultimate realisation. Jesus is the fullest realisation of the hope of Israel, of her expectations, of what God intended her to be. Israel, as a vine, never achieved its goal. She was a failure.

However, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came as the True Vine, accomplished all that God intended His Messiah to do. Jesus drew a sharp contrast between the degenerate vine of Israel and Himself. He transferred the privileges and responsibilities from the Hebrew people to Himself.

CHAPTER 81

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm which commemorates the memorials of how God had worked throughout Israel's history. This psalm was used at many of the annual feasts, such as the feast of Trumpets, the feast of tabernacles and the day of atonement.

HEADING

'For the director of music. According to Gittith. Of Asaph.'

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The heading tells us that this was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
It was to be sung 'according to gittith', which is a musical instrument. Some commentaries suggest that this instrument would have been used by the people of Gath or sung to the tune of Gath. Others suggest it was used at the festivities of the vintage, Psalm 81 / Psalm 84.
Most commentators agree that the Asaph mentioned here is another Asaph. This Asaph was probably a descendant of the earlier Asaph who worked during the reign of Josiah, 2 Chronicles 35:15.

'Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! Begin the music, strike the timbrel, play the melodious harp and lyre. Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our festival; this is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. When God went out against Egypt, he established it as a statute for Joseph. I heard an unknown voice say:' Psalm 81:1-5

Asaph begins by asking God's people to sing for joy because God is their strength. He asks God's people to shout aloud to the God of Jacob, Psalm 81:1. We can almost feel the excitement in his words and the great expectations in their songs of praise to God.
He asks God's people to begin the music, using the timbrel, Psalm 81:2 / Isaiah 5:12, harp, Psalm 81:2 / Isaiah 5:12, and lyre, Psalm 81:2 / Isaiah 5:12. He asks that the ram's horn be used, Psalm 81:3, but this isn't used as an instrument.
This was used to call God's people together for the festival of the New Moon, Psalm 81:3 / 1 Chronicles 23:31 / 2 Chronicles 2:4 / Isaiah 1:13 / 2 Kings 4:23 / Amos 8:5.
This was a part of God's decree, Psalm 81:4 / Numbers 10:10, and it was the trumpet announcing freedom for Israel when they were about to leave their captivity in Egypt, Psalm 81:5 / Leviticus 23:24 / Numbers 29:1.
Asaph says he 'heard an unknown voice', Psalm 81:5, that is, the language from God on Mount Sinai. Remember, they would have known the Egyptian language because they had lived in Egypt for over four hundred years.

'I removed the burden from their shoulders; their hands were set free from the basket. In your distress, you called, and I rescued you, I answered you out of a thundercloud; I tested you at the waters of Meribah. Psalm 81:6-7

God removed their shoulders from the burdens that they bore in captivity, Psalm 81:6 / Exodus 1:11-14 / Exodus 2:23-24. It was God who set them free from the bondage of Egypt, Exodus 5:4-17.
Whilst in Egypt God heard their cries of distress and rescued them, Psalm 81:7 / Exodus 2:23 / Exodus 3:9 / Exodus 14:10. God answered them out of a cloud of thunder, Psalm 81:7. This happened at Mount Sinai, when they first heard the voice of God speaking to them, Exodus 19:16-25 / Exodus 20:18-21.
After delivering Israel from Egypt, God tested them at the waters of Meribah, Psalm 81:7. This was the place where God miraculously provided water for them because they were complaining, Exodus 17:1-7.
You may notice at the end of verse seven, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates how God had brought them out of Egypt, but complained about having no water to drink.

‘Hear me, my people, and I will warn you—if you would only listen to me, Israel! You shall have no foreign god among you; you shall not worship any god other than me. I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth, and I will fill it.’ Psalm 81:8-10

Before God gives His instruction to His people, He asks them to hear Him, Psalm 81:8, that is, really listen to the warning He is about to say. The warning is simply don’t have any foreign gods among them, don’t worship any other god except God Himself, Psalm 81:9 / Exodus 20:3 / Deuteronomy 32:12 / Isaiah 43:12.
God was their LORD, their God; He was the One who brought them out of Egypt, therefore they shouldn’t worship any other god. God promises Israel that He would provide everything they need, but their mouths must be open in order to receive it, Psalm 81:10.

‘But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices. “If my people would only listen to me, if Israel would only follow my ways, how quickly I would subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes! Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him, and their punishment would last forever. But you would be fed with the finest of wheat; with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.” Psalm 81:11-16

Although God wanted to supply everything Israel needed and although He wanted His people to obey Him, they wouldn’t listen to His warnings, they wouldn’t submit to Him, Psalm 81:11 / Exodus 20:3.
As a result of their disobedience, God gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices, Psalm 81:12. In other words, God gave up on them and allowed them to do whatever they thought was right, Psalm 78:26-37 / Acts 7:42 / Acts 14:16 / Romans 1:24.
If they had obeyed God, their history would have been completely different, Psalm 81:13. Even those who hate the Lord would have been subjected to them, Psalm 81:14-15 / Deuteronomy 32:29-30.
They would have had no need for food, for God would have supplied them from rocks, Psalm 81:16 / Deuteronomy 32:13-14 / Psalm 37:11 / Matthew 5:5 / 1 Timothy 4:8.
If Israel had obeyed God, then He would have fed them with the finest wheat, Psalm 81:16 / Genesis 27:28 / Genesis 27:39 / Job 36:16 / Psalm 36:8 / Psalm 63:5 / Psalm 65:11.
He would have satisfied them with honey from the rock, Psalm 81:16 / Genesis 43:11 / Deuteronomy 8:8 / Deuteronomy 32:13 / 1 Samuel 14:25-26 / Isaiah 7:15 / Ezekiel 16:13 / Matthew 3:4. In other words, God would have abundantly supplied them with the best of the best if only they had listened to God and obeyed Him.

CONCLUSION

In the last few sentences of this psalm, we can almost feel the heartache in God’s words here as He wanted nothing more than to bless His people, Matthew 23:37. If the Israelites obeyed God, they would be blessed and dwell in the land that God was giving to them forever, Deuteronomy 5:28-29.
It is clear that God wants His people to succeed in life. He wants His people to live life to the full, John 10:10. He not only wants to bless His people, but He also wants to bless the whole world, John 3:16.
And He is patiently waiting on the world to turn to Him to be saved, 2 Peter 3:9. He truly wants to bless everyone who will listen to His Word, Romans 10:17, and obey His Word, John 14:15.

CHAPTER 82

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm of Asaph, he cries out to God for justice against the wicked, corrupt rulers. He sees God as the Supreme Judge who judges without respect of persons, and he wants Him to deal with those who were prejudiced in their judgments of others.

HEADING

'A psalm of Asaph.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

Asaph was the singer and musician during the reign of David and Solomon, 1 Chronicles 15:17-19 / 1 Chronicles 16:5-7 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. 1 Chronicles 25:1 and 2 Chronicles 29:30 tell us that Asaph was a prophet in his musical compositions.

'God presides in the great assembly; he renders judgment among the "gods": How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Psalm 82:1-2

Asaph begins by giving us a picture of God presiding in the midst of the great assembly, who is about to render judgment among the 'gods', Psalm 82:1, that is, the judges.
The reason why God, the Supreme Judge, is among them is that He wanted to confront them for judging unjustly and for showing partiality to the wicked, Psalm 82:2.
You may notice at the end of verse two that some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates the Supreme Judge, judging these unjust judges.

'Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.' Psalm 82:3-4

These judges had neglected their duties in defending the weak, the fatherless, the poor and the oppressed, Psalm 82:3, that is, all those who were vulnerable in society, James 1:27. It was the duty of the judges to rescue the weak and needy and deliver them from the hands of the wicked, but again, they failed miserably.
It appears that at the time of writing, society had collapsed because there were no fair judgments, especially for the poor and orphans, 1 Samuel 8:3 / Isaiah 1:17 / Isaiah 3:13-15 / Jeremiah 21:12 / Amos 5:12 / Amos 5:15 / Zechariah 8:9-10.

'The 'gods' know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.' Psalm 82:5

The ‘gods’, that is, the judges, know nothing and understand nothing, Psalm 82:5. In other words, because they were in positions of power as judges, they thought too highly of themselves and, as a result, they became ignorant and thought they knew it all.
They were proudly and arrogantly walking about in darkness, Psalm 82:5 / Acts 18:26-27, and as a result, the foundations of the earth are shaken, Psalm 82:5. In other words, because of their corruption, the lives of everyone else were unstable, and all the things on which the welfare of society rests are unstable, Psalm 11:3 / Psalm 75:3.

“I said, ‘You are “gods”; you are all sons of the Most High.’ Psalm 82:6

The Hebrew text reads, ‘I Myself said you are gods,’ and it’s important to notice that the pronoun is emphatic, Psalm 82:6. The stress should be placed on the ‘I Myself’ because the speaker is God and He’s addressing those whom He calls the ‘Elohim’.
That word is used very frequently in the Old Testament, and, although it is used in a special way, as the first of the three primary names of Deity, it’s also used in a more general sense. The other two names are Adonai and Yahweh.

We first encounter it in Genesis 1, when God’s action in creation is described. You will find it used twenty-seven times in the thirty-one verses of that chapter, and it’s used because its root meaning is that of ‘strength’, ‘power’, ‘might’ or ‘authority’. The word itself does not imply deity, yet it is a very fitting title when used of the Almighty in His creative activity, ‘Yahweh Elohim’ is the Strong One.
So, the answer to the question who are the gods? Is that because the root meaning of the word is ‘might’ or ‘power’, the ‘Elohim’ to whom God speaks in the psalm, are judges?

They are ‘mighty ones’ who are to be recognised as His representatives, His agents, because they have been appointed, in accordance with His law, to execute judgment among His people, Israel. Into this category of ‘gods’ were placed not only the judges but also the priests and prophets, because they also had a divinely appointed ministry.

It is interesting to note that, in John 10:33-36, the Lord Jesus uses this passage in a discussion with the Jews, knowing that they would have no problem accepting this use of the term ‘Elohim’ and would see the strength of the argument he was making because they knew that their Rabbis taught that the word was applied by their Law to men who had been called and appointed by God to undertake special service.
The Lord’s argument runs like this: the Father Himself called certain people ‘Elohim’ when He called them to undertake certain duties among the people. In the exercise of their ministry, they represented Him and acted with His authority.

They were, therefore, called ‘the elohim’, ‘the mighty ones’. Do you, then, call the One whom the Father actually and directly sanctified, consecrated, set apart, and sent into the world, a blasphemer, because I said that ‘I am ‘the’ son of God’? John 10:36.
Since the Jews accepted that God had called certain of His servants ‘gods’, they had no reason for accusing Jesus of blasphemy when he called himself ‘son of God’, John 10:36.
I think we should also notice that in this passage, the emphasis should not be placed on the word ‘the’ because the argument is not about the Lord’s uniqueness as ‘the only begotten’ Son, but about the fact that His relationship with God is that of son-ship, and not merely that of servant-hood, no matter how elevated that service might be. In fact, the definite article is not used in the original text.

But compare Hebrews 1:13, ‘To which of the angels, angelon: messengers, said He at any time, ‘You are my son?’ This distinction between Christ and all previous servants of God is brought out most clearly in Hebrews 3:1-6.

Moses, whom the Jews regarded as God's greatest servant, is declared to have been faithful 'as a servant' in God's house, that is, among God's people. And the people to whom the Lord was speaking would certainly regard Moses as being among the 'elohim'.

Yet, even though the service of this great man of God was of the very highest kind, so that he is described by the word 'therapon', a word for servant which indicates one who renders service voluntarily as distinct from 'doulos', the word that indicates a bond-servant, there remains a world of difference between Moses and Jesus.

In God's house, Moses was faithful as a servant. But Christ as a son, Hebrews 3:6. I must also point out that this confrontation between the Lord and the Jews has a significance which goes far beyond this discussion about the 'elohim', the 'gods'.
At a much deeper level, it concerns his deity. We are told that the Jews took up stones to stone him, accusing him of blasphemy because, they said, 'You, make yourself God', John 10:33.
During that particular discussion, Jesus hadn't, at that point, explicitly claimed to be the Son of God, but he had most certainly implied it when he said, 'I and the Father are one', John 10:30, and the Jews had certainly understood what he claimed.
It's astonishing, then, that there are so-called religious leaders living today, almost two thousand years later, who presume to declare that Jesus never claimed to be Deity, when the Jews with whom he discussed face-to-face during his personal ministry had enough intelligence to understand that this is exactly what he claimed!

God tells these judges that are 'all sons of the Most High', Psalm 82:6, that is, they are human, they are His children, made in the image of God, Acts 17:28-29. In other words, they should be acting and judging as sons of the Most High, but they weren't; they were arrogant and corrupt.

'But you will die like mere mortals; you will fall like every other ruler." Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance.' Psalm 82:7-8

Despite these judges holding a place of respect in society, God tells them they will die, Psalm 82:7, because they had abused their power. They will stand before the great Judge of all the earth and face judgment like every other ruler will face judgment, Psalm 82:7.
Asaph ends his psalm by asking God to 'rise up' and take His place as the Supreme Judge of all the earth, Psalm 82:8 / Amos 5:18-20, because all the nations are His inheritance, Psalm 82:8.

CONCLUSION

When Asaph looked around and saw Israel's judges acting unjustly, he rightly cried out to the Supreme Judge of the world to intervene on behalf of the hopeless and helpless in society.

The Scriptures clearly tell us that God hates injustice in whatever form it comes in, Deuteronomy 25:13-16 / Proverbs 6:17 / Proverbs 17:15 / Psalm 89:14, and He expects all those who have positions of authority to act justly, Proverbs 8:15 / Micah 6:8, and if they don't act justly, they will be judged by the Supreme Judge Himself, Matthew 25:31-46.
God expects all of His children to look after those who are vulnerable in society, those who are open to abuse and oppression from the wicked, Acts 6:1-7 / Romans 13:4 / James 2:1-13 / James 1:27.

CHAPTER 83

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of Asaph, but no one really knows its historical background. There are a couple of possibilities; it may be related to the time when Israel's enemies joined together to attack them during the reign of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chronicles 20:1-17. It could also be earlier in history, relating to the time of the judges, Judges 7-8.

HEADING

'A song. A psalm of Asaph.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

Asaph was the singer and musician during the reign of David and Solomon, 1 Chronicles 15:17-19 / 1 Chronicles 16:5-7 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. 1 Chronicles 25:1 and 2 Chronicles 29:30 tell us that Asaph was a prophet in his musical compositions.

'O God, do not remain silent; do not turn a deaf ear, do not stand aloof, O God. See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads. With cunning, they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish. "Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, so that Israel's name is remembered no more." Psalm 83:1-4

Asaph begins by asking God not to remain silent, Psalm 83:1 / Psalm 28:1, don't turn a deaf ear and stand aloof, Psalm 83:1, because their enemies were growling around and rearing their heads, conspiring, and plotting against God's people, Psalm 83:2-3.
Their enemies wanted to totally destroy Israel and remove it from the history books. Asaph knew that Israel would fall if God wasn't with them, Psalm 83:4.

'With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you, the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites, Byblos, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre. Even Assyria has joined them to reinforce Lot's descendants.' Psalm 83:5-8

Because their enemies plotted together in one mind, Psalm 83:5, and formed an alliance with other enemies, Psalm 83:6-8. It's clear they hated Israel, and they hated the God of Israel, Luke 23:12.
This alliance of nations was a mixture of different races, some were descendants of Abraham, the Edomites, Psalm 83:6 / Genesis 19:37-38 / Isaiah 11:14, the Ishmaelites, and the Moabites, Psalm 83:6 / Isaiah 15:1-9. The Hagrites, Psalm 83:6, were probably descendants of Hagar, Genesis 16:1 / Genesis 25:12.

There are ten nations mentioned here, Byblos, Psalm 83:7, is associated with Tyre, Joshua 13:5 / Joshua 23:5 / 1 Kings 5:18 / Ezekiel 27:9. Ammon, Psalm 83:7, were descendants of Lot, Genesis 19:38 / 1 Samuel 11:1-11. Amalek, Psalm 83:7 / Exodus 17:8-16 / Numbers 13:29 / Numbers 24:20 / 1 Samuel 15:7 / Judges 3:13 / Judges 6:3 / Judges 6:33 / Judges 12:15.
The Philistines, Psalm 83:7, were residents of Philistia and were long-time enemies of Israel. Because these are mixed nations, they were doomed to fail because most nations have their own agendas, Psalm 83:8.
You may notice at the end of verse eight, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Asaph pausing for a breath as he contemplates all these nations joining together to destroy the nation of Israel.

'Do to them as you did to Midian, as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, who perished at Endor and became like dung on the ground. Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, who said, "Let us take possession of the pasturelands of God." Make them like tumbleweed, my God, like chaff before the wind. As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze, so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm. Cover their faces with shame, LORD, so that they will seek your name. May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace. Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.' Psalm 83:9-18

Asaph asks God to destroy Israel's enemies just as he destroyed the Midianites, Psalm 83:9. God destroyed Jabin, who was a king of Canaan, and Sisera was his general, Psalm 83:9 / Judges 4:4 / Judges 4:6 / Judges 4:14-15 / Judges 4:17-21 / Judges 5:21.
It was at Endor, Psalm 83:10 / Joshua 17:11 / 1 Samuel 28:7, where Gideon defeated the Midianites, Judges 6:33 / Judges 7:1. Notice Endor became like dung on the ground, Psalm 83:10.
The nobles, Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna, Psalm 83:11, were like princes or rulers of the Midianites, Judges 7:1-8:13. Zebah and Zalmunna were kings of Midian and were also killed by Gideon, Judges 8:5 / Judges 8:21.
It was the Ammonites who wanted to take possession of the pasturelands of God, Psalm 83:12, in the times of Jephthah, Judges 11:13. The Ammonites and the Moabites wanted to destroy Israel, in the times of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chronicles 20:10.
Asaph wants them to become tumbleweed, like chaff before the wind, Psalm 83:13 / Isaiah 17:13 / Isaiah 22:18. In other words, he wants God to scatter them and totally destroy them.
He wants God to consume Israel's enemies with fire, the same way a forest catches fire and spreads quickly, bringing about their devastation, Psalm 83:14 / Isaiah 10:18.
He wants God to pursue them with His tempest and terrify them with His storm, Psalm 83:15. In other words, he not only wants God to chase them but also frighten them with His power, Job 27:20.
Asaph wants God to cover their faces with shame, Psalm 83:16, that is, totally humble them, in order that they will seek God's Name, Psalm 83:16 / Isaiah 26:9. In this call for judgment on the nations, Asaph didn't forget that Israel were a nation of priests who were responsible for leading people to God, Exodus 19:6.
Asaph asks God that Israel's enemies be ashamed, dismayed and may they perish in disgrace, Psalm 83:17, in order that they may know the LORD, Psalm 83:18 / Genesis 22:14 / Exodus 6:3 / Exodus 17:15 / Judges 6:24 / Isaiah 42:8 / Ezekiel 48:35 / Jeremiah 23:6 / Jeremiah 33:16. That they may come to surrender to the Most High God who rules over the earth, Psalm 83:18 / Genesis 14:22.

CONCLUSION

In this psalm, Asaph wanted God to deal with all those nations that came together to defeat Israel, but He wanted it done in such a way that they would come to know the Lord and come to submit to Him.

The principle of loving our neighbour fulfils all that the law would command concerning our duty toward our fellow man, Leviticus 19:17-18 / Matthew 22:35-40. The principle of loving our enemies is valid and binding upon everyone who follows Christ, Matthew 5:43-48.
There's no room in the Christian's heart, especially since they've had their sins forgiven, to have hatred towards anyone. The kind of love we must demonstrate towards our enemies is the love manifested by God Himself in that He sends rain on the good and the evil, etc. The implication is that Christians should treat their enemies with fairness and impartiality, doing unto them as they would desire people to do unto themselves.

God loves sinners, even dying for them while they were yet in sin, Romans 8:5, so Christians should love all men, sinners included, even their own personal enemies! God's love is impartial; He loved us when we were His enemies, Romans 5:10.
A true heart isn't one of malice or hate; hearts of malice and hate identify those individuals who are of the world. Luke adds that we should do good to and pray for our enemies, Luke 6:27-28.
There is no reward in a love that acts out of selfish motives to do something for others for the purpose of receiving something in return. In what way would Jesus' teaching on loving and praying for our enemies help us in our outreach efforts?

It certainly tells us that we will have enemies and we will be persecuted at times, but it also teaches us to continue to love them and pray for them. Remember that prayer may not change their attitude towards you, but it may change your attitude towards them, John 15:18-21.

CHAPTER 84

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find the psalmist making a journey to the tabernacle of God for the Feast of Tabernacles. He is yearning for fellowship with God.

HEADING

'For the director of music. According to Gittith. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
It was to be sung 'according to gittith', which is a musical instrument. Some commentaries suggest that this instrument would have been used by the people of Gath or sung to the tune of Gath. Others suggest it was used at the festivities of the vintage, Psalm 81 / Psalm 84.
The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It's possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.

'How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, LORD Almighty, my King, and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.' Psalm 84:1-4

The psalmist begins by telling us how lovely the LORD Almighty's, Psalm 84:1 / Isaiah 1:9 / Psalm 24:10, dwelling place is, Psalm 84:1, that is, His tabernacle, Matthew 21:12.
Their souls yearn and even faint for the courts of the LORD, Psalm 84:2. They obviously wanted to be in the place where they would feel close to God, Psalm 17:12 / Psalm 42:1-2 / Jeremiah 16:4 / Lamentations 2:11 / Job 19:27.
Their heart and flesh cry out, Psalm 84:2 / Leviticus 9:24 / Job 38:7 / Isaiah 12:6, / Lamentations 2:19, for fellowship with the Living God, Psalm 84:2 / Psalm 63:1 / Acts 7:48 / Acts 7:54. The psalmist remembered the sparrows and the swallows who had made their nests in God's house, Psalm 84:3.
The birds had nested near God's altar, and therefore they were blessed to be close to the LORD Almighty, the psalmist's King and God, Psalm 84:3 / Proverbs 26:2.
We get the picture that even the birds acknowledged they were blessed and sang praises to God, and the psalmist recognises if they were there, they would continually sing praises to God, Psalm 84:4.
You may notice at the end of verse four, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate being in close fellowship with God in His tabernacle, singing praises to Him.

'Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob.' Psalm 84:5-8

The psalmist recognises that the blessings come from not relying on their own strength but God's strength, Psalm 84:5. Their heart is focused on the pilgrimage to the tabernacle, Psalm 84:5 / Isaiah 40:31.
The Israelites made this journey every year to present themselves before the Lord, Psalm 84:5. On their way to the tabernacle, they pass through the 'Valley of Baka', Psalm 84:6.
No one knows where this is or what it refers to, but some commentators suggest it was a difficult place to pass through, it was a place of weeping or a very dry place.

However, the place was transformed into one where there was much water, enough to create springs and pools, Psalm 84:6. They knew the route to take and where to stay along the way.

Though they had to go through a very dry land to arrive at the tabernacle, the lands became a place of fountains, Psalm 84:6. Those who have God in their hearts know the way to Zion, and it's clear that this isn't the first time the psalmist has made this journey.

We can imagine them drawing closer to the tabernacle in Zion, Psalm 84:7, God's dwelling place, and the excitement they must have felt. The more excited they got, the stronger they became.

The psalmist asks the LORD God Almighty, the God of Jacob, Psalm 84:8 / Genesis 32:24-30, to hear their prayer and listen to them, Psalm 84:8 / Psalm 5:1. They are obviously asking God for more strength so that they can complete the journey.

You may notice at the end of verse eight, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate getting closer and closer to having fellowship with God in His dwelling place.

'Look on our shield, O God; look with favour on your anointed one. Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favour and honour; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. LORD Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.' Psalm 84:9-12

The psalmist now asks God to look on 'our' shield, Psalm 84:9. They don't call God their shield, but the shield was Israel's main defence in battle. In other words, they were asking God to give them the ability to defend themselves, Psalm 5:12 / Psalm 18:2 / Psalm 33:20.

They also ask God to look with favour on His 'anointed one', Psalm 84:9. This is probably a reference to the psalmist himself, as one of the pilgrims who made their way to the house of God. Some commentators suggest it could refer to David or Solomon and possibly the Messiah.

Notice the excitement in the psalmist's words, one day in God's courts is better than a thousand days anywhere else, Psalm 84:10. As far as the psalmist is concerned, he gets more delight and value in the presence of God in one day than he gets from anywhere else, Philippians 3:8.

They would rather be a doorkeeper in God's house than live with those who are wicked, Psalm 84:10. In other words, they would rather live in the most humble place in the house of God than live in luxury with the wicked.

The wicked may live in luxury, but the real blessings come from God, who is a sun, Psalm 84:11, that is, the source of all blessings, Isaiah 60:19 / Revelation 21:23 / Revelation 22:5. God is also a shield, Psalm 841, that is, the source of all protection, Psalm 84:9.

The wicked may live in luxury, but it's God who blesses His people with favour and honour, Psalm 84:11 / Romans 5:1-2 / Romans 8:29-30. God doesn't hold back any blessings from those who walk blamelessly, simply because it is those people who totally trust in Him, Psalm 84:11-12 / Romans 8:28 / 1 Timothy 4:8 / Philemon 4:19.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist was clearly excited about going to the tabernacle to have close fellowship with God; there's nowhere else they would rather be than in the presence of God among like-minded people.

It appears that many Christians lose their excitement about coming to worship God over a period of time. Over a period of time, the joy and enthusiasm about coming together with like-minded people, simply to praise God, appear to leave some Christians.

When we first became Christians, we were on 'fire' for God, but after time, that fire just doesn't burn as bright as it used to. This usually happens because we often neglect to fuel the fire; we neglect our love relationship with God, Jeremiah 2:2 / Revelation 2:4.
What are the signs to look for to see if our love for Him has diminished and been neglected?

1. One sign is that prayer is no longer a vital part of your life.

It's just something you do occasionally.

2. Another sign is that you've grown content with your biblical understanding, and you don't hunger for more.

You've acquired all the knowledge of the Bible you need.

3. Another sure sign is that the gathering of God's people is not eagerly anticipated.

You can hear someone announce, 'we're having a fellowship day at someone's house to be followed with a Bible study,' and you sit there, and you know in your heart that you have absolutely no intentions of going.

4. Another sign is that you can easily mouth hymns and scriptures, but nothing happens in your heart.

5. Another sign is that you are slow to respond when you hear of an opportunity to minister and serve in the church.

6. Another sign is that you hardly ever think about or sense God's presence in your life.

7. Another sign is that strong desire to just praise Him for His grace hardly ever fires up in your heart.

If you're suffering from any of these systems, today would be a good day to return to God and fall back in love with Him again, Isaiah 55:6-7 / Jeremiah 29:12-13 / Malachi 3:7.

CHAPTER 85

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find the psalmist praising God with thanksgiving and asking God to revive His people once again. Most commentators believe the historical setting of this psalm was probably when the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity in 536 B.C. Psalm 126 / Nehemiah 1:3 / Haggai 1:6-11 / Haggai 2:15-19.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

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The heading tells us that this was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.
The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It's possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.

> 'You, LORD, showed favour to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins. You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger.' Psalm 85:1-3

The psalmist begins by reminding us that God showed favour in the land of Israel, Psalm 85:1 / Psalm 24:1, and it was God who restored the fortunes of Jacob, Psalm 85:1.
The Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into Assyrian captivity in 722/21 B.C., and the southern kingdom in 586 B.C. A remnant of all twelve tribes of Israel returned to the promised land when Cyrus of Persia allowed the initial group of captives to return in 536 B.C.

It was during this time that God forgave Israel of their iniquities and sins, Psalm 85:2 / Psalm 32:5. Because of Israel's apostasy, Israel had been taken into captivity, 1 Chronicles 9:1, but while they were in captivity, they repented, and so, God allowed them to return. Some believe that forgiving their iniquities and the covering of their sins was pointing forward to Christ, Hebrews 7:27 / Hebrews 9:12 / Hebrews 10:10.
You may notice at the end of verse two that some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate their time in captivity.

When Israel was taken into captivity, they were feeling the effects of God's wrath and anger, Psalm 85:3, but now that they have returned to the land, the psalmist was grateful that God had turned aside from His wrath and anger, Psalm 85:3.

> 'Restore us again, God our Saviour, and put away your displeasure toward us. Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger through all generations? Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, LORD, and grant us your salvation.' Psalm 85:4-7

The psalmist now asks God, their Saviour, to restore His people again and put away His displeasure towards them, Psalm 85:4. The psalmist is asking God to continue in the restoration of His people, Psalm 80:3.
They ask God if He will be angry with them forever? Will He prolong His anger through all generations? Psalm 85:5.
In light of the fact that they have just thanked God for setting aside His anger and wrath, the psalmist once again asks God to continue not to be angry with His people.

Notice the psalmist asks God to revive His people again, Psalm 85:6. This tells us that revival comes from God but must be sought by His people. When God's people are revived, it's certainly a time of rejoicing, Psalm 85:6 / Acts 8:8. Revival involves seeking God's unfailing love, and the result will be salvation, Psalm 85:7 / Jonah 2:9.

'I will listen to what God the LORD says; he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants—but let them not turn to folly. Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven. The LORD will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest. Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps.' Psalm 85:8-13

The psalmist says that revival also involves listening to God's Word and listening to His promises, Psalm 85:8 / Haggai 2:7 / Haggai 2:9. It's God who promises peace to His people, his faithful servants, but they must be humble and repentant; they mustn't turn to folly but to God, Psalm 85:8.
Salvation is promised to those who humbly fear the Lord, and as God draws near to His people, glory will live in the land, Psalm 85:9. In God's salvation, love and faithfulness come together, Psalm 85:10.
Some translations use the words, mercy and truth, John 1:14 / John 1:17, righteousness and peace kiss each other, Psalm 85:10, that is, they become best friends, Isaiah 53:5-6.
When God's love and faithfulness unite for the benefit of man, and man lives in righteousness and peace, the result is the restoration of joy among the people of God.

In God's salvation, faithfulness is described as coming from the earth and righteousness is described as looking down from heaven, Psalm 85:11 / Romans 8:21. When God brings salvation to His people, He will give them everything they need, even the land will produce its harvest, Psalm 85:12 / Psalm 67:6.
Notice that righteousness goes before Him, Psalm 85:13. This has to be a reference to the Christ who is the righteousness of God, Jeremiah 33:15 / 1 Corinthians 1:30. It is Christ, whose footsteps we must follow in, Psalm 85:13 / 1 Peter 2:21.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist prayed that God would send a revival to His people, but for that to happen, there were terms and conditions which needed to be met by God's people.

Revival is a 'time of refreshing' that comes from the Lord, Acts 3:19, and wakes His people back up, and rekindles the fire of the Holy Spirit in our souls. But before God awakens His people again, there are terms and conditions which must be met.
Solomon has just dedicated the temple, and in his dedication, he has prayed to God, 2 Chronicles 6:12-39. In 2 Chronicles 7:11-13, God answers His prayer, but notice the terms and conditions of the answered prayer, in the next verse.
'If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land,' 2 Chronicles 7:14.
God says He's looking for people to humble themselves, He's looking for people to pray and seek His face, and He's looking for people to turn from their wicked ways. That's what God is looking for when He returns to His people.
But what stops that from happening?

If the first thing that God is looking for is for people to humble themselves, then that means that God is looking for a sufficient spirit. God wrote to the church in Laodicea and said, “You know, you’re so self-sufficient, you say I am rich, I don’t have a need for anything.”

And God says, ‘What you don’t know is that you are wretched, poor, pitiful, blind, and naked. Your problem is that you are so efficient and so ignorant of how empty you really are,’ Revelation 3:14-22.
God said, “I live in a high and holy place, but also with me who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite,” Isaiah 57:15. In other words, God can only fill those who are not filled with themselves.
The second thing that hinders revival is a complacent heart. God says He will return when you pray and seek His face. Revival cannot be manufactured, but it can be sought.

God says, ‘Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart, ’Jeremiah 29:12-13.
God says, ‘Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon,’ Isaiah 55:6-7.
The third thing that hinders revival is a disobedient walk. God is waiting for people to turn from their wicked ways. ‘Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord’, Acts 3:19.
In every revival in the Bible, you can see a profound sense of God’s holiness accompanied by a thorough confessing of sin, 1 John 1:9 / James 5:16. Getting serious about sin and holiness is necessary for revival, 1 Peter 1:16.

CHAPTER 86

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm of lament by David, where he laments the fact that God is good and always ready to forgive those who come to Him in repentance. He describes God as compassionate, always ready to help those in trouble and always ready to comfort them.

HEADING

‘A prayer of David.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is simply a prayer of David.

‘Hear me, LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God; have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to you all day long. Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you. You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you.’ Psalm 86:1-5

David begins by asking God to hear his prayer and answer them, Psalm 86:1. He feels poor and needy, Psalm 86:1, that is, he pours his heart out to God because, spiritually speaking, he needs God’s help in his life, Matthew 5:1-12. He’s desperate for God’s help, and so, he asks God to ‘guard his life’, Psalm 86:2. In other words, without God’s help, he felt he would die.
He acknowledges that he is faithful to God, Psalm 86:2.
This doesn’t mean he was sinless, but when compared to those who were his enemies, he was faithful to God. Because he had given his life to the Lord, he begged the Lord to work in his life.

David is God’s servant, and he fully trusts God, Psalm 86:2, that is, he feels he is firmly rooted in God. Because God is his God, he can ask for mercy, Psalm 86:3, which demonstrates his total reliance on God and no one else.
Because David was faithful to God, he could cry out to God all day long, Psalm 86:3 / Romans 12:1-2 / 1 Thessalonians 5:17. He knew that it’s only God who could bring him joy, Psalm 86:4, which again, is an expression of total trust in God.
He knows that God is not only a merciful God but a God who is forgiving, good and abundant in love, Psalm 86:5. This again speaks of his total trust in God and God’s character.

‘Hear my prayer, LORD; listen to my cry for mercy. When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me. Among the gods, there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvellous deeds; you alone are God.’ Psalm 86:6-10

Once again, David asks God to hear his prayer and listen to his cry for mercy, Psalm 86:6 / Psalm 5:1. He knows that when he’s in times of distress, he can confidently turn to God in prayer and God will answer his prayers, Psalm 86:7 / James 1:6-7.
He now compares God to the other so-called gods, Psalm 86:8. Unlike them, God can be trusted, He is merciful, good, ready to forgive and abundant in love. The manmade gods such as Baal, Ashtoreth, and Dagon were gods that were bitter, vengeful and cunning, 1 Kings 18:26-29.
But David knew his God was the exact opposite; they were nothing compared to the Almighty God, their deeds don’t even come close to the deeds of God, Psalm 86:8 / 1 Corinthians 8:5-6.
David says that God made all the nations come and worship Him and they will bring glory to His Name, Psalm 86:9. David knows that God isn’t just the ruler and master of Israel, but He’s also ruler and master over all nations, Isaiah 2:2-3 / Isaiah 60:3-14.
This is another reason why God was different from those other gods because they were restricted to certain areas and places, whereas God Almighty isn’t restricted; He’s everywhere, Psalm 139:7-12. It’s only God and God alone who truly is great and who does marvellous deeds, Psalm 86:10, which can’t be matched by any other god.

‘Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. I will praise you, Lord, my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead. Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God; ruthless people are trying to kill me—they have no regard for you. But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. Turn to me and have mercy on me; show your

strength in behalf of your servant; save me, because I serve you just as my mother did. Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.'
Psalm 86:11-17

Because of David's close relationship with God and because He knows God really well, he now asks God to teach him His ways, Psalm 86:11. Although he saw himself as faithful to God, he wants to learn to rely on God's faithfulness, Psalm 86:11, that is, in order to really live, he wants to learn to walk in God's truth, John 14:6.
He knows the only way he could ever truly walk in God's ways was to have a heart that was totally surrendered to Him, Psalm 86:11. When he totally surrenders to God and His ways, then he will truly be able to fear God, Psalm 86:11.
He didn't want to be tossed back and forth with the theologies which came from these other so-called gods. He wanted to dedicate the totality of his mind, heart, soul and strength to God alone, Psalm 86:12 / Hosea 10:2 / Philippians 3:13.
When he totally surrenders to God and His ways, then he will truly be able to praise God with all his heart and glorify His Name forever, Psalm 86:12. David reminisces over the times in his past, when God showed him mercy and delivered him from the depths, the realm of the dead, Psalm 86:13. Because of the compassionate nature of God, David knows that He is willing to help those who put their trust in Him.
The realm of the dead is Sheol; there are, in fact, three Biblical words, the meanings of which are often confused because people tend to use them very loosely. Two of the words in the New Testament are Greek words. The Third word is an Old Testament Hebrew word.

For instance, in the New Testament, we have the following.

1. 'Gehenna', which occurs twelve times, and, in the Authorised Version, is always translated 'hell'.

2. 'Hades', which occurs ten times, and which is also always translated as 'hell'.

3. The third word is the word 'Sheol', found in the Old Testament, and which sometimes is erroneously said to be the word that corresponds to 'Gehenna'.

You clearly see the confusion that has been created about the meaning of this word when you understand that, in the Authorised Version, out of the sixty-five instances it occurs, thirty-one times it has been translated 'hell' and thirty-four times it has been translated 'the grave'!

Now, although the word 'Sheol' literally means 'The Place of the Dead', you don't need much intelligence to recognise that 'Hell' and the 'Grave' aren't the same places! When a body is placed in the grave, it hasn't been consigned to 'Hell'!

But there is a history behind this inconsistent rendering of the word 'Sheol'. Whilst the translators of the Authorised Version believed 'Hell' to be the place of punishment for the wicked, they withdrew from the idea of saying that good people also go to 'Sheol', and so in passages that related to the death of good people, they decided to translate 'Sheol' as 'the grave'!

However, in Hebrew theology and in Old Testament teaching, 'Sheol' is described as the place to which all the dead go, both good and bad. It's defined as 'the place of departed souls'.

In the account of King Saul's visit to the medium at Endor, the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel is recorded as saying to Saul, 'Tomorrow, you and your sons shall be with me,' 1 Samuel 28:19. Even the Oxford Dictionary is close to the truth as far as the meaning of the word is concerned. It says that 'Sheol' is 'The abode of the dead'. Furthermore, in the Old Testament, 'Sheol' is described as a gloomy place, in which an individual is farther away from God than he was during his lifetime. We are told that 'the living know that they will die, but the dead do not

know anything,' Ecclesiastes 9:5, and, according to Psalm 115:17, 'The dead do not praise Yahweh, nor any who go down into silence.'

David describes his foes as arrogant, ruthless, and having no regard for God; they wanted him dead, Psalm 86:14. Clearly, David felt that his life was in real danger.

He contrasts his foes with God, and once again, he says that God is the total opposite of them, Psalm 86:15. Unlike his foes, God is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, Psalm 86:15 / Exodus 34:6 / Psalm 103:8.

Notice that David never appeals to God on the basis of his own goodness, but he appeals on the basis of God's mercy, Psalm 86:16. Because David knows the real nature of God, he was confident that God would show him mercy. He didn't rely on his own strength as God's servant, but on the strength of God, Ephesians 6:10.

Notice the high compliment which David gives his mother, he says, he serves the Lord just as his mother did, Psalm 86:16. The Scriptures tell us nothing about his mother or even mentions her name, but she must have been a godly woman who served the Lord, 1 Samuel 17:12–14.

It appears that David didn't expect God to answer his prayer straight away, and so, he asks God for a sign of His goodness, Psalm 86:17. In other words, he asks for a signal from God which would be a sign to his foes that God was with him and against them, which would result in them being ashamed of what they were doing, Psalm 86:17.

David ends by reminiscing again over the times God had helped him and comforted him in the past. He's confident that God will help and comfort him in his current circumstances because He has done it time and time again in the past, Psalm 86:17.

CONCLUSION

Compared to all the other so-called gods and compared to David's foes, David tells us that God is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love and faithfulness.

Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, God's prophets quoted these words over and over again: Exodus 34:6 / Numbers 14:18 / Nehemiah 9:17 / Psalm 86:15 / Psalm 103:8 / Psalm 145:8 / Joel 2:15 / Jonah 4:2.

When we read these verses, we read about the character and nature of God Himself. He is compassionate, merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abundant in love and faithfulness and forgiving.

Who doesn't want to have a close relationship with a God who is like that? God longs to show mercy to people, but people must be repentant towards Him, Exodus 34:5-9 / Hebrews 6:4-6.

CHAPTER 87

INTRODUCTION

This psalm speaks about the heavenly Zion above, where all nations come together to pay their respect to God, Hebrews 12:22-23.

HEADING

‘Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm. A song.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this was a psalm and a song. The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It’s possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.

‘He has founded his city on the holy mountain. The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are said of you, city of God: “I will record Rahab and Babylon among those who acknowledge me—Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush—and will say, ‘This one was born in Zion.’” Indeed, of Zion it will be said, “This one and that one were born in her, and the Most High himself will establish her.” The LORD will write in the register of the peoples: “This one was born in Zion.” As they make music, they will sing, “All my fountains are in you.” Psalm 87:1-7

The psalmist begins by reminding us that it was God who founded His city, that is, Zion, Psalm 87:1-2, Jerusalem, Psalm 48:1-2 / Matthew 2:1. Jerusalem is the earthly source of the metaphor that refers to heaven. What Jerusalem was to the Jewish faith, heaven is to all Christians.
The gates of the city, Psalm 87:1, signified the strength of its walls against the enemy, as well as the place where the elders met with those who wanted some counsel, Ruth 4:1 / Job 29:7 / Matthew 16:18-19. Other people spoke about the glorious city of God, and those other people are the Gentiles, who looked to God for protection and guidance, Psalm 87:3 / John 10:16.
You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, ‘selah’, although no one really knows what this word means, it’s likely it means to pause.

It’s a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate how other nations spoke of God’s glorious heavenly city.

The psalmist continues to think about the Gentiles in the mention of Rahab and Babylon, Psalm 87:4. Rahab is a name that was used in Hebrew poetry for Egypt, Isaiah 30:7. The Gentiles who acknowledge God will be included with those who have given themselves to the Lord, Psalm 87:4.
Philistia, Psalm 87:4, was located in the western portion of Palestine, Psalm 60:8 / Psalm 108:9 / Isaiah 14:29 / Isaiah 14:31. Tyre, Psalm 87:4, is another Gentile region, Psalm 45:12 / Isaiah 23:1, as was Cush, Psalm 87:4 / Psalm 68:31 / Isaiah 18:1.

God was going to bless all the nations, not just Israel, as He promised Abraham, Genesis 28:14 / Ephesians 2:19. All the Gentile nations would say, 'this one was born in Zion', Psalm 87:4. In other words, the believing Gentiles whose spiritual heritage came out of God's city would also have their citizenship in Zion, Philippians 3:20.

Notice the psalmist repeats what he just said regarding the citizenship of the Gentiles, Psalm 87:5. They repeat this to speak of how much they would cherish their birthright and their freedom in being citizens of the heavenly Zion, Galatians 4:26.

Notice it's not man but the Lord who writes people's names in the register, the names of those born in Zion, Psalm 87:6 / Isaiah 44:3-5 / Hebrews 12:22-23. Remember, Israel as a nation was supposed to be a kingdom of priests, trying to reconcile the world back to God, Exodus 19:6.

They failed because of sin, but now all Christians are priests in God's kingdom, 1 Peter 2:5 / 1 Peter 2:9, and all Christians have to obey the command to go into all the world, Matthew 28:18-20 / Mark 16:15-16.

You may notice at the end of verse six, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine the psalmist pausing for a breath as they contemplate all the nations being blessed by God.

All the citizens of Zion will praise God in song and sing, 'All my fountains are in you', Psalm 87:7. In other words, it's God who is the source of flowing water, John 4:10 / John 7:37-39, and it's God who is the source of life, John 10:10.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist spoke clearly about the blessings which come from being a part of the heavenly Zion. When we turn to the New Testament and read Hebrews 12:22-24, we soon discover that we have come to many things.

1. 'We have come to Mount Zion', Hebrews 12:22.

We haven't come to the physical but, by implication, to the spiritual; we have come to Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem. We haven't come to the physical city, but the city of the living God. By faith, Abraham looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God, Hebrews 11:10, that is the city we have come to.

2. We have also come to 'thousands of angels in joyful assembly', Hebrews 12:22.

Too often, we read these descriptions and do not ask what this is telling us; we simply say that we have come to innumerable angels. But what does that mean for us?

Consider these Scriptures and think about where these innumerable angels are, Daniel 7:9-10 / Revelation 5:11-12. What is the writer saying when he says we have come to innumerable angels?

3. We have come to the very presence of God, Hebrews 12:22.

We haven't come to the God who had to tell the people not to come near Him because of His holiness. We have come near to God, which is the point, the writer of Hebrews made earlier in his writing, Hebrews 4:16. What else is the author telling us we have come to? Remember that the writer of Hebrews is teaching us what we have left and what we now have.

4. The Hebrew writer also tells us we have come 'to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,' Hebrews 12:23.

He's telling us that we're a part of the new covenant, we're the assembly of the saved, and our names are written in heaven. We're a part of something great; we haven't come to the physical, rather, we're a part of the group of people whose names are registered in heaven.

We're of the firstborn, not only because Jesus is the firstborn of the dead, but because we have valued our birthright. We haven't been like Esau, the firstborn, who despised his birthright inheritance and gave it away for the pleasures of this world.

We value our inheritance with God and are part of the family of God, Hebrews 2:11. Part of this assembly are those who have died. They are also part of the family, and we are joined together. Death separates us, but we are still joined together as God's saved family.

5. The final person we have come to is 'Jesus', Hebrews 12:24.

We've not come to the physical, we've not come to Sinai, but we have come to Jesus. Moses was the mediator of the Sinai covenant, and Jesus is the mediator of the Zion covenant. We have come to the sprinkled blood, which is a picture of atonement.

CHAPTER 88

INTRODUCTION

This psalm of Heman is a psalm of lament where he feels there is no end to his suffering. He appears to be suffering from some kind of disease, probably leprosy, which he's had since he was young and has come to the conclusion that he will die from this disease.

HEADING

'A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah. For the director of music. According to Mahalath Leannoth. A maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6.

The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath, who by the time of David, served in the musical aspect of the temple worship, 1 Chronicles 9:19 / 1 Chronicles 26:1 / 1 Chronicles 26:19 / 2 Chronicles 20:19. It was David who originally organised the temple singers, 1 Chronicles 15:17 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:4-5.
Korah is probably most famous for his role in the rebellion against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus, Numbers 16 / Jude 11. God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died, but the sons of Korah remained, Numbers 26:9-11. It's possible they were so grateful for this mercy that they became prominent in Israel for praising God.
Psalm 53 also mentions the Mahalath, but no one really knows what the words, 'Mahalath Leannoth' mean, although some commentators suggest it refers to the musical instrument upon which the song was composed.
Other commentators believe it's speaking of some kind of disease like leprosy, which would fit with the psalm, 2 Chronicles 21:15 / Exodus 15:26 / Proverbs 18:14 / Exodus 23:25 / 1 Kings 8:37 / 2 Chronicles 6:28.
No one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.
Heman is mentioned many times during the times of David and Solomon, 1 Kings 4:31 / 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 15:17-19 / 1 Chronicles 16:41-42 / 1 Chronicles 25:1 / 1 Chronicles 25:5-6 / 2 Chronicles 5:12 / 2 Chronicles 35:15.

'LORD, you are the God who saves me; day and night I cry out to you. May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry. I am overwhelmed with troubles, and my life draws near to death. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like one without strength. I am set apart with the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom you remember no more, who are cut off from your care. You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths. Your wrath lies heavily on me; you have overwhelmed me with all your waves.' Psalm 88:1-7

Heman begins by saying that God is the one who saves, and he cries out to God constantly in prayer for deliverance day and night, Psalm 88:1. He prays that God will hear his prayer and his cries, Psalm 88:2, which tells us how desperate he is for deliverance, Psalm 5:1.
He is feeling overwhelmed with his troubles and concludes that he was near death and he had resigned himself to death, Psalm 88:3 / Isaiah 14:9 / Job 10:21-22.
He feels he is counted among those who go down to the pit, Psalm 88:4, that is, his friends expect him to die anytime soon, Job 3:19 / Psalm 22. It's clear that Heman feels like he's in a dark place mentally and spiritually, he's weak and fears being set apart with the dead who lie in the grave, Psalm 88:5.
In other words, he fears that his death will not only separate him from all his earthly relationships but also separate him from his relationship with God, that is, God will remember him no more and he will be cut off from God's care, Psalm 88:5 / Job 19:25 / Psalm 6 / Psalm 16:10.
He feels that God has put him in the lowest pit and the darkest depths, Psalm 88:6, that is, he feels that it was God who brought all this upon him, Job 10:21-22. He feels it is because of God's wrath that he's suffering; he feels he has sinned in some way, Psalm 88:7.
We're not to think that God gave him some kind of disease to make him suffer like he was. God has allowed him to suffer the difficulty of living in a world with a physical body that is subject to suffering.

God is good, but He allows the natural processes of life to transpire. We live in a fallen world, one from which God will eventually deliver the righteous. We must remember that the thought of eternal life and eternal damnation wasn't really taught in the Old Testament; the thoughts of going to heaven or hell and living forever only came into light when Christ came, 2 Timothy 1:10.

You may notice at the end of verse seven, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Heman pausing for a breath as he contemplates his future.

'You have taken from me my closest friends and have made me repulsive to them. I am confined and cannot escape; my eyes are dim with grief. I call to you, LORD, every day; I spread out my hands to you. Do you show your wonders to the dead? Do their spirits rise up and praise you? Is your love declared in the grave, your faithfulness in Destruction? Are your wonders known in the place of darkness, or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?'
Psalm 88:8-12

In the midst of Heman's suffering, his friends appear to have abandoned him, and once again he thinks that God was the cause of this, Psalm 88:8. He feels that God has made his friends see him as repulsive, Psalm 88:8 / Job 19:13-17 / Psalm 31:11 / Psalm 38:11 / Psalm 69:8.
His friends wanted to avoid being around him, Luke 23:49, as they saw him as someone unclean, Genesis 43:32. He feels trapped in his own home, Psalm 88:8 / Job 12:14, which suggests he was a leper, who was cut off from society, Leviticus 13:1-8 / Leviticus 13:45-46.
His eyes are dim from all the crying he has been doing, Psalm 88:9 / Job 16:20 / Psalm 6:6 / Isaiah 38:3. Once again, Heman tells us that he constantly cried out to God in prayer for deliverance, every day, Psalm 88:9.
Heman is desperate and desperate for answers. Notice all the questions which Heman asks God, Psalm 88:10-13, and the answer to all of these is question is, No. Do you show your wonders to the dead? Psalm 88:10. No, Psalm 6:5 / Isaiah 38:18. Do their spirits rise up and praise you? Psalm 88:10. No, Isaiah 14:9.
Is your love declared in the grave, your faithfulness in Destruction? Psalm 88:11. No, Luke 16:28-31. Are your wonders known in the place of darkness, or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?' Psalm 88:12. No, Job 10:21-22.
You may notice at the end of verse ten that some translations have the word 'selah'; although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Heman pausing for a breath as he contemplates the answer to these questions.

'But I cry to you for help, LORD; in the morning, my prayer comes before you. Why, LORD, do you reject me and hide your face from me? From my youth, I have suffered and been close to death; I have borne your terrors and am in despair. Your wrath has swept over me; your terrors have destroyed me. All day long, they surround me like a flood; they have completely engulfed me. You have taken from me, friend and neighbour—darkness is my closest friend.'
Psalm 88:13-18

After reflecting on how despairing he was for God to deliver him from his suffering, Heman once again focuses on the Lord to help him, Psalm 88:13 / Psalm 5:3 / Psalm 55:17 / Psalm 59:16.
Just before he gets out of bed, he begins every day with a prayer to God, Psalm 88:13, expecting that God will answer his prayer, Job 3:12 / Psalm 21:3 / Psalm 59:10 / Psalm 79:8 / Psalm 119:148 / Matthew 17:25 / 1 Thessalonians 4:15.
As it is with most people who are suffering terribly, Heman felt that God was rejecting him and had abandoned him, Psalm 88:13. He's been suffering since he was young and has been close to death on many occasions, Psalm 88:15.
He feels it was God who was causing his terrors, Psalm 88:15, that is, his suffering, and God was the reason for his despair, Psalm 88:15. He feels he is on the receiving end of God's wrath, and it was God who was destroying him, Psalm 88:16. He feels overwhelmed by his suffering and thought he would drown in his sorrow, Psalm 88:17 / Psalm 42:7.

He feels that it was God who was to blame for his friends and neighbours deserting him, Psalm 88:18, and so, he was left to suffer alone, Psalm 88:8. As a result, he felt that the only friend he had left was darkness, Psalm 88:18, that is, without help or hope for the future.
The illness that he suffered was from his youth, and though he had no friends, he prayed that God would not turn from him. At this time in his life, he felt that all the agony that came with his illness hadn't climaxed with his impending death.

Although we're not told if God helped him and delivered him from his suffering, it's clear, despite being angry with God and seeking answers to his questions, that his faith was totally reliant upon God.

CONCLUSION

Heman was suffering greatly because of his leprosy, and as a result, he became angry with God and wanted answers to his questions. As Christians, we too may go through times when we're suffering, when we get angry with God and ask Him, why?

Getting angry with God and asking Him deep and difficult questions is a real human response to suffering. But unlike Heman, we know that we can suffer with patience, Romans 12:12, we can suffer in the hope of the resurrection, Romans 6:5, and we can suffer in the hope of eternal life, Romans 8:24-25.
Like Heman, we must also pray to God when we're suffering, and trust that He knows what's best for us, 2 Corinthians 12:8-10. More importantly, we must remember that our suffering is only temporary, Job 13:15, and that our suffering is nothing compared to eternal life, Romans 8:18.

CHAPTER 89

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is Messianic in nature, and some commentators suggest the historical setting appears to take place during the reign of Jehoiachin, where the long dynasty of Davidic kings was under real threat of coming to an end. This psalm is the third-longest psalm we find within the book; Psalm 78 and Psalm 119 are longer.

HEADING

'A maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite'.

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

No one really knows what the word 'maskil' means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.
Although Ethan is a popular name in the Old Testament, Ethan the Ezrahite is a man who is specifically mentioned in 1 Kings 4:31, as someone who was more famous than Solomon for his wisdom. He was also the founder of one of the three choirs, 1 Chronicles 15:19 / 2 Chronicles 5:12.

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

Ethan began his psalm by saying he will use his mouth to sing of the LORD's great love forever, and he will use his mouth to make known His faithfulness through all generations, Psalm 89:1. In other words, He wanted others in his generation and the generation to come to know of God's great love and faithfulness.
He wants all generations to know of God's love, which stands firm forever, Psalm 89:2 / Isaiah 55:3, and his faithfulness is established in heaven, Psalm 89:2 / Jeremiah 33:20-21.
Upon the foundation of David, God built the Davidic dynasty, Psalm 89:3. This fulfilled the promise and covenant that God had made with David, 2 Samuel 7:11-17.
Ethan notes that God had made a covenant with his chosen one, David, Psalm 89:3, a promise in which He would build and establish the house of David, Psalm 89:4 / 2 Samuel 2:16.
He promised to establish David's household forever and establish his throne, Psalm 89:4, that is, his kingdom through all generations, 2 Samuel 7:12-13 / 1 Kings 2:4.
These promises were partly fulfilled in Solomon, who was David's son, but they would be completely fulfilled in Christ, who was known as the son of David, Matthew 12:23 / Acts 2:30. Peter quotes Psalm 89:3-4 in Acts 2:30.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Apparently, the thought never entered either the mind of David himself, or that of any other Israelite, that the kingdom God promised was not a kingdom of this world, but a SPIRITUAL kingdom. The entire conception of an earthly kingdom of Israel was sinful in its inception, absolutely contrary to God's will, and constituting, through Israel's demand that they should have such a kingdom, Israel's rejection of God Himself, 1 Samuel 8:7. In this light it appears to us as wholly the fault of Israel that they should have believed that 'the everlasting kingdom' which God promised them would be any kind of a literal earthly monarchy. God told them at the very beginning of that earthly kingdom, they so much desired just exactly what such a kingdom would be like, 1 Samuel 8:10-18.'
You may notice at the end of verse four, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Ethan pausing for a breath as he contemplates the greatness of God's love and faithfulness to His promises.

'The heavens praise your wonders, LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings? In the council of the holy ones, God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him. Who is like you, LORD God Almighty? You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them. You crushed Rahab like one of the slain; with your strong arm, you scattered your enemies. The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world, and all that is in it. You created the

north and the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name. Your arm is endowed with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.' Psalm 89:5-14

Ethan now not only praises God for His great love and faithfulness, but he also praises God in the assembly of the holy ones, for His wonderful work in creation, Psalm 89:5 / Psalm 19:1-6.

The 'holy ones' are probably a reference to angels; God is feared among them and more powerful than any of them, Psalm 89:6. God is to be held in reverence by all those around Him, and all of mankind should fear Him, Psalm 89:7, which will result in their obedience to Him.

Ethan knows there is no one compared to the LORD, God Almighty; he knows that there is no one as mighty as God, Psalm 89:8 / Romans 8:38 / Ephesians 1:21, nothing compares to God, Psalm 89:8 / Isaiah 40:25.

His might is seen in the way He controls the seas and the waves, Psalm 89:8. His might is shown in the way He crushed Rahab and scattered Israel's enemies, Psalm 89:10. Rahab, whose name means 'the proud one' is often personified to speak of proud and strong Egypt, Job 26:12-13 / Psalm 87:4.

Ethan declares that the heavens and the earth belong to God since He was the One who created all of creation, Psalm 89:11. His power is seen in that He created everything from the north to the south, Psalm 89:12.

Tabor and Hermon Psalm 89:12, are two mountains and are used to describe God's power over His creation, Psalm 8 / Romans 1:20. Everything belongs to Him since He created everything.

Notice Ethan describes God as having an arm and a right hand, Psalm 89:13. This is obviously figuratively speaking, as God doesn't have physical arms and hands, Deuteronomy 5:15 / Deuteronomy 7:8 / Deuteronomy 7:19 / John 4:24. The emphasis here is on the strength of God among all the people of the earth. In other words, there's no one who is as strong as He is.

Because God is powerful over all things, He is the finality of justice and judgment among men, Psalm 89:14. He is the final moral standard by which all will be judged.

God and God alone has the right to reign, and righteousness and justice are His foundation, while love and faithfulness go before Him, Psalm 89:14, that is, they announce the coming of the Judge.

'Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they celebrate your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and by your favour you exalt our horn. Indeed, our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.' Psalm 89:15-18

Ethan proclaims that those who are aware of God's might, His righteousness, justice, mercy, and faithfulness are truly blessed, Psalm 89:15. Those who walk in the light of His presence are blessed and rejoice in His Name and celebrate His righteousness, Psalm 89:16 / Leviticus 23:24 / Numbers 10:10 / Psalm 27:6.

God's people are blessed because God is their glory and strength, He exalts their horn, Psalm 89:17, that is, He increases their power, Psalm 75:4 / Daniel 7:8 / Job 16:15. God's people are blessed because their shield, their king, is David, God's chosen king, Psalm 89:18.

'Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said: "I have bestowed strength on a warrior; I have raised up a young man from among the people. I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him. The enemy will not get the better of him; the wicked will not oppress him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries. My faithful love will be with him, and through my name, his horn will be exalted. I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers. He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Saviour.' And I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness—and I will not lie

to David—that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky." Psalm 89:19-37

Ethan describes a vision in which God spoke through Nathan the prophet and promised to strengthen and help David, Psalm 89:19 / 2 Samuel 7:4-17. It was God who chose David to be His anointed servant, Psalm 89:20 / 1 Samuel 13:14, and it was God who would sustain him, strengthen him, protect and defend him from his enemies, Psalm 89:21-34 / Psalm 2.

God had made a covenant with David that from his seed there would be kings in Israel. Paul quotes Psalm 89:20 in Acts 13:22-23. The purpose of the genealogies of Jesus was to establish the fact that Jesus was of the lineage of David, and so, He had a right to sit on the throne of David and reign as king, which reign Jesus is presently doing from heaven, Acts 2:22-36.

God would set his hand over the sea, Psalm 89:25 / Mark 4:39-41, that is, the Mediterranean Sea, and his right hand over the rivers, Psalm 89:25, that is, the Tigris and Euphrates. Although this promised dominion was never fulfilled by David, they were fulfilled in Christ, the son of David, Isaiah 9:6-7 / Daniel 7:14 / 1 Peter 3:22.

He will call to God and say you are my Father, my God, the Rock my Saviour, Psalm 89:26. This is an obvious reference to Jesus, who was totally dependent upon the Father, John 5:19 / John 8:28. God will make him His firstborn, Psalm 89:27.

This was true of Israel as a nation; they were God's firstborn, Exodus 4:22. This was true of David, despite being the youngest in his family, 1 Samuel 16:11; God blessed him with the status of a firstborn son. It's even more true when we look to Jesus, the Messiah, as the King of kings and Lord of lords, Romans 8:29 / 1 Timothy 6:15 / Revelation 19:16.

David's house was promised love in the covenant God made with him, Psalm 89:28 / 2 Samuel 7:15. God established a sure and steadfast covenant with the seed of David, Psalm 89:28 / 2 Samuel 7:16. It was 'forever' in the sense that Jesus was the last of David's seed who would reign as king, John 12:15 / John 18:37 / Revelation 1:5 / Revelation 17:14.

If any of David's sons forsake God's law and don't follow His statutes, if they violate His decrees and fail to keep His commands, Psalm 89:30-31, then there will be consequences for their disobedience.

God will punish their sin with the rod and their iniquity with flogging, Psalm 89:32. In other words, their punishment was going to be painful. Even if the children were disobedient to the will of God, God wouldn't forsake His promise to David; He would be faithful to His word, Psalm 89:33 / 2 Samuel 7:14-16.

When Jesus came to earth, the Jews had failed to keep God's laws, but God still fulfilled His promise to place Jesus on the throne of David, John 1:10-14. God established Jesus on the throne of David because He wouldn't break His covenant with David, Psalm 89:34. Because God was faithful to His covenant with David, Jesus is now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords, 1 Timothy 6:15.

When God makes a covenant with man, He won't break His covenant, Psalm 89:34-35 / 2 Samuel 7:14-16 / 2 Samuel 23:5 / Psalm 60:6 / Hebrews 6:13-20, or lie about it, Psalm 89:35 / 2 Samuel 7:8-16. Though man may be disobedient to the will of God, God will be true to His promises as the sun and moon are established in the heavens, Psalm 89:36-37.

You may notice at the end of verse thirty-seven, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Ethan pausing for a breath as he contemplates the faithfulness of God to keep His promises.

'But you have rejected, you have spurned, you have been very angry with your anointed one. You have renounced the covenant with your servant and have defiled his crown in the dust. You have broken through all his walls and reduced his strongholds to ruins. All who pass by have plundered him; he has become the scorn of his neighbours. You have

exalted the right hand of his foes; you have made all his enemies rejoice. Indeed, you have turned back the edge of his sword and have not supported him in battle. You have put an end to his splendour and cast his throne to the ground. You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered him with a mantle of shame.' Psalm 89:38-45

Ethan now changes his tone as he thinks about some present crises. He says that God has rejected, spurned, and become angry with His anointed one, Psalm 89:38. Ethan knows that God hadn't forsaken the covenant, but in the present crisis, it felt like it, Psalm 89:39.
It appears that the king himself, that is, either David, Solomon, or another king, probably Jehoiachin, was personally affected and weakened by the crisis. Ethan felt that because the king's days had been shortened, Psalm 89:40-44, and he was covered in shame, Psalm 89:45, that God's covenant wasn't being kept during this crisis.
Some commentators suggest that this is the time when the southern kingdom of Israel, Judah, was being led into captivity, because of their disobedience. That captivity began with the initial captivity of Jehoiachin and ended with the final captivity in 586 B.C.

To those Jews who were experiencing the toughness of captivity, it felt as if God had nullified His covenant and cast down the crown of David, Psalm 89:39. It was the end of Israel's habitation in the land, and so, the people of God became a shame to the name of God among the nations.
You may notice at the end of verse forty-five, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Ethan pausing for a breath as he contemplates his present crisis and God's promise regarding the king.

'How long, LORD? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire? Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all humanity! Who can live and not see death, or who can escape the power of the grave? Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David? Remember, Lord, how your servant has been mocked, how I bear in my heart the taunts of all the nations, the taunts with which your enemies, LORD, have mocked, with which they have mocked every step of your anointed one. Praise be to the LORD forever! Amen and Amen.' Psalm 89:46-52

It appears that Ethan, under the present crisis, wanted to know how long they were going to go through what they were experiencing. He felt that God was hiding Himself from them, Psalm 89:46, that is, he felt God had abandoned them. He felt that God was angry with them, and their king, Psalm 89:46.
Some commentators suggest that Israel was aware that they were being punished for their apostasy by God. They had evidently been listening to Jeremiah, who said that they would go into captivity, Jeremiah 29:10 / Jeremiah 30:16.
Ethan asks God to remember how fleeting life is, Psalm 89:47, which indicates that he's desperate, Psalm 39:5. He asks God who can live and not die and who can escape the power of the grave? Psalm 89:48.
The answer to these questions is obviously, no one. There has only been one with the power to deliver His life from the power of the grave, and that was Jesus Christ, John 2:19.
You may notice at the end of verse forty-eight that some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine Ethan pausing for a breath as he contemplates whether God has abandoned them.

Although in despair, Ethan appeals to God on the basis of what God had promised and swore to David, Psalm 89:49.
Some commentators suggest that he's pleading the case of Israel that was based on the fleetness of life, and then he pleads that God will remember His love and faithfulness He showed Israel in the past.

God did remember His former love and faithfulness when He allowed them to return from captivity. He also appeals to God on the basis of how Israel was mocked and taunted by their enemies and enemies of God's anointed king, Psalm 89:50-51.

Despite the suffering, despite feeling abandoned by God, despite feeling that God was angry with Israel, Ethan still found it necessary to finish by praising God, Psalm 89:52. Notice he encourages everyone to say the 'Amen' twice, Psalm 89:52, and it's with these words, which conclude the third book of the five books of the psalms.

CONCLUSION

Ethan ended his psalm by saying 'amen, amen'. This is used for emphasising purposes; the writer is emphasising the importance of what has been said, Numbers 5:22 / Psalms 41:13 / Psalms 72:19.

The only greater emphasis possible in Jewish literature is to say it or write it three times, and that's only reserved when referring to God, where it's said that He is 'holy, holy, holy', Isaiah 6:3.

The word 'amen' in the Bible means just about the same thing in Hebrew in the Old Testament as it does in Greek in the New Testament; it means 'so be it,' or 'it is so,' and implies truth and verity. Saying the 'amen' is commonplace for Christians; usually, it's said after a prayer, but sometimes it is said during or after the Word has been preached.

Like so many things we practice in Christianity, there's a real danger of saying the 'amen' out of habit and without thinking about what it is we're actually saying. There's also the danger that it just becomes a byword for ending a prayer or sermon with its meaning lost.

With no disrespect to anyone, over the years I've heard countless prayers and countless sermons where I haven't said the 'amen', simply because I haven't clearly understood what was being said, there are other times I won't say the 'amen', simply because I don't agree with what has been said or there was no truth in what was said in that prayer or in that sermon.

No Christian should say the 'amen' if they don't agree with or understand something which was said, especially if it wasn't in accordance with God's will or in line with His Word. No Christian should say the 'amen' just because everyone else does or because they are encouraged to do so by others, Revelation 22:20-21.

CHAPTER 90

INTRODUCTION

In the fourth book of the Psalms, Psalms 90-106, we find the theme of the brokenness of the world, including human mortality, in the context of God's sovereignty.

They teach us that none of us are able to make our own life, never mind the whole world, as it should be. They teach that we will suffer, but we can't protect those we love closest to us from suffering either.

Psalm 90 is ascribed to Moses, and Psalm 101 and Psalm 103 are ascribed to David. In Book 2, we find that eighteen psalms are ascribed to David and one to Solomon, Psalm 72; the rest are anonymous.

In Book 1, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found two hundred and seventy-three times. In Book 2, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found seventy-four times. In Book 3, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found thirteen times, and finally, in Books 4 and 5, the name ‘Yahweh’ is found three-hundred and thirty-nine times. As you can see, the name ‘Yahweh’ is more popular in Book 1.

In Book 1, the name ‘Elohim’ is found fifteen times. In Book 2, the name ‘Elohim’ is found two hundred and seven times. In Book 3, the name ‘Elohim’ is found thirty-six times and finally, in Books 4 and 5, the name ‘Elohim’ is found seven times. As you can see, the name ‘Elohim’ is more popular in Book 2.

In this psalm, Moses expresses his deep feelings concerning the shortness of life. Although there’s no heading for this in the NIV, the first verse of the KJV tells us it is a prayer of Moses, the man of God, Deuteronomy 33:1 / Joshua 14:6 / Ezra 3:2.
Jewish tradition accredits the ten following psalms to Moses, Psalms 91-100. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

‘Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. You turn people back to dust, saying, “Return to dust, you mortals.” A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death, they are like the new grass of the morning: In the morning it springs up new, but by evening it is dry and withered.’ Psalm 90:1-6

It appears this psalm was written sometime during the wilderness wanderings of Israel on their way to Canaan, Psalm 90:1. It was certainly during those years that God was Israel’s constant shelter, refuge, and protection, and more importantly, God dwelt among His people, Deuteronomy 33:27.
On route to Canaan, Moses looked around at the mountains and reflected upon how God existed before any of them, Psalm 90:2. It was God who created them and the whole world. God has no beginning or ending; He existed before anything existed, and He truly is everlasting to everlasting, Psalm 90:2.
During the wilderness wanderings, Moses says time and time again that when God judges people, they return to the dust and therefore He should be feared by all, Psalm 90:3. The word ‘return’ doesn’t mean repent, it was a command of man to return to the dust from which he came, Genesis 3:19.
Moses reminds us that to God ‘a thousand years is like a day’ that has just gone by, Psalm 90:4. In other words, God isn’t retrained by time, 2 Peter 3:8. In contrast to the eternality of God, man is brief as a watch in the night and man I swept away in the sleep of death, Psalm 90:5.
In contrast to the eternality of God, man is like new grass, which is new in the morning but withers in the evening Psalm 90:5-6. In other words, God’s perspective of time’s passing is very different from ours, Isaiah 40:6-8 / 1 Peter 1:24-25.

‘We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due. Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.’ Psalm 90:7-12

Moses now tells us that God, who isn’t restrained by time, has the divine right to judge His own people. God judges His people with wrath and anger because of their iniquities, Psalm 90:7, and their ‘secret sins’, Psalm 90:8 / Romans 3:23 / Romans 3:9-10 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.
People are fools to think they can sin and not be seen by the God who sees everything. Both God and man can see the sin that is carried out in behaviour. But only God can know all the hidden attitudes of sin that are deep within the heart of man. And so, we pass our days under the judgment of God, Psalm 90:9.

In contrast to the eternal nature of God, man and his sinfulness are temporary. While God remains forever, man's life finishes with a moan, Psalm 90:9. In other words, the length of our days is like a sighing breath.
If we're blessed, we will live for seventy or eighty years, but our days will end with trouble and sorrow, Psalm 90:10. We must note that it isn't a promise to live this long, but an estimation of our lifespan.
After all, Moses lived to one-hundred and twenty years of age, Deuteronomy 31:2 / Deuteronomy 34:7. Regardless of the length of life, we are but a breath of wind in comparison to time and when we fly away, that is, die, we will be judged, Psalm 90:10 / Hebrews 9:27.
If we were aware of God's anger, we would fear God more and live our lives right for Him, Psalm 90:11. We would ask God to teach us to number our days, Psalm 90:12, that is, take one day at a time and make the most of that day, Ephesians 5:16, whilst being thankful for the day we now have. No one is promised a tomorrow, James 4:14, so we should learn wisdom from God in our hearts and minds, Psalm 90:12 /James 1:5.

'Relent, LORD! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants. Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendour to their children. May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.' Psalm 90:13-17

After thinking about God's judgement upon His people, Moses now asks God how long He will take to return with compassion for man. He asks Him to relent, not to delay in bringing His presence, compassion, and unfailing love to His people, Psalm 90:13.
Only God can satisfy our souls with His unfailing love; He does this 'in the morning', Psalm 90:14, every morning, Psalm 30:5 / Psalm 49:14 / Psalm 143:8 / Lamentations 3:23, in order that His people may sing songs of joy and be glad, Psalm 90:14.
Moses asks God that their days of gladness would also be many, Psalm 90:15, so many, that Israel's children would see evidence of God's glory, Psalm 90:16 / 2 Corinthians 4:17.
Moses desires that God's favour rest upon His people, and that His works would be established, Psalm 90:17. In other words, He's pleading with God that His salvational work among His people is made known.

CONCLUSION

Moses taught us about the shortness of life, and He asks God to teach His people His ways because life is so short. All too often, we deceive ourselves into thinking that we have a tomorrow when tomorrow isn't promised to anyone, Proverbs 27:1 / Luke 12:20 / James 4:13-15.
As Christians, we need to make the most of today because we're not promised a tomorrow. Imagine how our lives would be different if we truly believed we only had one more day to live?

I'm sure that most of us would have different priorities and possibly an enhanced sense of urgency in what we would do, Matthew 6:33-34 / Ephesians 5:16.
Chris Rice wrote a beautiful song called 'Life means so much', and a few lines from this song will be a good final thought.

Every day is a bank account
And time is our currency
So nobody's rich, nobody's poor
We get 24 hours each
So how are you gonna spend

Will you invest, or squander
Try to get ahead
Or help someone who's under
Teach us to count the days
Teach us to make the days count
Lead us in better ways
That somehow our souls forgot
Life means so much
Every day is a gift you've been given
Make the most of the time every minute you're living.

CHAPTER 91

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist affirms that God is for His people and because of this, His people can fully trust in Him. There is no heading for this psalm, so we don't know who the author is; however, Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

'Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.' Psalm 91:1-8

Notice how the use of the first and second-person pronouns is alternated throughout the psalm. The psalmist proclaimed his own personal faith and then proclaimed comfort to the people.

The psalmist begins by telling us that God is a shelter and whoever dwells in Him will find rest, Psalm 91:1 / Psalm 27:5 / Psalm 31:20. We find rest in the 'shadow' of the Almighty, Psalm 91:1, that is, we find protection, comfort, and care in God.
The psalmist tells us that God is their refuge and fortress, Psalm 91:2, that is, God is their safe place and protector. God is their God, Psalm 91:2, which tells us about their close relationship with Him; they trust Him completely. God protects His people from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence with His feathers and places them under His wings, Psalm 91:3. Obviously, God doesn't have feathers or wings; these descriptions are used as metaphors to describe God as a bird who shelters young chicks under his wings, Psalm 61:4. As chicks flee for safety under the wings of the hen, so we flee for the protection of God, Matthew 23:37.
God's faithfulness will be His people's shield and rampart, Psalm 91:4 / Deuteronomy 32:11. In other words, when an error is spread about by false teachers, the truth of God's word will keep us from being tossed back and forth, Ephesians 4:11-16.
With God as our refuge and shield, we have nothing to fear from anyone, Psalm 91:5. God would protect His people from those who would attack in the night and those who would fire arrows in the day, Psalm 91:5 / Isaiah 28:2.

He would protect His people from the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, Psalm 91:6 / Deuteronomy 32:24, and plagues that destroy at midday, Psalm 91:6. In other words, no matter what time of the day terror comes, God would protect His people.

It doesn't matter how many came to destroy God's people; God would protect them, even against the odds. He would protect them, Psalm 91:7. While God protects His people, they were to observe with their own eyes how God punishes the wicked, Psalm 91:8.

'If you say, "The LORD is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.' Psalm 91:9-13

The psalmist now sets out the terms and conditions for a person to receive God's protection. They have to proclaim that God is indeed their refuge and that they must choose the Most High as their dwelling place, Psalm 91:9.

In other words, if they make God their only source of life, then God promises that no harm will overtake them and no disaster will come near their tent, Psalm 91:10.

The psalmist now describes another aspect of God's protection for His people, that is, His angels, Psalm 91:11. His angels will guard His people, lift them up in their hands, so that they will not strike their foot against a stone, Psalm 91:11-12.

In other words, God would send His angels to protect those who are His, Hebrews 1:14. You may recall that these promises were quoted but twisted by Satan when Jesus was being tempted on the mountain, Matthew 4:5-7 / Luke 4:9-12.

God's protection is also seen in the lion and the cobra, Psalm 91:13, that is, if they put their trust in the Lord, they would be able to do what men normally would not be able to do, that is, face lions and trample on snakes, Psalm 91:13 / Mark 16:18.

'Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. With long life, I will satisfy him and show him my salvation." Psalm 91:14-16

Notice that it is God Himself who is speaking here. God knows those who love Him, John 14:15 / Romans 5:5 / 1 John 4:18, and He acknowledges their names, Psalm 91:14. This again speaks of a close relationship with God.

Because of God's people's love for Him, God promises to rescue and protect them.

He also promises to answer His people's prayers when they call upon Him in times of trouble, Psalm 91:15. He promises to deliver and honour His people, and He promises to give them long life, Psalm 91:16 / Exodus 20:12 / Proverbs 3:2 / Proverbs 3:16, and salvation, Psalm 91:16, that is, salvation from death, 1 Timothy 4:8.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist has clearly got a close relationship with God, as they know God's Name and who He is and in turn, God has a close relationship with the psalmist as He knows those who love Him by Name.

God knows each of us intimately, Luke 12:7; He knows us by Name, Isaiah 49:1, and He knows those who truly love Him, 1 Corinthians 8:3 / 1 John 4:7. Sadly, many people profess to know God and even love Him, yet they don't obey His will, John 14:23-24. We can't claim to know or love God but not do His will, Matthew 7:22-23.

If we want to have or maintain a close relationship with God, we must learn to speak to Him in prayer regularly, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, acknowledging that He knows us intimately, Psalm 139:2.
If we want to have or maintain a close relationship with God, we need to learn to draw closer to Him through reading and learning from His Word, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
If we want to have or maintain a close relationship with God, not only should we read and learn from His Word, but we must also learn to do what it says, James 1:22-25.

CHAPTER 92

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find the psalmist speaking about how the wicked are prospering; however, in the end, they will be destroyed. The justice of God will be shown, Psalm 37 / Psalm 49 / Psalm 74, and God will be praised because of His justice.

HEADING

'A psalm. A song. For the Sabbath day.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading for this psalm doesn't tell us the author, so we don't know who the author is; however, Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32. This song was to be sung on the Sabbath day, which tells us the Sabbath day wasn't only a day of rest for Israel, Exodus 35:2, but also a day of worship, Leviticus 23:3.

'It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp. For you make me glad by your deeds, LORD; I sing for joy at what your hands have done. How great are your works, LORD, how profound your thoughts! Senseless people do not know, fools do not understand, that though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be destroyed forever. But you, LORD, are forever exalted.' Psalm 92:1-8

The psalmist begins by revealing an everlasting truth, and that is, it is good to praise the LORD, Psalm 92:1. It's good to give thanks to the Lord for all the good that He does in our lives, and when we think about what He has done in our lives, it will always lead to praising His Name.

When we think about what God has done in our lives, it's always good to make music to His Name, Psalm 92:1 / Ephesians 5:19 / Colossians 3:16. The psalmist starts their day by proclaiming God's love in the morning and ends their day by proclaiming God's faithfulness, Psalm 92:2.
We can imagine the psalmist encouraging everyone to start and end every day with these proclamations of thanksgiving. These proclamations are made to the music of instruments, the ten-stringed lyre, Psalm 92:3 / Isaiah 5:12, and the harp, Psalm 92:3 / Isaiah 5:12.
They brought a pleasant sound to their ears as they poured out their heart in praise to the Lord. The proclamations were made from a glad heart, which resulted in singing praises to God because of the things God had done.

The psalmist now praises the greatness of God's works, Psalm 92:4 / Job 11:7, and acknowledges how profound God's thoughts really are compared to mankind's, Psalm 92:5 / Isaiah 28:29 / Romans 11:33-34.
The 'senseless' and the 'fools' who think that they are smarter than God, Psalm 92:6. A senseless person doesn't think about things that are above this world, Psalm 49:10 / Psalm 73:22 / Proverbs 12:1 / Proverbs 30:2.
They don't see the work of God in the righteous, they behave like an animal which shows no rationale, and like a fool who shows no common sense, Isaiah 1:2.
We can almost imagine the psalmist looking around and watching the wicked prosper. They appear to grow like grass, and they appear to flourish, but the psalmist knows their end; they will be destroyed forever, Psalm 92:7. While the wicked perish, God will be exalted forever, Psalm 92:8. In other words, the prosperity of the wicked is only temporary, but God is everlasting.

'For surely your enemies, LORD, surely your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered. You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; fine oils have been poured on me. My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries; my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes. The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, "The LORD is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him." Psalm 92:9-15

Notice the psalmist repeats the words, 'surely your enemies', Psalm 92:9. This is for emphasis purposes. They do not doubt that God's enemies will perish and be scattered, Psalm 92:9 / Job 21:18 / Isaiah 17:13 / Isaiah 29:5 / Hosea 13:3.
While God's enemies perish, God will 'exalt His horn', Psalm 92:10, that is, He will strengthen the righteous with the power a wild ox has, Psalm 92:10 / Job 39:9-12.
The anointing with fine oils brought refreshment and honour, Psalm 92:10, signifies the blessing and power and enabling of God poured out upon the one anointed, 1 Samuel 16:13.
The psalmist is also blessed in seeing his adversaries being defeated, and hearing his foes being routed out, Psalm 92:11 / Romans 8:37. Because their adversaries and foes have been defeated, the righteous will 'flourish like a palm tree', Psalm 92:12. In other words, they will prosper and experience the best life has to offer, Psalm 1:3 / Matthew 21:8 / John 10:10.
Because their adversaries and foes have been defeated, the righteous will 'grow like a cedar of Lebanon', Psalm 92:12, that is, they will be strong and useful, and be able to endure, Isaiah 2:13.
Because their adversaries and foes have been defeated, the righteous will 'be planted in the house of the Lord and will flourish in God's courts', Psalm 92:13. In other words, they will live in the very presence of God Himself and they will flourish, Matthew 21:12.
Because the righteous will live in God's presence, they will 'still bear fruit in old age', Psalm 92:14 / Deuteronomy 34:7. They will grow to maturity and be fresh and green, that is, active until the day they die, 2 Corinthians 4:16.

As they bear fruit, they will proclaim the LORD is upright, Psalm 92:15 / Psalm 25:8; they will proclaim that God is their Rock, Psalm 92:15 / Isaiah 26:4, that is, their stability, and they will proclaim that there is no wickedness in Him, Psalm 92:15 / Psalm 5:4, that is, His ways are pure.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist spoke of those who would be in the very presence of God being able to bear fruit, despite being old in age. Sadly, among many congregations, the elderly are often overlooked and forgotten about.

Many congregations forget that the elderly were once young and have and continue to invest a lot of time in the lives of other Christians, Psalm 37:25 / 1 Timothy 5:3-4 / Galatians 6:10.
Many congregations forget that being old and having grandchildren is actually a blessing from God, Proverbs 17:6. They forget that it's those very same elderly people who are teaching their grandchildren the ways of God, Psalm 128:6.
One of the biggest blunders for many congregations is that they don't recognise the wisdom that the elderly can add to a congregation, Proverbs 16:31 / Proverbs 20:29 / Job 12:12. The elderly have lived longer and learned many life lessons, and they have learned to submit to the Scriptures, Psalm 119:100.
Although some people look upon old age as a curse, the elderly often recognise that being old is often the best time of their lives. The young people within a congregation must recognise that the elderly still have a place within the Lord's church.

They are not there just to make up the numbers and fill the pews; they are an important part of the kingdom of God, and they are still very useful, Deuteronomy 34:7. Despite being older, just like the psalmist says, they can still bear fruit to the glory of God, Psalm 71:18 / John 15:5.

CHAPTER 93

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm which speaks of the sovereign reign of God over all things, Psalm 47 / Psalm 96-99. Figurative language is used to describe how God demonstrates His power over the world.
There is no heading for this psalm, so we don't know who the author is; however, Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

'The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure. Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity. The seas have lifted up, LORD, the seas have lifted up their voice; the seas have lifted up their pounding waves. Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea—the LORD on high is mighty. Your statutes, LORD, stand firm; holiness adorns your house for endless days.' Psalm 93:1-5

The psalmist begins by reminding us of an eternal truth, and that is, the LORD reigns, Psalm 93:1 / 1 Chronicles 16:31 / Psalm 47:8 / Isaiah 52:7 / Revelation 19:6. He is robed in majesty, Psalm 93:1 / Isaiah 6:1, and armed with strength, Psalm 93:1 / Matthew 5:38-41.
His majesty and strength are established, firm and secure, Psalm 93:1, that is, the way God created the world cannot be moved unless He chooses to do so.
Not only did God establish His creation, but He also established His throne, Psalm 93:2, which means that He is eternal, Psalm 90:2. He has always been, and there is no one else like Him.
The seas which have lifted up their voices, Psalm 93:3, and the profound waves, Psalm 93:3, are figurative for those who oppose God, Jeremiah 50:32 / Jeremiah 51:8 / Revelation 18:1-2. They appear to be unstoppable and destructive in nature, but the threat of the nations that opposed God was only as loud as the sound of ocean waves.
Delitzsch, in his commentary, says the following.

'The sea with its mighty mass of waters, with the constant unrest of its waves, with its ceaseless pressing against the land and foaming against the rocks, is an emblem of the Gentile world alienated from God and at enmity against Him. The rivers, floods, are emblems of worldly kingdoms, the Nile stands for Egypt, the Tigris for Assyria, and the Euphrates for Babylon.'

Despite the thunder of the great waves, despite the might of the breakers of the sea, despite the destructive nature of the seas, Psalm 93:4, those who oppose God are no match for God and the power He has, Psalm 93:4 / Psalm 65:7 / Job 38:11.
The psalmists know that God's sovereignty and strength are seen in that His statutes remain firm, Psalm 93:5 / John 1:11 / Ephesians 1:20-22 / Philippians 2:5-11, and His holiness adorns His house, Psalm 93:5 / 1 Corinthians 3:17 / 1 Peter 2:9. God's power, sovereignty, strength and holiness are eternal and unchanging, Psalm 93:5 / Psalm 23:6 / Revelation 21:22-22:5.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist spoke about the awesome power of God as seen in His creation and His control over the elements of the world. People often talk about 'powerful' speakers, but the real power is found in God's Word itself.

Just as God has put His power into a seed to reproduce after its kind, He has put His power in the Gospel. It's God's system by which He could be just and still justify the sinner, Romans 3:25-26.
It is God's power to root out the love, practice, guilt, and penalty of sin. It's not God's power to save politically, socially, financially, physically, or mentally, though all are influenced by it. It's God's power to salvation, both now and in eternity.

In the Gospel, we find 'the righteousness of God,' that is, the righteous acts which God ordained, Acts 10:34-35. The plan of salvation by which men are made righteous before God, 1 John 3:6. Because of sin, man's right relationship with God was broken, Isaiah 59:1-2, and to restore that broken relationship means.
It is called 'the righteousness of God' because it is made possible by Him without any help or merit of man. It is 'revealed' in the Gospel. The Gospel reveals God's plan to make man righteous, to restore the sinner back to a proper relationship with God.

CHAPTER 94

INTRODUCTION

This is a psalm which focuses on the injustices in life that the righteous are facing due to the conduct of those who are morally wicked, Psalm 37 / Psalm 49 / Psalm 72. Despite all the injustices caused by the wicked, the psalmist relies upon the grace of God to help them through.

There is no heading for this psalm, so we don't know who the author is; however, Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and in Deuteronomy 32.

'The LORD is a God who avenges. O God who avenges, shine forth. Rise up, Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve. How long, LORD, will the wicked, how long will the wicked be jubilant? They pour out arrogant words; all the evildoers are full of boasting. They crush your people, LORD; they oppress your inheritance. They slay the widow and the foreigner; they murder the fatherless. They say, "The LORD does not see; the God of Jacob takes no notice." Psalm 94:1-7

The psalmist begins by informing us that vengeance belongs to the LORD, and because God is the One who avenges, they ask God to shine forth, Psalm 94:1. They ask God to rise up, Judge the earth, and pay back to the proud what they deserve, Psalm 94:2.

In other words, because of all the injustices of the wicked, they called on God to render vengeance on those who were persecuting His people, Deuteronomy 32:35 / Jeremiah 51:56 / Romans 12:19.

The psalmist now asks God how long before He will rise and take vengeance on the wicked, Psalm 94:3 / Revelation 6:9-10. Notice how the psalmist describes the wicked; first of all, he describes what they do with their mouths.

They pour out arrogant words, Psalm 94:4, that is, they use words of defiance, Proverbs 14:16 / Romans 12:16, and they are full of boasting, Psalm 94:4, that is, they boast about themselves, Jeremiah 9:23 / 1 Corinthians 1:31.

Secondly, the psalmist describes what they do physically to others. They crush God's people, Psalm 94:5, that is, they destroy God's people, Isaiah 5:18-24 / Isaiah 3:15 / Lamentations 3:34.

They oppress God's inheritance, Psalm 94:5, that is, they put pressure on God's own people, Deuteronomy 32:9.

They slay the widows and the foreigners and murder the fatherless, Psalm 94:6, that is, they attack and kill those who are the weakest and most vulnerable in society, those who were unable to defend themselves, Psalm 68:5 / Psalm 82:3 / Isaiah 1:17.

They do all these things and say that God doesn't see what they are doing. They arrogantly say the God of Jacob takes no notice, Psalm 94:6, that is, He just ignores what they are doing, 2 Kings 21:16. Though the wicked think that they can conceal their evil deeds from God, they will eventually reap the vengeance of God, Psalm 94:7.

'Take notice, you senseless ones among the people; you fools, when will you become wise? Does he who fashioned the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see? Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge? The LORD knows all human plans; he knows that they are futile. Blessed is the one you discipline, LORD, the one you teach from your law; you grant them relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked. For the LORD will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance. Judgment will again be founded on righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow it.' Psalm 94:8-15

After describing the evil actions of the wicked who were saying, The God of Jacob takes no notice, the psalmist now tells the wicked to take notice. He calls them senseless and fools because they have no real understanding of God, Psalm 94:8 / Psalm 92:6.

The psalmist asks a series of questions, when will they become wise? Psalm 94:8. This can only happen when they acknowledge the existence of God and are fearful of Him, Proverbs 1:7.
The next question has an obvious answer; it was God who created the human ear, Psalm 94:9, and so, he can certainly hear what's being said by these wicked people.
The next question also has an obvious answer; it was God who created the human eye, Psalm 94:9, and so, he can certainly see what's being done by these wicked people. The next question also has an obvious answer; it was God who created the nations, and so He has the right to discipline them, Psalm 94:10 / Job 12:23.
The next question also has an obvious answer; God is the great teacher and lacks no knowledge, Psalm 94:10 / 1 John 3:20. The psalmist says that God knows all our plans and He knows they are futile, Psalm 94:11.
No one can be compared to God and the wisdom and knowledge He has, Psalm 94:11 / Romans 1:21 / 1 Corinthians 3:20. God is omniscient, and so, He knows all things. God is omnipresent and is wherever we are. God is omnipotent, and so, He is able to bring judgment on the wicked wherever they are.
Those who are wise enough to listen to God will be blessed by God when He disciplines them, Psalm 94:13 / Hebrews 12:5-11. He will teach them His laws, Psalm 94:12 / Proverbs 9:7 / Job 4:3 / Psalm 16:7, and give them relief from their troubles when trouble comes, Psalm 94:13 / Exodus 33:14 / Matthew 11:28.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Two great blessings are mentioned here for the sufferers. 1. God will give them peace and rest spiritually, even during their afflictions, and 2. Meanwhile, the pit is being dug for the wicked into which they shall surely fall. It is evident that God's punishment of evil-doers, while inevitable and certain, in many instances must wait until their wickedness has run its course, or b. until God's preparation for their punishment is complete.'

The psalmist assures the righteous that God will not reject or forsake His inheritance, Psalm 94:14, that is, Israel, Deuteronomy 31:6 / 1 Samuel 12:22 / 1 Kings 6:13 / Romans 11:1-2. God also promises that His righteousness will reign again, and as a result, the righteous will follow it, Psalm 94:15.
There is a final judgment day when all will be judged, Romans 2:6-10, and the righteous will be delivered out of the oppression of the wicked, for the wicked will pass away, Matthew 25:46 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.

'Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will take a stand for me against evildoers? Unless the LORD had given me help, I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death. When I said, "My foot is slipping," your unfailing love, LORD, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy. Can a corrupt throne be allied with you—a throne that brings on misery by its decrees? The wicked band together against the righteous and condemn the innocent to death. But the LORD has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge. He will repay them for their sins and destroy them for their wickedness; the LORD our God will destroy them.' Psalm 94:16-23

The psalmist now asks who will rise up with him against the wicked? Who will take a stand for him against evildoers? Psalm 94:16. This is an acknowledgement of their own human limitations concerning those who are wicked. These are rhetorical questions that the psalmist answered himself.
Though no one would stand with the psalmist, they were assured that God was there for them, Psalm 94:17. God would help them; if it wasn't for God, they would have dwelt in the silence of death, Psalm 94:17, that is, they would have gone to the grave, Amos 8:3.
It was because of God's unfailing love that the psalmist's foot was saved from slipping, Psalm 94:18, that is, God supported them and stopped them from falling. When the psalmist was anxious, God calmed them down, Psalm 94:19. They were comforted when they realised that God was with them, Romans 8:28.
The psalmist now asks two more questions: Can a corrupt throne be allied with you, a throne that brings on misery by its decrees? Psalm 94:20. Sometimes it appears that iniquity is enthroned in society, and so, righteous people have no chance, 1 John 1:6.

The wicked ruler uses the law to carry out their wicked deeds against the people, Psalm 94:21, but they can't claim they are working on God's behalf. The wicked banding together against the righteous and condemning the innocent to death, Psalm 94:21, is common among those who hate God's people, 1 John 3:13.

Despite the wicked oppressing the weak and the righteous in society, the psalmist knows that God is their fortress, Psalm 94:22, that is, a place of security. They know that God is their Rock, Psalm 94:22, that is, their place of refuge.

The psalmist ends by reminding the righteous that God will bring down the unrighteous and He will deliver the oppressed, Psalm 94:23. Knowing that the wicked will eventually come to an end gives confidence to the righteous, Matthew 25:46 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.

God will repay the wicked for their sins and destroy them for their wickedness, Psalm 94:23. In other words, they are going to reap what they have sown, 1 Kings 2:32 / Esther 3:8-15 / Esther 5:14 / Esther 7:4-10 / Hosea 8:7 / Galatians 6:7-8.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist ended this psalm by reminding us that the wicked will reap what they sow, Romans 14:12. The Bible teaches that we reap what we sow in this life, Hosea 8:7 / Matthew 7:15 / Romans 2:6 / 2 Corinthians 9:6, but it would be a serious mistake to believe that we can escape the consequences of our actions, Romans 2:6.

In Galatians 6:7-8, Paul is basically teaching what he's been teaching throughout the book of Galatians; he's contrasting all those who sow to please the Spirit, Galatians 5:16 / Galatians 5:18 / Galatians 5:25, with those who sow to please the flesh, Galatians 5:13 / Galatians 5:19. Those who sow to please the flesh will reap the curse of God, Galatians 1:6-9, but those who reap to please the Spirit will reap eternal life, Galatians 5:21.

It's very true that how we live in this life will affect where we end up for eternity, and it's also true if we don't know God or obey the Gospel, we will end up in hell, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9.

CHAPTER 95

INTRODUCTION

Most commentators suggest that this psalm, through to Psalm 100, are psalms of worship when Israel gathered for the Sabbath Day worship. The Hebrew writer quotes this psalm throughout Hebrews 3:7-4:13.

There is no heading for this psalm, so we don't know who the author is; however, when we read Hebrews 4:7, we find the writer quoting many parts of this psalm and attributes the authorship to David. Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

'Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.' Psalm 95:1-7

The psalmist begins by asking everyone to join them in singing songs of joy to the LORD, and they ask everyone to join them in shouts to the Rock of their salvation, Psalm 95:1 / Psalm 18:2. This is clearly speaking about communal worship, where everyone is to take part in their public worship of God, which involves singing praises to God.
When they worshipped God, their worship was directed at God, their Rock of salvation, and they all knelt before Him, Psalm 95:2, which means they were aware that they were in the presence of God.
They were to bow down before Him with thanksgiving in their hearts, Psalm 95:2, because of who God is and what God has done in their lives. They extolled God with music and song, Psalm 95:2.
If we learn anything from these verses is that our worship should be directed at God and everything we do in worship is for God. Worshipping God isn't the time for entertainment; it's a time of deep reflection on who He is and what He has done and continues to do for His people.

When we reflect upon God in our worship, we will acknowledge that He truly is a great God and we will acknowledge that He truly is the great King above all gods, Psalm 95:3.
In other words, when we worship God, we reflect upon His greatness and remove any thoughts of any other god. We may not worship other gods today as Israel did in the past, but we still may have things which we have made gods in our lives, such as our job, our families, money or even food.

God is so great, He holds the depths of the earth in His hands, the mountain peaks belong to Him, Psalm 95:4, and the sea belongs to God since He made it, Psalm 95:5.
In other words, He reigns supreme over His creation. We pour our hearts out to God in worship because we understand that God is everywhere and in control of all creation.

After declaring the greatness of God over His creation and why He deserves to be worshipped, the psalmist once again invites everyone to come and bow down, Psalm 95:6 / Judges 7:5-6 / 1 Kings 8:54 / 2 Kings 1:13 / 2 Chronicles 7:3 / Isaiah 45:23, to worship God.
They invite everyone to kneel before the LORD, their Maker, Psalm 95:6 / Daniel 6:10 / 2 Chronicles 6:13 / Luke 22:41 / Acts 7:60 / Acts 9:40 / Acts 20:36 / Acts 21:5. The reason everyone should bow down and kneel before God is simply because He is our God, we are the people of His pasture, Psalm 95:7 / Psalm 23:1-3, and the flock under His care, Psalm 95:7 / Numbers 4:28 / Numbers 31:49 / Judges 9:29.
In other words, His people belong to Him, and God belongs to them, like a shepherd cares and protects his flock, He cares for His people and protects them like the Good Shepherd, John 10:1-18.

> 'Today, if only you would hear his voice, "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years, I was angry with that generation; I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" Psalm 95:8-11

The psalmist now tells us that not only should God be worshipped with singing and thanksgiving for being the great God that He is, but He should also be listened to worship, Psalm 95:8. When we worship God, we should listen to what He is saying to us when we hear His word being read and preached.
God tells them not to harden their hearts as they did at Meribah, Psalm 95:8. This warning is emphasised three times in the Book of Hebrews, Hebrews 3:7 / Hebrews 3:15, and in Hebrews 4:7, the writer adds the word 'today', to emphasise the urgency to listen to God with soft hearts.
The Hebrew word for 'quarrelling' is Meribah, Psalm 95:8, which is the place where Israel rebelled because they had no water, Exodus 17:1-7 / Numbers 20:1-13, and the word for 'testing' is Massah, Psalm 95:8.
Because they thought of themselves, they tested and tried the patience of God by complaining about their circumstances. They doubted whether God could care for them, and thus were actually putting God to the test, Psalm 95:9.

God is telling them that, after everything He did for them in bringing them out of Egypt, they should have listened to His voice and worshipped Him, Hebrews 3:9. Instead, Israel hardened their hearts; that is, they rebelled against God at Meribah, Numbers 20:1-13.

They refused to trust God and enter the Promised Land, Numbers 13:30-14:10, and as a result of their rebellion, God condemned that generation, and they died in the wilderness of Massah, Numbers 14:22-23 / Numbers 14:28-32.

Because of their rebellion God was angry with Israel for forty years, Psalm 95:10, because of Israel's self-centeredness, they were condemned to wander for forty years in the wilderness, Joshua 5:6.

God says their hearts had gone astray, it's impossible to worship God if our hearts aren't pure and it's impossible to worship God if we don't know His ways, Hebrews 3:10.

Because Israel's hearts had gone astray and because they didn't know God's ways, God swore an oath in His anger, Psalm 95:11 / Hebrews 3:11. He swore that Israel would never enter His rest, that is, those who rebelled against Him and didn't trust Him, Numbers 14:26-38.

CONCLUSION

After encouraging the readers not to give up, the author of Hebrews gives a stern warning based on Israel's history, Hebrews 3:7-11. The parallel in Hebrews is striking as we remember that this isn't written to unbelievers in the world. This is being written to Christians as a warning.

You have been delivered from the slavery of sin, as the Israelites had been delivered from Egyptian slavery. You have been baptised and become part of Christ just as the Israelites were 'baptised' in the Red Sea, 1 Corinthians 10:1. Do not now harden your heart after all that you have experienced. You have seen the mighty works of God; do not turn back.

Now the writer draws a couple of important lessons. First, 'take care and be on your guard for an unbelieving heart', Hebrews 3:12-15. Now I believe all of us would say that we do not have an unbelieving heart, so we are in the clear, but let's back up for a moment and examine what he means.

The reference is to those in Psalm 95, who put God to the test. They did not believe that God would provide for them, and they, therefore, complained about water. They did not put their full trust in God concerning their lives, and they did not believe God would provide.

The second lesson is the necessity to 'encourage each other every day'. We need to be encouraged every day so that we are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Sin lies to us, sin tells us that what we are doing is okay. It makes us put our trust in it rather than God. Sin deceives us into thinking that our hearts are not hardening against God by committing sin.

We need to encourage or exhort each other every day. Every day is today. When tomorrow comes, it will be today. This is a call for a deeper fellowship and a regular fellowship with one another to fight against the hardening of the heart.

This explains to us why meeting together is important. When we miss, our hearts grow hard. We must accept this truth: the longer I am disconnected from my family in Christ, the easier it is to stay away from God. Encourage each other every day!

This is the remedy against a hard heart. Isn't it interesting that more praying or more Bible reading is not the answer here? Encourage each other every day to prevent a hard heart. But there is another reason why this is so important, because 'we have come to share in Christ'.

We are companions and partners with Christ. We are sharing in Christ, as the writer argued in Hebrews 2. He is our brother, but we only remain in this family if we hold our original confidence to the end.
In Hebrews 3:15, the writer quotes Psalm 95, again to make the point emphatic. Hardening our hearts is to not hold on to the confidence that we had at the beginning of our journey with God.
Now I think we can flip the language and understand our warning; if we do not hold on to our original confidence, then we do not share with Christ and are not in God's family.

CHAPTER 96

INTRODUCTION

This psalm speaks about the deity of God and His sovereignty over all things. The psalmist calls upon the nations of the world to pay their respect to the One true God.

The words within this psalm are more or less the same as we find in 1 Chronicles 16:23-33, where David first appointed Asaph and his associates to give praise to the Lord.
There is no heading for this psalm, so we don't know who the author is; however, Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

'Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples. For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendour and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.' Psalm 96:1-6

The psalmist begins by asking the nations to praise the Lord in song; they are to sing a new song, Psalm 96:1 / Psalm 33:3 / Psalm 98:1 / Psalm 149:1 / Isaiah 42:10. The reason for singing a new song is to renew their hearts to praise God in worship, Revelation 5:9.
The psalmist encourages all of the earth to sing to the Lord and praise His Name, Psalm 96:2 / 1 Chronicles 16:23, and proclaim His salvation day after day, Psalm 96:2, that is, without ceasing. God's people were to declare His glory to all nations, they were to declare His marvellous deeds to everyone they met, Psalm 96:3 / 1 Chronicles 16:24.
The Lord is great, Psalm 96:4 / Psalm 77:13, and He alone is worthy of praise, Psalm 96:4 / 1 Chronicles 16:25. God and God alone is to be feared above all other gods, Psalm 96:4, because He isn't like any of the manmade gods. All the gods of the nations were simply idols, Psalm 96:5 / 1 Chronicles 16:26, but God is the One who created the heavens and the earth, Psalm 96:5 / Genesis 1:1.
These idols are nothing compared to God, Job 13:4 / Jeremiah 14:14 / 1 Corinthians 8:4 / 1 Corinthians 10:19. God calls upon all the nations of the earth to give up their idols and turn to Him and worship Him, Psalm 115:4-8 / Isaiah 40:18-23 / Isaiah 44:9-20.
Splendour and majesty are before God, Psalm 96:6 / 1 Chronicles 16:27, that is, He is great and powerful, as a mighty royal king, strength and glory are in His sanctuary, Psalm 96:6 / 1 Chronicles 16:27 / Hebrews 8:5.

'Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." The world is firmly established, it

cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.' Psalm 96:7-13

The psalmist now asks the families of all the nations to ascribe to the Lord, Psalm 96:7 / 1 Chronicles 16:28, that is, God wasn't just the God of Israel but the God of all the nations, Genesis 12:3.

They are to ascribe to Him, glory and strength, the glory due to His Name, Psalm 96:7-8 / Psalm 96:1-13:28. In other words, God is truly worthy of the praise from everyone.

After asking the families of the nations to praise God, the psalmist now invites the families of the nations to bring an offering to God, Psalm 96:8 / Isaiah 1:13, and come into His courts, Psalm 96:8, where the sacrifices were made, Matthew 21:12.

The psalmist invites all the families of the nations to come and worship God in the splendour of His holiness, Psalm 96:9 / 1 Chronicles 16:29-30. In other words, come and worship God, and you will see the beauty of His holiness.

When they come face to face with the Creator of the world, they will tremble before Him, Psalm 96:9. The nations would tremble when they understand that God reigns, Psalm 96:10.

God the Father now reigns over all things. When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, He assumed kingdom reign over all things, Ephesians 1:20-24 / Philippians 2:5-11.

The nations would tremble when they hear that it was God who firmly created the earth, which cannot be moved, Psalm 96:10. They will tremble when they hear that this same God is the judge of all the people of the earth, Psalm 96:10.

The psalmist now calls upon the heavens and all the earth to rejoice and be glad, Psalm 96:11. They call upon the seas, and everything which lives in them, the fields and everything within them, and the trees to rejoice because God reigns above them all, Psalm 96:11-12 / 1 Chronicles 16:32-33 / Isaiah 35:1-10 / Romans 8:21.

All creation comes before the Lord, Psalm 72:2-4 / Isaiah 11:2-5, because God is the One who comes to judge the earth, Psalm 96:13. He comes to judge with righteousness and faithfulness, Psalm 96:13. At the end of time, when Jesus returns, He will come to judge all things, Acts 17:30-31 / 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 / Revelation 20:1-12.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is coming again! This is the great expectation of all Christians. Nothing is more clearly taught in the New Testament. In every age, some have boldly predicted the exact time of our Lord's return. They have always been mistaken.

The Bible clearly teaches that no man knows when Jesus will come again, Matthew 24:36 / 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 / 2 Peter 3:10. Paul declared that the second coming would be preceded by a falling away from the truth, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

Peter said that before Christ's return, scoffers would ask, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' 2 Peter 3:4. As a result, many will be totally unprepared when He does come. Since we cannot know when He will come again, the important thing for every person is to be fully prepared.

The second advent will be seen by all, Matthew 24:27 / Revelation 1:7. Christ will be accompanied by His angels when He returns, Matthew 16:27, and He will come back with ten thousand of His saints, Jude 14. At the second coming, the dead will arise from the grave, John 5:28-29 / 1 Corinthians 15:23.

Perhaps the clearest explanation of the second coming is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. Notice the sequence of events. 1. Christ will descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God. 2. The dead in

Christ will arise from the grave. 3. After the dead have arisen, the living will be caught up with them in the clouds. 4. They will meet the Lord in the air.

What will happen to the earth when Christ returns? Peter answers this question in 2 Peter 3:10-12. The great judgment will follow the return of Christ. None shall be able to escape it, Hebrews 9:27. As they appear before Christ the judge, the righteous will be set on the right hand, the unrighteous on the left.

The righteous will be rewarded with an everlasting home in heaven, the unrighteous will be consigned to the eternal punishment of hell, Matthew 25:31-46. After the judgment, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God.

Every enemy, including death, will have been overcome, 1 Corinthians 15:54-57, and Jesus, who has been reigning, will deliver up His authority to God, the Father, and will Himself be subject to Him, 1 Corinthians 15:24. The righteous will dwell with God in the eternal home of unspeakable beauty, John 14:2-3.

CHAPTER 97

INTRODUCTION

This psalm appears to continue from the previous psalm, Psalm 98, which says that God is coming to judge the world. In this psalm, we find the psalmist reminding the righteous that they can rejoice at the judgement, especially those who have been oppressed by the wicked.

There is no heading for this psalm, so we don't know who the author is; however, Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

'The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice. Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side. His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all peoples see his glory.' Psalm 97:1-6

The psalmist begins by reminding us that the Lord reigns, Psalm 97:1 / Psalm 96:10, and because God wasn't only the God of Israel but of all the world and because He is in control of everything, the earth should be glad and rejoice, Psalm 97:1 / Psalm 95 / Hebrews 1:3.

The psalmist remembers when God appeared to Israel in the form of a dark cloud, Psalm 97:2 / Exodus 19:16-20 / Psalm 18:7-15 / Psalm 104:3 / Daniel 7:13 / Matthew 24:30 / Hebrews 12:29 / Revelation 1:7.

Another reason why the earth can rejoice is that God's throne is built upon righteousness and justice, Psalm 97:2. At Mount Sinai, fire went before God and consumed His foes, Psalm 97:3.

At Sinai, lightning lit up the world, Psalm 97:4 / Exodus 19:16-21 / Deuteronomy 4:11 / Deuteronomy 5:23 / Psalm 77:18 / Psalm 104:32 / Habakkuk 3:6-10. These were all signs of God's glory and that God was in their presence; the earth saw it, and the result was trembling, Psalm 97:4.

Although mountains are huge and look immovable, when in the presence of the Lord of all the earth, Joshua 3:11 / Joshua 3:13, they melt, like wax, Psalm 97:5. In other words, they move out of the way when God is present and speaks, Judges 5:5 / Revelation 20:11 / Micah 1:4 / Nahum 1:5. The heavens proclaim God's righteousness and everyone sees His glory, Psalm 97:6 / 1 Corinthians 15:52.

'All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols worship him, all you gods! Zion hears and rejoices, and the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments, LORD. For you, LORD, are the Most High

over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked. Light shines on the righteous and joy on the upright in heart. Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name.' Psalm 97:7-12

The psalmist now turns their attention to those who worship and boast about their idols, Psalm 97:7 / Isaiah 20:5. The psalmist tells them to turn to God and worship Him, Psalm 97:7 / Job 6:20 / Psalm 22:5 / Psalm 25:2 / Hebrews 1:6. Although the whole earth rejoices in God's righteous judgment, His people, Psalm 97:8, that is, Zion and Judah, will especially have a reason to rejoice, Psalm 97:8. God is Most High, so high that He is to be exalted far above all other gods, Psalm 97:9 / Ephesians 1:21.

The psalmist encourages God's people to love the LORD but hate evil, Psalm 97:10 / Isaiah 1:16-20 / 1 John 5:2. It is God who guards His people, and it is God who delivers them from the hand of the wicked, Psalm 97:10.

In other words, because God comes to help His people, His people have a reason to rejoice, Psalm 97:11 / Daniel 3:16-17 / Daniel 3:24-25 / Daniel 6:18-23 / Romans 8:28 / 1 Corinthians 10:13. Those who are righteous will rejoice in the Lord, not just because of who He is but also because His Name is holy, Psalm 97:11 / Proverbs 11:18.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist reminds us that the righteous will rejoice in the Lord and in the Lord only. Paul says the same thing over in Philippians 4:4-7. I think worry is our greatest joy stealer. Now, what is a worry? A worry is anything that's draining your tank of joy. What am I supposed to do about worry? Well, Paul says two things.

1. 'Remember the Lord is near', Philippians 4:5.

Anxiety is usually caused by an uncertain future. But for the Christian, the future has already been secured; we know what's going to happen in the future. And we can rejoice in our circumstances because our circumstances don't have the final word, the Lord Jesus has the final word, and He's coming back soon. And worrying is going to start leaving you when you remember Jesus is coming.

2. 'Pray', Philippians 4:6.

If we spent the time praying, we would spend worrying; we would have a lot less to worry about, Ephesians 6:18. I've noticed we do the exact opposite: the more we have to worry about, the less we pray. Here's Paul's prescription, 'worry about nothing, pray about everything, and give thanks for it.'

Just the act of praying will help you with your worry, but there's something else that's going to happen: God will bless us with peace, Philippians 4:7. I can't explain it; the Bible says, 'It's beyond understanding.' But it's God's gift of a supernatural visitation to you to take away your worry.

CHAPTER 98

INTRODUCTION

This psalm speaks of the mercy and salvation of the Lord, and as a result of His mercy and salvation, all people, all nature and all the nations are called upon to sing praises to Him. It's possible that Mary, the mother of Jesus, had this psalm in mind, as she quotes the first part of this psalm in Luke 1:46-55, in relation to the Christ.

HEADING

‘A psalm.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a psalm, but we don’t know who the author is; however, Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

‘Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn—shout for joy before the LORD, the King. Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.’ Psalm 98:1-9

The psalmist begins by calling upon everyone to sing a new song to the Lord, Psalm 98:1 / Psalms 33:3 / Psalm 40:3 / Psalm 96:1 / Psalm 144:9 / Psalm 149:1 / Isaiah 42:10 / Revelation 5:9 / Revelation 14:3.
A new song usually signifies a renewal of commitment to the Lord, a new start in recognition of the marvellous things He had done, Psalm 98:1 / Psalm 77:14 / Psalm 86:10.
His right hand and His holy arm, Psalm 98:1, signify God’s strength and power. His power is demonstrated through His mercy and deliverance of His people, Psalm 98:1 / Isaiah 52:10 / Isaiah 59:16 / Isaiah 63:5. His salvation is known, and He revealed His righteousness to the nations, Psalm 98:2 / Isaiah 52:10.
God remembered His love and faithfulness to Israel, Psalm 98:3 / Luke 1:54-55 / Luke 1:72. Love and faithfulness speak of the establishment of His just order on earth, Isaiah 46:13 / Isaiah 51:5-6 / Isaiah 51:8.
God didn’t deliver Israel for Israel’s sake alone; He delivered them as a witness to other nations that He was working through Israel, Psalm 98:3. As a result, all the nations have seen the salvation God brought His people, Genesis 12:3.
The psalmist encourages all the earth to shout for joy to the Lord, Psalm 98:4 / Zechariah 9:9, because of all the marvellous things He has done. Because of what God has done, He should be praised, in every way. He should be praised for His work among His people and the world, 2 Chronicles 29:25-30 / Ezra 3:10-13.
The earth is to ‘burst into jubilant song with music,’ Psalm 98:4 / Isaiah 52:9. This is clearly a song of joyful praise.
They are to use the harp, Psalm 98:5 / 1 Samuel 10:5 / 1 Chronicles 16:5 / 2 Chronicles 5:12-13, trumpets, Psalm 98:6 / Numbers 10:2 / Numbers 10:8-10 / Numbers 31:6.
They are also to use the lamb’s horns, Psalm 98:6 / Leviticus 25:9-12 / 1 Kings 1:39 / Exodus 19:16 / Exodus 19:19 / Exodus 20:18 / Leviticus 25:9 / Joshua 6:4-6 / Joshua 6:8-9 / Joshua 6:13 / Joshua 6:16 / Joshua 6:20 / 1 Chronicles 15:28 / 2 Chronicles 15:14 / Hosea 5:8, in their praise before the Lord, the King, Psalm 98:6.
Also, notice the seas, and everything which lives within them, Psalm 98:7, the world and everything which lives within it, Psalm 98:7, should also praise God, Psalm 98:1.

The rivers were to clap their hands and the mountains were to sing together with them, Psalm 98:8 / Isaiah 55:12. These are all obviously metaphors which speak of the entire creation coming together to offer praise to God.
The reason for all the praise is that God comes to judge the earth, Psalm 98:9, which will give the earth some relief from man's sin, Romans 8:19-22. He isn't just praised because of all the marvellous things He has done, but also because of what He is about to do.
He will judge the world in righteousness, Psalm 98:9, that is, He will judge justly and right, He will also the peoples with equity, Psalm 98:9, that is, without respect of persons, 1 Peter 1:17.
Because God judges, the righteous will get some rest from the wicked who opposed them, those who were denied justice, and they can rejoice because they stand within the grace of God.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist beautifully and poetically portrays all of God's creation coming together to praise Him, Psalm 14:7-13. Although the seas, the rivers, mountains, and trees are all used as metaphors, they certainly take our imaginations to a wonderful place where everyone and everything just simply comes together to praise God for what He has done and what He will do.
These metaphors remind me of that great hymn, 'Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah', written by William J. Kirkpatrick. Apparently, this hymn was inspired by Psalm 148:1-14, and as we read the words to this hymn, we can see why it has become a very popular hymn within many congregations.

Hallelujah, praise Jehovah,
From the heavens praise His name;
Praise Jehovah in the highest,
All His angels praise proclaim.
All His hosts together praise Him,
Sun, and moon, and stars on high;
Praise Him, O ye heav'n of heavens,
And ye floods above the sky.
Let them praises give Jehovah,
They were made at His command,
Them forever He established;
His decree shall ever stand.
From the earth, oh, praise Jehovah,
All ye floods, ye dragons all;
Fire, and hail, and snow, and vapours,
Stormy winds that hear His call.
All ye fruitful trees and cedars,
All ye hills and mountains high,
Creeping things, and beasts, and cattle,
Birds that in the heavens fly.
Kings of earth, and all ye people,
Princes great, earth's judges all,
Praise His name, young men, and maidens,
Aged men and children small.

CHAPTER 99

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist emphasises the holiness of God three times, Isaiah 6:3, because of His sovereignty over all things. The psalmist encouraged everyone who acknowledges Him as King to worship Him because He alone is sovereign over all His creation.
We don't know who the author is; however, Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

'The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake. Great is the LORD in Zion; he is exalted over all the nations. Let them praise your great and awesome name—he is holy. The King is mighty, he loves justice, you have established equity; in Jacob you have done what is just and right. Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy. Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel was among those who called on his name; they called on the LORD, and he answered them. He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud; they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them. LORD our God, you answered them; you were to Israel a forgiving God, though you punished their misdeeds. Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his holy mountain, for the LORD our God is holy.' Psalm 99:1-9

The psalmist begins by reminding their audience that the LORD reigns, Psalm 99:1 / Psalm 93:1 / Psalm 97:1. He reigns as King and sits enthroned between the cherubim, Psalm 99:1 / Exodus 25:18-22 / Exodus 37:7-9.
When the nations acknowledge His reign over all the nations, they tremble in fear at His awesomeness, and the earth shakes, Psalm 99:1 / Habakkuk 3:6 / Habakkuk 3:10.
Although God is great in Zion, Psalm 99:2, that is, Jerusalem, He is also high above all the nations, Psalm 99:2.
Because God is a mighty King, the nations should praise God's great and awesome Name, and because He is holy, Psalm 99:3 / Isaiah 6:3.
God loves justice, and has established equity, and He has acted justly and rightly in Jacob, Psalm 99:4. In other words, He is the God of equality in judgment. He judges without respect of persons, judging the righteous on the foundation of His grace. He renders mercy to those who have obediently responded to His grace.
The psalmist encourages the nations to 'exalt the LORD their God', Psalm 99:5, that is because God is all-powerful; the nations should humbly bow down and worship Him.
The words, 'worship at his footstool', Psalm 99:5, may refer to the ark of the covenant, 1 Chronicles 28:2. It may also refer to Jerusalem itself, Lamentations 2:1, or it may refer to the earth, Isaiah 66:1 / Matthew 5:35 / Acts 7:49.
Notice again that the psalmist reminds us that God is indeed a holy God, Psalm 99:5. He is holy in every way and in all He does, Isaiah 6:3 / Revelation 4:8 and there is no darkness in God, 1 John 1:5.
The psalmist speaks of the three great priests of Israel, that is, Moses, Psalm 99:6 / Exodus 24:1-18, Aaron, Psalm 99:6 / Leviticus 8:1-36 / Exodus 40:18-33, and Samuel, Psalm 99:6. Because they were obedient to His statutes and decrees, God answered the prayers of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, Psalm 99:6.
God spoke to them from the pillar of cloud, Psalm 99:7 / Exodus 14:19-20 / Exodus 33:9 / Numbers 12:5. Although to Israel, God was a forgiving God, He still had to punish them for their misdeeds, Psalm 99:8.
Because of their disobedient deeds, the Israelites were condemned to forty years of wandering in the wilderness, Psalm 99:8 / Numbers 32:13. Those who were twenty years of age and older at the time of the rebellion weren't allowed to enter the Promised Land but died in the wilderness, Numbers 14:29.
Notice that the psalmist once again encourages the nations to 'exalt the LORD their God', Psalm 99:9, and once again they encourage the nations to worship Him, Psalm 99:9, and for the third time, they remind the nations that God is a holy God, Psalm 99:9 / Isaiah 6:3 / Revelation 4:8.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist spoke about God's holiness on three occasions, but there is always the danger that we can be too casual in our approach to God. God's holiness demands fear, reverence, and obedience.

God's first command to Moses is for him to stay back and remove his sandals, Exodus 3:5-6. God declares that the ground is 'holy ground'. This is the first occurrence of the word 'holy' in the Bible.
As we remember the word, 'qodesh' means sacred, dedicated, or hallowed. Throughout the Old Testament, it presents the idea of separation by God for His purposes. This includes purity as well, especially in the New Testament.

There was nothing inherently 'holy' about this piece of ground, but God was there and God is inherently holy or transcendent. He cannot be approached except in His direction and with His provision. God's holiness demands fear, 'reverence' and obedience.

Moses' attitude went from curiosity to fear, Exodus 3:6. Those who come to recognise God's holiness are driven to their knees with the clear perception of their own unholiness. When Isaiah looked into the throne room of heaven, he saw angels praising God, Isaiah 6:3-5.
The holiness of God is centre stage at Sinai and in the giving of the law, but it also would play a major role in the Exodus. God's uniqueness would be clearly demonstrated in the coming plagues, and Israel would be called upon to fear and obey Him.

God said to Moses, 'Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.' God is holy, and unclean sandals cannot be stomped in and out of His presence.

God was telling Moses, 'This is my house, so take off your dirty shoes before you come any farther.' For the priests, they understood that they had to wash their hands and feet before they walked into the holy place, Exodus 30:18-21. In other words, they couldn't pass farther or serve in the tabernacle until they washed their feet and washed them in the golden laver.
When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, He was preparing them for a deeper walk, He was preparing them for the Upper Room experience, He was preparing them for service, John 13:1-15.
We know that Joshua is also told to take off his shoes. In this incident, the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so,' Joshua 5:15. Putting off the shoe was a token of respect and submission. God's holiness demands fear, reverence, and obedience, 1 Peter 1:15-16.

CHAPTER 100

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist calls upon all the nations to recognise and praise the God of heaven with thanksgiving.

HEADING

‘A psalm. For giving grateful praise.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a psalm for giving grateful praise. We don’t know who the author is; however, Jewish tradition accredits Psalms 90-100 to Moses. Other Psalms written by Moses are also found in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

‘Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.’ Psalm 100:1-5

The psalmist begins by encouraging all the earth to shout for joy to the LORD, Psalm 100:1. By inviting all the earth to shout to the Lord, this tells us that God isn’t just the God of Israel, but He is the God of all the nations.
The earth is called upon to worship the LORD with gladness, Psalm 100:2. which consists of singing joyful songs before Him, Psalm 100:2. Worshipping God also involves a recognition of who God is, a recognition that He made us and we are His, Psalm 100:3.
It was Israel who were originally God’s people, Deuteronomy 7:6, the sheep of His pasture, Psalm 100:3 / Ezekiel 34:11-15, but in Christ, all Christians are His chosen people, 1 Peter 2:9, the sheep of His pasture, John 10:7-18.
The psalmist encourages the nations to enter His gates with thanksgiving, and in His courts with praise, Psalm 100:4. The gates speak of God’s strength, and as we enter His gates, we should be ready with an offering of thanksgiving, Leviticus 7:12-15.
As we enter His courts, we should be ready to give Him praise, because of all that He has done for us, Hebrews 13:15. Giving thanks and praising His Name should always go together, especially now that Christ has opened the gateway to heaven for us, Hebrews 10:19.
God is good, Psalm 100:5, and is full of goodness, Exodus 34:6 / Ezra 3:11. God is love, Psalm 100:5 / 1 John 4:8 / 1 John 4:16, and His love endures forever, Psalm 100:5 / Psalm 136.
God is faithful, Psalm 100:5 / Deuteronomy 7:9 / Hebrews 6:18, and His faithfulness continues through all generations, Psalm 100:5. God’s goodness, God’s love, and God’s faithfulness are the three main reasons why God and God alone is worthy of our worship, praise, and thanksgiving.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist reminded us that God is good, that is, goodness is a part of His essence. Goodness is who He is, Psalm 145:9, and our goodness comes from Him, Psalm 34:8 / Psalm 119:68.

In the opening chapter of Genesis, we read about His goodness. In fact, everything God created was good, Genesis 1:3 / Genesis 1:4 / Genesis 1:10 / Genesis 1:12 / Genesis 1:17-18 / Genesis 1:21 / Genesis 1:25 / Genesis 1:31 / Matthew 5:45.

Because God is good, surely, this tells us that He only wants good for us as His children. It's God's goodness that helps us recognise that everything God gives us and does for us is for our good, Romans 8:28 / James 1:17. God's goodness can be relied upon, but His goodness endures forever, Psalm 52:1.

CHAPTER 101

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David, after he was anointed king, 1 Samuel 16:13 / 2 Samuel 2:4 / 2 Samuel 5:3, set out his ideals for maintaining his kingship among God's people. He was determined to live his life with dignity, and he was determined to remove all evil from his service.

HEADING

'Of David. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a psalm of David.

'I will sing of your love and justice; to you, LORD, I will sing praise. I will be careful to lead a blameless life—when will you come to me? I will conduct the affairs of my house with a blameless heart. I will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it. The perverse of heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with what is evil. Whoever slanders their neighbour in secret, I will put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, I will not tolerate. My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; the one whose walk is blameless will minister to me. No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence. Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the LORD.' Psalm 101:1-8

David begins by announcing that he will sing songs of praise which speak about God's love and justice, Psalm 101:1. God had been merciful and just with him, and so, David in turn wanted to be merciful and just with others, Matthew 6:12 / Luke 6:36 / James 2:13.

David declares that he is determined to lead a blameless life, Psalm 101:2. Remember, 'blameless' doesn't mean sinless, but it refers to doing what needed to be done under the Old Testament Law to have his sin forgiven.
When God comes to Him, Psalm 101:2, that is, when God is in his presence, he will be obedient to the law, Psalm 101:2 / Deuteronomy 28:1-14 / 1 John 1:6-7. As it is with most of us, a blameless heart begins in our own homes, Psalm 101:2, and so he promises to live a righteous life as an example before his family.
He is determined not to look for the approval of anything vile, Psalm 101:3 / Job 31:1 / 1 John 2:16. In other words, he will only look upon what is right in God's eyes.
David is determined to stay away from anything wicked, Psalm 101:3. He is determined to hate what faithless people do and will not get involved with anything they do, Psalm 101:3 / 1 Corinthians 15:33.
He wouldn't allow his loyalty to God to be compromised by friends who fell away from God. He wouldn't associate with apostates. He would maintain companions who were righteous, but he would stay away from evil companions, Psalm 101:4.
He is determined that anyone who slanders another in secret will be silenced, Psalm 101:5. In other words, he would reject those who maliciously spoke to him about others.
He is determined that he will not tolerate all those who have haughty eyes and are proud, Psalm 101:5 / Exodus 3:8 / Proverbs 28:25 / Job 11:9. In other words, he promised that he would associate with humble people, not those who played politics in order to gain his favour as the king of Israel.
He is determined that those who are faithful in the land will dwell with him and those who are walking blamelessly will minister to him, Psalm 101:6. In other words, he would focus on the righteous and encourage them to be his friends.
However, those who are practising deceit will not live in his house, and those who speak falsely against him will not be in his presence, Psalm 101:7. In other words, he will reject from his court all those who deceive in order to gain favour or promote their own personal agendas.
He is determined to silence all the wicked in the land and cut off every evildoer with the city, Psalm 101:8, that is, Jerusalem, Psalm 46:4 / Psalm 48:2 / Psalm 48:8. The reason for doing this every morning was simply to get rid of the wicked so that their influence would not infect the people.

CONCLUSION

Although David would sin on numerous occasions, 2 Samuel 3:2-5 / 1 Samuel 5:13 / 2 Samuel 11:2, at this point in his life, he was determined to do what was right by God's standards. Overall, David truly was a man after God's own heart, 1 Samuel 13:14 / Acts 13:22.
Godly leadership is a must for any congregation of the Lord's church, and godly leaders recognise that it is Christ's church, and He is the one with all the authority, Matthew 28:18 / Colossians 1:18 / Hebrews 10:12 / 1 Timothy 6:15.
In the first century, each local assembly was under the guidance of men known as elders, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 / Titus 1:6-9. They were elders because they were older, especially in experience, bishops, or overseers because they 'oversaw' the work of the church, and pastors because they shepherded the flock.
Like David, they too must be determined to lead God's people in God's ways and be on their guard for anyone who would come amongst the flock to destroy them, Acts 20:28-31.

CHAPTER 102

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find the psalmist mourning over his current situation, that is, they appear to be far away from home. The psalmist longs to go back to the land of their fathers but is confident that God hasn't forsaken His people. We don't know who the author of this psalm is, but the historical background appears to be the time when the Jews were in exile.

HEADING

'A prayer of an afflicted person who has grown weak and pours out a lament before the LORD.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a prayer of an afflicted person who has grown weak and pours out a lament before the LORD.

'Hear my prayer, LORD; let my cry for help come to you. Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly. For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers. My heart is blighted and withered like grass; I forget to eat my food. In my distress, I groan aloud and am reduced to skin and bones. I am like a desert owl, like an owl among the ruins. I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof. All day long, my enemies taunt me; those who rail against me use my name as a curse. For I eat ashes as my food and mingle my drink with tears because of your great wrath, for you have taken me up and thrown me aside. My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass.' Psalm 102:1-11

The psalmist begins by asking God to hear their prayers, and their cries for help because of their current distress, Psalm 102:1. They ask God 'not to hide His face' from them, Psalm 102:2, that is, they felt that God wasn't present, they felt that God didn't care, Job 13:24 / Job 34:29 / Deuteronomy 31:17.
The intensity of their prayer was measured by the depth of their distress, Psalm 102:2 / Daniel 9:20-23. Their distress was so great that they asked God to give a quick answer to his deliverance from the situation in which he lived, Psalm 102:2 / Job 35:9 / Job 36:13.
The psalmist compares their life to smoke which quickly vanishes, Psalm 102:3, that is, they feel their life is short and meaningless, James 4:14. Their bones burn like glowing embers, Psalm 102:3 / Psalm 31:10.
His heart is blighted and withering like grass, Psalm 102:4. In other words, they're struggling, and it's clear the psalmist, in their distress, is feeling mental and emotional stress. Their distress is really affecting them; they have lost their appetite, Psalm 102:4 / 1 Kings 21:4 / 2 Samuel 12:16 / Daniel 10:3.
Their bodies had given up food, and so, it was withering away, Psalm 102:5. Hunger pains had already passed, and he was in a state of starvation. The lack of food means that they are now more or less just 'a bag of bones', Psalm 102:5 / Job 19:20.

The psalmist feels like a desert owl, like an owl among the ruins, Psalm 102:6 / Isaiah 34:11 / Zephaniah 2:14. When they lie awake, they feel like lonely birds on a roof, Psalm 102:7 / Leviticus 14:4 / Deuteronomy 14:11 / Daniel 4:12 / Daniel 4:14 / Daniel 4:21. In other words, they were feeling extremely lonely as they looked out on the world around them.

Their enemies didn't help their case either; they taunted them all day long and used their name as a curse word, Psalm 102:8. In other words, they were constantly taunting and cursing him, Acts 23:12.

The psalmist's mourning continues, as he eats ashes for food, Psalm 102:9, possibly because of fasting, and their tears fall into their drink, Psalm 102:9 / Job 2:8 / Job 42:6 / Isaiah 58:5 / Isaiah 61:3 / Jonah 3:6 / Daniel 9:3 / Matthew 11:21.

The psalmist is so low that they believe that all their mourning and all the distress they were experiencing was because of God's wrath, Psalm 102:10. In other words, they thought their world was turned upside down because God was punishing them; they felt that God wasn't in favour with them, Isaiah 22:18.

To the psalmist, they felt that their days were like an evening shadow, like grass that withers away, Psalm 102:11, that is, they felt their life was short and had no real meaning, 2 Kings 20:10 / Isaiah 38:8.

'But you, LORD, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations. You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favour to her; the appointed time has come. For her stones are dear to your servants; her very dust moves them to pity. The nations will fear the name of the LORD, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory. For the LORD will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory. He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea. Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD: "The LORD looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death." So the name of the LORD will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the LORD.' Psalm 102:12-22

After pouring out their deep emotions to God and after feeling that God has forsaken them, the psalmist now focuses on the bright side of their relationship with God.

The psalmist's life may feel short and meaningless, but God sits on His throne forever, His renown, Psalm 102:12, that is, His fame endures through all generations, Psalm 102:12.

In other words, God is a God who can be relied upon, He won't fail, and His greatness will be known to all generations to come. God endures with His people; He doesn't forget His people.

The psalmist, despite feeling in distress, has full confidence in God to arise, Psalm 102:13, that is, act and have compassion on Zion, Psalm 102:13, that is, Jerusalem.

But this was only going to happen at God's appointed time, Psalm 102:13. If the historical background to this psalm is the time when the psalmist was in exile, the set time points to the seventy years set by God for Israel's captivity, Jeremiah 25:11-13 / Jeremiah 29:10 / Daniel 9:2.

As Jerusalem lay in ruins, the Israelites held the ruined stones dear to them, Psalm 102:14 / 1 Peter 2:5, and showed favour to the dust, Psalm 102:14. When God shows compassion on Jerusalem, the nations will fear God's Name and the kings of the earth will revere God's glory, Psalm 102:15.

Because Jerusalem was rebuilt by the returned Jews, the nations realised again that God was working with His people, Psalm 102:16. God will respond to their prayers and pleas, Psalm 102:17.

When God fulfilled His promises concerning Jerusalem, it was to be written for future generations in order that God may be praised, Psalm 102:18. When the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, it was the fulfilment of prophecy that they would return to rebuild, Isaiah 20:20-27.

God looks down from His sanctuary, Psalm 102:19, that is, heaven, He views the earth, hears the groans of His people in prison, and realises those condemned to death, Psalm 102:20. The psalmist groaned in Babylonian captivity, Psalm 102:20, as Nehemiah wept over the devastation of the city, Nehemiah 1:4.

God listened to the groaning prayers and responded by allowing the Jews to return to the promised land, Psalm 102:21. As a result, His people were again gathered out of the nations in order to serve God, Psalm 102:22. Notice, though, that other kingdoms would assemble to worship God, Psalm 102:22 / Isaiah 2:1-4 / Micah 4:1-2 / Matthew 28:18-20 / Mark 16:15-16.

> 'In the course of my life, he broke my strength; he cut short my days. So I said: "Do not take me away, my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations. In the beginning, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing, you will change them, and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end. The children of your servants will live in your presence; their descendants will be established before you." Psalm 102:23-28

The psalmist now focuses on the shortness of their life, compared to the longevity of God's creation. The psalmist acknowledges their own human weakness; they feel that God broke their strength and shortened the days they will live, Psalm 102:23 / 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

They ask God not to allow them to die, Psalm 102:24. It's possible they wanted to see God's fulfilment concerning Jerusalem, Job 21:21 / Psalm 89:45. They cry out in prayer, pleading for God's merciful help, Psalm 30:9 / Isaiah 38:1-3 / Isaiah 38:9-18.

The psalmist's words written in Psalm 102:25-27 are quoted by the Hebrew writer in Hebrews 1:10-12. In Hebrews, they are the words of God spoken to His unchangeable Son.

The psalmist is confident that God wouldn't change from His promises that He had made concerning the restoration of His people, and so, God's servants would continue throughout many generations to come.

The psalmist is confident that some of the things God creates will perish like garments and clothing, Psalm 102:26, but God Himself will remain the same forever, Psalm 102:27. Only God has the power to change His creation, but He Himself is unchanging and eternal.

The psalmist ends by declaring that the children of God's servants will live in God's presence, and their descendants will be established before Him, Psalm 102:28 / Matthew 5:18 / Matthew 24:35.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist openly expressed how they were feeling to God; however, despite feeling in deep distress, they received some kind of comfort in knowing that God doesn't change. The psalmist's words written in Psalm 102:25-27 are quoted by the Hebrew writer in Hebrews 1:10-12.

The writer of Hebrews says that these quotations are talking about the Son. He emphasises the role of the Son in creation, the Son laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens. Further, the Son is eternal; all of creation will perish, but He remains, Hebrews 1:10-12.

When we read this psalm, which is clearly written to God and relates the psalmist's words to the Hebrew writer, we soon discover that Jesus is Deity, John 1:1-3 / John 1:14. He remains the same, Hebrews 13:8, and His years will never end, Hebrews 7:3.

CHAPTER 103

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David praises God for His redemptive work, which reaches everyone, and he thanks God for caring for all people, not just Israel.

HEADING

'Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a psalm of David.

'Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.' Psalm 103:1-5

David begins by speaking to his soul and asks his soul to praise the LORD and praise His Holy Name, Psalm 103:1.
David is simply seeking to praise God with everything he's got.
He wants the innermost part of him to praise God too, Numbers 6:23-27. He essentially speaks to his inner self to praise God, possibly because there was a part of him which didn't really praise God.
David speaks to his soul again and asks that his soul praises the Lord, but this time, it was to remind him of all the benefits he has for being a child of God, Psalm 103:2 / 2 Chronicles 32:25.
He now goes on to describe five benefits which he and all of God's children have because of their obedience and commitment to God.

1. Because we are God's children, He forgives our sin, Psalm 103:3.
When we reflect upon our own sinfulness and the staggering amount of sin God forgave us personally at our baptism, Acts 2:38, it can sometimes be overwhelming that God, in His grace, is willing to forgive us completely. Sometimes, people who have been Christians for a long time often forget what it was like to have their many sins forgiven.
2. Because we are God's children, He heals all our diseases, Psalm 103:3.
God heals us emotionally, mentally, and if it is His will, physically. More importantly, God heals us spiritually; the biggest disease we needed healing from was our sin, Isaiah 53:5 / 1 Peter 2:24.
3. Because we are God's children, He redeems our life from the pit, Psalm 103:4.
God knows how to save His people from the destruction that comes from sin, Ephesians 1:7 / Colossians 1:13. He loves His children and helps them to avoid the pitfalls of life, 1 Corinthians 10:13. He knows how to rescue us from any situation in life, 2 Timothy 4:18.

4. Because we are God's children, He crowns us with love and compassion, Psalm 103:4.
God is love, 1 John 4:8 / 1 John 4:16, and He is full of compassion, Psalm 86:15; therefore, His love and compassion will never be exhausted. We love Him because He first loved us, 1 John 4:19; we love others because He loves us, John 15:12. We show compassion to others because He was compassionate to us, Luke 6:36 / Luke 15:20.
5. Because we are God's children, He satisfies our desires with good things, Psalm 103:5.
God wants us to live life to the full and get the best out of life, John 10:10. Everything we receive from God isn't only good, but it's also perfect, James 1:17. We won't lack anything in this life; He provides us with everything we need for life and to live a life which pleases Him, 2 Peter 1:3.
As an eagle soars to great heights, Psalm 103:5, so the result of God providing for the youth is that they too will have strength and longevity in life, Isaiah 40:31.

'The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.'
Psalm 103:6-14

David tells us that the LORD works righteousness and justice, but notice He works for 'all' the oppressed, Psalm 103:6, not just those living in Israel. God has made His ways known to Moses and the people of Israel, Psalm 103:7.
David speaks about how God dealt with the nation of Israel so that we can understand how gracious God can be with our rebellion, Psalm 103:8-9. God was patient with Israel, James 5:11. He was forgiving, and He cared for them as a father lovingly cares for his children, Exodus 34:6-7.
David acknowledges that God that Israel totally deserved to be punished much more severely for their sins than they were, Psalm 103:10. This is because God is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love and because God won't always accuse or harbour His anger against His people forever, Psalm 103:8-10.
In other words, though there were times when His children had to be disciplined, God wouldn't continually do so day after day, Isaiah 57:16. Because of His forgiveness and mercy, He doesn't punish His people with what they deserve for their sins, Psalm 103:10. Their rebellion would justly deserve death, but because of His mercy, He only disciplines.
The measure of God's love for those who fear Him is seen in the distance between the earth and the heavens, Psalm 103:11, that is, it's immeasurable, Isaiah 55:9. The measure of his forgiveness is seen in the distance from the east to the west, Psalm 103:12, that is, He completely forgives, Isaiah 43:25 / Isaiah 44:22.
As a loving father shows compassion for his children, the Lord shows compassion on all those who fear Him, Psalm 103:13 / Matthew 7:7-11 / Luke 15:22-24.
God knows we are formed because He is the One who formed us; He knows we are dust because He created us from the dust, Psalm 103:14 / Genesis 2:7 / Genesis 3:19 / Ecclesiastes 3:20 / Isaiah 29:16.

'The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.'
Psalm 103:15-18

David, after telling us that God remembers we are dust, now speaks about the brevity of life. Life is like grass and like flowers, and when the wind blows over them, they are gone, they disappear, and no one remembers where they were, Psalm 103:15-16. In other words, it's there one day and gone the next, Psalm 90:5-6 / Isaiah 40:6-8 / James 4:14 / 1 Peter 1:24.

In contrast to the brevity of the mortal's life, God's love is never-ending, Psalm 103:17. God's children and their children's children, if they fear Him, will be blessed by His love and righteousness, Psalm 103:17 / Exodus 20:6 / Acts 2:39.

David tells us the terms and conditions in these verses for those who will receive His everlasting love. They must fear Him, they must keep His covenant and be obedient to His precepts, Psalm 103:18.

'The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, my soul.' Psalm 103:19-22

David declares that the LORD has established His throne in heaven, Psalm 103:19, that is, God reigns in heaven, and He will never be moved. God not only reigns in heaven but His kingdom rules over all, Psalm 103:19, that is, God rules over everything which He created, including the earth.

Israel was under the kingdom reign of God, but Israel wasn't the kingdom of God. All nations of the world are composed of the territory of the sovereignty of God.

Earlier, David spoke to his soul and asked his soul to praise God, Psalm 103:1-2. Now, he calls upon the angels to praise God, Psalm 103:20. The angels are the mighty ones, the heavenly hosts, God's servants who obey God at His command, Psalm 103:20-21.

Even angels were a part of the kingdom reign of God before Jesus assumed this authority when He ascended to the right hand of the Father, Isaiah 1:9 / Ephesians 1:20-24 / 1 Peter 3:22. David also asks all of God's works everywhere in His dominion to praise God, Psalm 103:22, that is, everything everywhere is called upon to praise God.

David ends his psalm with the same words he began with, Psalm 103:1-2. He wants his soul to praise the LORD, Psalm 103:22. After writing everything he wrote in this psalm, it's clear that David had many, many reasons to praise the LORD.

CONCLUSION

David personally knew about receiving God's love and forgiveness, 2 Samuel 12:1-14 / Psalm 51, but as Christians, we often find it difficult to accept that He has totally forgiven us of all our sins. There are a few things we should remember when it comes to our forgiveness.

1. Forgiveness is available because Jesus took my guilt and shame upon himself, Romans 3:23-25 / Hebrews 12:2.
2. Forgiveness is based on His merit and not ours, Ephesians 1:7.
3. Forgiveness is reliable because it is given by the one who is in authority, Romans 8:34.

I wonder when Jesus said to the woman who was caught in the act of adultery, 'Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?' And she said, 'No one Lord,' John 8:10. I wonder maybe for the first time she included herself.

The next time we're struggling to accept God's forgiveness, we should remind ourselves of the words of the Hebrew writer. 'Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more,' Hebrews 10:17.

Or maybe we should read David's words in this psalm, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us,' Psalm 103:12. Or maybe we should read Jesus' words to the woman, 'Neither do I condemn you, go your way and sin no more,' John 8:11.

CHAPTER 104

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is similar to the previous psalm, Psalm 103, where the psalmist, who is unknown, speaks of adoration and praise for God because of His wonderful works of creation.

'Praise the LORD, my soul. LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendour and majesty. The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants. He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. You covered it with the watery depths as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.' Psalm 104:1-9

As in the previous psalm, Psalm 103:1-2 / Psalm 103:22, the psalmist speaks to their soul and asks their soul to praise the LORD, Psalm 104:1. They want the innermost part of them to praise God, Numbers 6:23-27.
The LORD is their God who is great and clothed with splendour and majesty, Psalm 104:1. God is also clothed in light as a garment, Psalm 104:1 / Genesis 1:3 / Matthew 17:2 / 1 Timothy 6:16.
God's power is clearly seen in creation when He stretched out the heavens like a tent, Psalm 104:2 / Isaiah 40:22. His power is seen in the way He laid the beams of His upper chambers on their waters, Psalm 104:3 / Amos 9:6.
In other words, as a builder constructs a building, so God constructed the world out of the materials that He had created from nothing. He first laid the foundations and then created all living things.

His power is seen in the way He makes the clouds His chariots and rides on the wings of the wind, Psalm 104:3 / Genesis 1:6-7. In other words, God has total control over all the elements. As the creator, He controls everything He created. The winds are His messengers, and flames of fire are His servants, Psalm 104:4.
Note that some translations render that verse as follows, 'who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire'. This simply means that God rules over the angels, equipping and commissioning them as it pleases Him, Hebrews 1:7.
The psalmist understands that God is the creator, the One who set the earth on its foundation, Psalm 104:5 / Job 38:4. They know that God built the earth with solid foundations which won't ever move, Psalm 104:5 / 2 Peter 3:10-13.
The psalmist recalls the separation of waters at creation, Psalm 104:6 / Genesis 1:2 / Genesis 1:9-10, and or the great flood in Noah's day, Genesis 7:19-20. The water covering the mountains, Psalm 104:6, would certainly speak of the great flood, Job 38:9. At creation, when the waters covered the earth, Psalm 104:6 / Genesis 1:9, God made the waters flee, Psalm 104:7 / Genesis 8:3.
The psalmist describes God's voice as of thunder, and when He speaks, the waters obey Him, Psalm 104:7 / Genesis 1:9 / Matthew 8:26. At God's rebuke, the waters flowed over the mountains and went down into the valleys, to the place He assigned for them, Psalm 104:8.
Notice it was God who set a boundary so that the water couldn't cover the earth again, Psalm 104:9 / Job 26:10 / Job 38:10-11. This, of course, could also be speaking about the water at the time of the flood, Genesis 8:11-17 / Genesis 9:11 / Genesis 9:15.

'He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches.

He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work. He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts. The trees of the LORD are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. There, the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the junipers. The high mountains belong to the wild goats; the crags are a refuge for the hyrax. He made the moon to mark the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down. You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all the beasts of the forest prowl. The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God. The sun rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens. Then people go out to their work, to their labour until evening.' Psalm 104:10-23

The psalmist tells us that God made the spring's water pour into the ravines and flow between the mountains, Psalm 104:10 / Genesis 1:9-13. By doing this, he was able to give water to all the beasts and the wild donkeys, Psalm 104:11 / Job 11:12, who were thirsty.

He was also able to give all the birds a place to nest where there is an abundant supply of water, Psalm 104:12. The water also blessed the mountains, and the land was blessed as it had the water it needed to produce fruit, Psalm 104:13.

It's God who created the grass and causes it to grow in order to feed the cattle, Psalm 104:14. He created plants and caused them to grow so that people can work and have abundant food to eat, Psalm 104:14.

He created the earth in such a way that the earth would provide food, Genesis 1:29, wine, Psalm 104:15 / John 2:10, oil and bread for everyone, Psalm 104:15 / Genesis 18:5.

Even the mighty trees of Lebanon are blessed to have plenty of water, Psalm 104:16 / Psalm 84:3 / Isaiah 14:8 / Isaiah 41:19. They are blessed because the bird's nest in their branches and the stork makes its home in the junipers, Psalm 104:17 / Job 39:13.

The mountains provide a home for the wild goats, Psalm 104:18 / Job 39:1, and the crags are a safe haven for the hyrax, Psalm 104:18, which is a shy rock-dwelling animal, Leviticus 11:5 / Deuteronomy 14:7.

When God created the moon and sun, He created them to mark out the seasons, and they move at His command, Psalm 104:19 / Genesis 1:14-18. In the darkness of night, the smaller nocturnal animals, Psalm 104:20 / Genesis 1:24, go out and hunt, and the lions look for food which God has provided for them, Psalm 104:21-22. Whilst the animals sleep through the day, mankind goes out to work when it's safer to do so, Psalm 104:23.

'How many are your works, LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number—living things both large and small. There the ships go to and fro, and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there. All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.' Psalm 104:24-30

The psalmist continues in his adoration of God's creation and acknowledges that everything didn't just happen by chance; God created all of His creatures with wisdom, Psalm 104:24 / Acts 17:24-31.

We can imagine the psalmist looking out onto the Mediterranean Sea, Psalm 104:25 / Isaiah 33:21, and seeing all the creatures, both large and small, who live in the sea, Psalm 104:25.

He sees the ships going back and forth on top of the waters, and He sees the Leviathan play around under the sea, Psalm 104:26. The Leviathan is some kind of large animal, Job 41:1 / Psalm 74:13-15.

All the creatures of the land, the air, and the sea, wait for God to feed them at the proper time, Psalm 104:27. When God does feed them, they feed from God's hand and are satisfied, Psalm 104:28. In other words, they are totally dependent on God to provide for their needs.

If God didn't provide for all the creatures' needs, they wouldn't last very long, Psalm 104:29. If God hid His face or removed their ability to breathe, they wouldn't last very long, Psalm 104:29. In other words, they were totally reliant on God to provide everything they needed to survive, and if He didn't, the creatures would soon die.

When one creature dies, God, by His Spirit, creates another, Psalm 104:30. He makes everything on earth new by breathing into new animals and people so that they become alive, Psalm 104:30.

'May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works—he who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke. I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD. But may sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Praise the LORD, my soul. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 104:31-35

The psalmist now gives God all the glory for everything He has created, His glory will endure forever, Psalm 104:31.
He asks the LORD to rejoice over everything He created, Psalm 104:31 / Genesis 1:31.
When God looks at the earth, the earth trembles, when He touches the mountains, they smoke, Psalm 104:32. These are constant reminders of God's power over His creation, Exodus 19:18 / Habakkuk 3:10.
Because of what God created, the psalmist ends by declaring that they will sing to the LORD all the days of their life, Psalm 104:33. They are determined to meditate on God and His ways because this will please God, and they are determined to rejoice in the LORD, Psalm 104:34.
In light of God's awesome creation, the psalmist declares that sinners should vanish and the wicked be no more, Psalm 104:35. These are obviously people who denied the existence of God and ignored all the evidence of His existence seen in His creation, Romans 1:18-32.
The psalmist ends their psalm, David ended the previous psalm, Psalm 103:1-2 / Psalm 103:22, with the same words they began with, Psalm 104:1. They want their soul, their entire inner being, to praise the LORD, Psalm 104:35.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist gave glory to God for everything God had created, and the glory of God has been demonstrated through the existence of that which He created, Psalm 8.
Everything God created was good, Genesis 1:4 / Genesis 1:10 / Genesis 1:12 / Genesis 1:18 / Genesis 1:21 / Genesis 1:25, and when He created man, He said it was very good, Genesis 1:31.
God is very active in His creation, and He didn't create the world and then just leave His creation to fend for itself. Even today, He participates in the physical world of His creation by maintaining its existence, Hebrews 1:3.
He participates in the life of His creation in that He continually provides for the animals and man who lives with the food that is produced by the natural environment which He upholds, Hebrews 1:3.
When we acknowledge that He exists and He controls everything within His creation, then surely we, like the psalmist, should thank Him for His creation every day and praise Him all the days of our lives.

CHAPTER 105

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is historical in nature, Psalm 78 / Psalm 107 / Psalm 114 / Psalm 136, in which the psalmist contrasts the failure of the people to live in accordance with God's will and those who trust and put their faith in God to preserve them.

Many commentators believe that this psalm and the next, Psalm 106, belong together. This psalm speaks of God's faithfulness and power, while Psalm 106 speaks about the repeated failure and rebellion on the part of His people. Although we aren't told the author, many commentators believe it was David who wrote this psalm because the first nine verses of this psalm are recorded by David in 1 Chronicles 16:1-22. In the procession to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, David composed this psalm in order to call on all of Israel to give glory to God.

'Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced, you his servants, the descendants of Abraham, his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.' Psalm 105:1-6

The psalmist begins by calling upon everyone to praise the LORD and His Name, Psalm 105:1. The reason for this is simply because they wanted everyone to know what God has done among the nations, Psalm 105:1 / Matthew 28:19-20.

The psalmist encourages everyone to sing to God with songs of praise so that they can tell everyone about God's wonderful acts, Psalm 105:2. Glory is found only in God's holy Name, and when people seek God with all their hearts, they will rejoice, Psalm 105:3, that is, they will find joy, Philippians 4:4.

Everyone should look to the LORD and seek His face always for strength because they get their strength from Him, Psalm 105:4 / Isaiah 40:29-31 / Ephesians 6:10. The psalmist invites everyone to remember the wonders and miracles God has done, Psalm 105:5.

They invite everyone to remember the judgments pronounced on His servants, the descendants of Abraham, His chosen ones, and the children of Jacob, Psalm 105:6 / 1 Chronicles 16:13.

These were His chosen ones in His covenant plan. The psalmist speaks about Israel's history and begins with Abraham and will continue to the time when Israel was delivered from Egyptian captivity.

'He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit." When they were but few in number, few indeed, and strangers in it, they wandered from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another. He allowed no one to oppress them; for their sake, he rebuked kings: "Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm." Psalm 105:7-15

The psalmist now speaks about how God is the ruler of the earth and His judgment is on all the earth, Psalm 105:7. God made an everlasting covenant with Abraham, Psalm 105:8-9 / Genesis 12:1-3, Isaac, Psalm 105:9 / Genesis 26:2-5, and Jacob, Psalm 105:10 / Genesis 28:10-15, and with the nation of Israel, Psalm 105:10 / Genesis 32:28 / Luke 1:72-75.

Throughout Israel's history, God's covenant with Abraham was the foundation upon which He conserved Israel, Exodus 20:6. Because Abraham was faithful, God promised him that in his seed all the nations of the world would be blessed, Genesis 12:1-3. This blessing was Jesus, Acts 13:16-34 / Romans 2:28-29 / Romans 4:12-17 / Galatians 3-4 / Hebrews 10:15-22.

Part of God's covenant was the promise of land, Psalm 105:11 / Genesis 12:1-3. This is the Promised Land of Canaan, which God gave to Israel, Joshua 17:14 / Joshua 19:9. The fathers of Israel, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were only strangers in the land that would later be given to their descendants, Psalm 105:12 / Hebrews 11:9.

They wandered from one nation to another, Psalm 105:3, that is, they lived in different places, wandering from one place to the next, Genesis 11:31-12:6 / Genesis 12:9-20 / Genesis 13:1 / Genesis 20:1 / Genesis 26:1 / Genesis 26:17 / Genesis 26:22-23 / Genesis 29:1.

God protected Israel's fathers and wouldn't allow anyone to oppress them, and on occasions, God even rebuked some kings, Psalm 105:14 / Genesis 12:14-20 / Genesis 20:1-16 / Genesis 26:6-11. He told them not to touch his anointed ones, Psalm 105:16 / Genesis 20:6 / Zechariah 2:8, and not to harm His prophets, Genesis 26:11 / Hebrews 1:1-2.

'He called down famine on the land and destroyed all their supplies of food; and he sent a man before them—Joseph, sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true. The king sent and released him, the ruler of peoples set him free. He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed, to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom.' Psalm 105:16-22

The psalmist tells us that in the days of Joseph, the famine which happened was no accident; it was God who caused it, Psalm 105:16 / Genesis 41:53-57 / Isaiah 3:1.
Despite Joseph being sold as a slave by his brothers, Psalm 105:17 / Genesis 37:12-28, it was all a part of God's plan to send him ahead into Egypt in order to save His people, Genesis 37:28 / Genesis 37:36 / Genesis 39:1.
Despite Joseph being imprisoned, placed in shackles and irons in an Egyptian jail, Psalm 105:18, it was all a part of God's plan to save His people. It was then that God tested him with His word, Psalm 105:19 / Genesis 40:3 / Luke 2:35.
Over a period of time, Joseph was released from prison, Psalm 105:20, by the order of the king to interpret his dream, Genesis 41:14. After successfully interpreting the king's, dream, the king made Joseph master of his household and ruler over everything, Psalm 105:21 / Genesis 41:40.
Joseph was basically second in command and he was given the authority to instruct the king's princes and teach the king's elders wisdom, Psalm 105:22 / Genesis 45:5.

'Then Israel entered Egypt; Jacob resided as a foreigner in the land of Ham. The LORD made his people very fruitful; he made them too numerous for their foes, whose hearts he turned to hate his people, to conspire against his servants. He sent Moses his servant and Aaron, whom he had chosen. They performed his signs among them, his wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness and made the land dark—for had they not rebelled against his words? He turned their waters into blood, causing their fish to die. Their land teemed with frogs, which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers. He spoke, and there came swarms of flies and gnats throughout their country. He turned their rain into hail, with lightning throughout their land; he struck down their vines and fig trees and shattered the trees of their country. He spoke, and the locusts came, grasshoppers without number; they ate up every green thing in their land, ate up the produce of their soil. Then he struck down all the firstborn in their land, the firstfruits of all their manhood.' Psalm 105:23-36

After a period of time, when the famine was severe, Israel came to Egypt, Psalm 105:23 / Genesis 46:3-4, and they lived as foreigners in the land of Ham, Psalm 105:23 / Genesis 10:6 / Genesis 46:6 / Psalm 78:51.
Whilst in Egypt, God's people grew numerically to such an extent that there were more Israelites than there were Egyptians, Psalm 105:24 / Exodus 1:7 / Exodus 1:9. This was the reason why God sent them to Egypt in the first place: He wanted to build a nation.
As a result of Israel's growth, the Egyptians hardened their hearts against the Israelites, and subsequently, Pharaoh's heart was hardened against them, Psalm 105:25 / Exodus 8:15 / Exodus 8:32 / Exodus 9:34. The Egyptians hated them and made slaves of them, Exodus 1:8-12.
God sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh, and they performed God's signs and wonders, Psalm 105:26-27. These signs and wonders were done in order to authenticate the message they delivered, Exodus 4:30-31 / John 10:38.
The psalmist tells us that Moses and Aaron didn't rebel against God's words, Psalm 105:28 / Exodus 10:21-23, that is, they spoke to Pharaoh the words of God, just as God asked them to. The psalmist recalls all the plagues which God sent upon Egypt, Psalm 105:28-35 / Exodus 7-12 / Psalm 78:43-51.

The final plague, which came, was when God Himself struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, the firstfruits of all their manhood, Psalm 105:36 / Exodus 11:4-5 / Exodus 12:29, those who weren't protected by the Passover lamb's blood, Exodus 12:7 / Exodus 12:13.

'He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no one faltered. Egypt was glad when they left, because dread of Israel had fallen on them. He spread out a cloud as a covering, and a fire to give light at night. They asked, and he brought them quail; he fed them well with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed like a river in the desert. For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham. He brought out his people with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy; he gave them the lands of the nations, and they fell heir to what others had toiled for—that they might keep his precepts and observe his laws. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 105:37-45

The psalmist reminds us that God didn't allow Israel to leave Egypt empty-handed; the Egyptians gave them silver and gold, Psalm 105:37 / Exodus 12:35-36. No one was so weak that they couldn't keep up with the group who left Egypt, Psalm 105:37 / Exodus 12:37.

When Israel left Egypt, they were glad to see the back of them because of all the plagues which God sent upon them, Psalm 105:38. As Israel was leaving Egypt, God showed His presence and protected them with a cloud and with fire, Psalm 105:39 / Numbers 10:34 / Psalm 78:14.

The Israelites were hungry and He provided quail and bread for them to eat, Psalm 105:40 / Exodus 16:11. God also provided them with an abundance of water to drink from a rock, Psalm 105:41 / Psalm 78:15 / Psalm 78:26-29 / 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Everything God had done for Israel was founded upon the holy promises He had given to Abraham, Psalm 105:42 / Genesis 12:1-3 / Psalm 105:8-9. Not only were Israel, God's chosen people, rejoicing and joyful that God brought them out of Egypt, but God Himself rejoiced, Psalm 105:43 / Exodus 15.

They all rejoiced when God brought them to the Promised Land and inherited a land which was already prepared for them by the other nations who lived there, Psalm 105:44 / Deuteronomy 6:10-11 / Joshua 13:7.

God did all of this in order that Israel would keep God's statutes and observe His laws, Psalm 105:45 / Exodus 19.

The psalmist ends by praising God for everything He has done for His people, Psalm 105:45.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist spoke about Joseph's experience in Egypt, and that's important because God had made a promise to bring a Saviour into the world through the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And Joseph played a key role in ensuring that the promise made by God wouldn't fail, and it didn't. So, what can we learn from Joseph's life that can be of help to us?

1. A young person can be a mighty instrument in the hand of God, bringing His plans to fulfilment, Genesis 39:20-23 / 1 Samuel 17:48-51.

2. God isn't looking for perfect people to carry out His will; He's looking for faithful people, and age isn't a barrier, 1 Timothy 1:16 / Galatians 2:11.

3. A young person doesn't have to be bad. Living as a rebellious teenager isn't something a young person has to do; Joseph didn't, 1 John 1:6-10.

4. Sexual immorality isn't a road a young person has to go down; Joseph didn't, Genesis 39:6-10.

5. A young person doesn't have to become unfaithful to God simply because he or she has major difficulties in life, Revelation 2:10.

6. Even in the worst situations that Joseph was in, God was still with him and will always be with us, Genesis 39:1-2 / Genesis 39:20-21.
7. Throughout his time in Egypt, Joseph remained faithful to God, even though he faced many discouraging moments, moments when he could have doubted God. But he kept growing spiritually, cultivating a heart for God. If Joseph can do it, so can we, Genesis 45:5-8.
8. God never changes. What God did for Joseph, He can do for us, Malachi 3:6 / Hebrews 13:8.
9. Joseph was faced with two choices. He could become a bitter, spiteful, hateful person because of the way his brothers had treated him, or he could choose to be obedient to God and forgive the wrongs committed against him. He chose the latter, and so can we, Genesis 50:16-21 / Ephesians 4:32.
10. The Bible speaks about being 'useful to the Master and prepared to do every good work,' 2 Timothy 2:24. Joseph made the right choices and so proved himself useful to the Master, and so can we, Matthew 25:37-40.

CHAPTER 106

INTRODUCTION

Although the author of this psalm is unknown, it appears that it was written during the Babylonian captivity, when the psalmist looks for hope to return to the Promised Land. Many commentators believe that this psalm and the previous psalm, Psalm 105, belong together.
Psalm 105 speaks of God's faithfulness and power, while this psalm speaks about the repeated failure and rebellion on the part of His people. In Psalm 105, Israel is called upon to remember God's mighty deeds, but in this psalm, the psalmist tells us that Israel forgets about God's mighty deeds.

'Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the LORD or fully declare his praise? Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right. Remember me, LORD, when you show favour to your people, come to my aid when you save them, that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may share in the joy of your nation and join your inheritance in giving praise. We have sinned, even as our ancestors did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly.' Psalm 106:1-6

The psalmist begins by giving thanks to God, and then they confess the sins of their fathers. In the previous psalm, Psalm 105, the psalmist praised the LORD because God had richly blessed Israel. In this psalm, the psalmist praises the LORD because of the mercy He has shown them time and time again.
The psalmist gives thanks to the LORD because He is good, Psalm 106:1, that is, because of God's goodness, Psalm 34:8. His love endures forever, Psalm 106:1, that is, His love towards Israel, despite their disobedience, never ceases, Psalm 136.
After praising God, the psalmist now asks, Who is capable of proclaiming God's mighty acts and who can fully declare His praises? Psalm 106:2. The answer is no one because His mighty acts are beyond our comprehension, and as a result, it's impossible to fully declare His praises.
Because God had worked so wonderfully in Israel's history, they had no excuse for their rebellion. Those who act justly and those who do what is right, Psalm 106:3, are those who can proclaim God's goodness and love.
After praising God, the psalmist now asks Him to remember them, when He shows favour to His people, Psalm 106:4. They want God to help them and save them when He saves His people, Psalm 106:4.

It appears the psalmist was on their own and had no one to help them at this time, and so, the psalmist wants God to help them so that they can enjoy the prosperity along with God's chosen ones, Psalm 106:5.
They want to share in the joy God's nations have and join God's inheritance in giving praise to God, Psalm 106:5.
Although being alone and missing out on the blessings that God's people are enjoying, the psalmist confesses the sins of their ancestors, Psalm 106:6. The psalmist acknowledges and openly confesses to God that their ancestors did wrong and acted wickedly, Psalm 106:6.

'When our ancestors were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember your many kindnesses, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea. Yet he saved them for his name's sake, to make his mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up; he led them through the depths as through a desert. He saved them from the hand of the foe; from the hand of the enemy, he redeemed them. The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them survived. Then they believed his promises and sang his praise.' Psalm 106:7-12

The psalmist now confesses seven sins to God, sins which were committed from the time they left Egypt and entered the Promised Land. Please note they are not in chronological order.

1. They rebelled at the Red Sea, Exodus 14:10-12.
They rebelled regardless of God's miracles and the kindness that He had shown to them by delivering them out of the hand of the Egyptians, Psalm 106:7 / Exodus 15:22-27. Despite their rebellion, God still saved them for His own Name's sake, so that His power might be known, Psalm 106:8.
God rebuked the Red Sea, Psalm 106:9, that is, He divided the sea for Israel to cross on dry ground, Psalm 106:10, and He caused the water to go back and drown Israel's enemies, Psalm 106:11, that is, the Egyptian army, Exodus 14:5-31. After this event, Israel believed and sang praises to God, Psalm 106:12 / Exodus 15.

'But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his plan to unfold. In the desert, they gave in to their craving; in the wilderness, they put God to the test. So he gave them what they asked for but sent a wasting disease among them.' Psalm 106:13-15

2. They complained to Moses that they did not have water and food, Exodus 15:23-17:7.
Because they lived the good life in Goshen, they had all the food and drink they needed; they didn't have to trust God, Psalm 106:13. And so, because they didn't know how to survive in the wilderness, they complained to Moses and blamed him for taking them there, Psalm 106:14 / Psalm 78:18.
God gave them the water and food they so desired, but because they had focused so much on the material side of life, their souls starved, Psalm 106:15 / Numbers 11.

'In the camp, they grew envious of Moses and of Aaron, who was consecrated to the LORD. The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan; it buried the company of Abiram. Fire blazed among their followers; a flame consumed the wicked.' Psalm 106:16-18

3. They questioned God's appointed authority among the people, Numbers 16.
The leadership of Moses and Aaron led Dathan, Abiram and Korah to become jealous of their position, Psalm 106:16, and so, they led some of the Israelites against their God-ordained leadership among the people, Numbers 16:3 / Numbers 16:13. Despite Aaron building and making a golden calf, Exodus 32, he was still God's consecrated one, Psalm 106:16.
God destroyed Dathan, Abiram and Korah and their families because of their rebellion against God's men. The ground opened them up and swallowed them, Psalm 106:17 / Numbers 16:31-33. The flames consumed two hundred and fifty other men who were conspiring with Korah, Psalm 106:18 / Numbers 16:35.

'At Horeb, they made a calf and worshipped an idol cast from metal. They exchanged their glorious God for an image of a bull, which eats grass. They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt, miracles in the

land of Ham and awesome deeds by the Red Sea. So he said he would destroy them—had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.' Psalm 106:19-23

4. They committed idolatry, Exodus 32 / Deuteronomy 9:8-29.

When Israel arrived at Mount Sinai, they wanted to manifest the glory of God in a golden calf idol, Psalm 106:19. They had obviously been influenced by the idolatry of Egypt, the land of Ham, and so, turned their thinking to something that they had created after their own imagination, Psalm 106:20.

When the apostle Paul speaks against all kinds of idolatry, in Romans 1:23, he quotes Psalm 106:20 to emphasise that anyone who puts anything ahead of God is committing idolatry.

It was during this time that they forgot about God; they forgot that He was the One who saved and brought them out of Egypt, Psalm 106:21-22. If Moses hadn't interceded for them on this occasion, God would have destroyed the entire nation of Israel, Psalm 106:23 / Exodus 32:31-35. He would have started another nation through the seed of Moses, Exodus 32:9-10.

Moses was God's chosen one; it was Moses who pleaded to God not to destroy Israel, and as a result, Israel was saved, Exodus 32:11-13 / Ezekiel 22:30. Notice that Aaron's role in the building of the calf isn't mentioned.

'Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise. They grumbled in their tents and did not obey the LORD. So he swore to them with uplifted hand that he would make them fall in the wilderness, make their descendants fall among the nations and scatter them throughout the lands.' Psalm 106:24-27

5. They failed to enter the Promised Land, Numbers 13:1-14:45.

Instead of entering the land as God asked them to, they came up with a plan to send spies into the land to check it out first, and when they returned, they gave a discouraging report, Psalm 106:24 / Deuteronomy 1:19-46.

They didn't believe God's promises, they grumbled against Moses and Aaron, Psalm 106:25 / Numbers 14:1-4, and they didn't believe the report of Joshua and Caleb, the two faithful spies, Numbers 13:30.

As a result of their unbelief, God swore to them and lifted His hand, Psalm 106:26 / Genesis 14:22 / Deuteronomy 32:40 / Nehemiah 9:15 / Revelation 10:5-6, and told them they would die in the wilderness, and they would be scattered throughout the lands, Psalm 106:26-27.

In other words, that generation of Israelites, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, wouldn't be allowed to enter the Promised Land, Numbers 14:22-25. It was because of this unbelief that they weren't allowed to enter the land, Hebrews 3:7-19.

'They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods; they aroused the LORD's anger by their wicked deeds, and a plague broke out among them. But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was checked. This was credited to him as righteousness for endless generations to come.' Psalm 106:28-31

6. They committed idolatry at Baal Peor, Numbers 25:1-18.

The young women of Moab teased the men of Israel into idolatry and immorality at Baal Peor, in which they ate sacrifices to the dead, Psalm 106:28. Worship of the Canaanite god, Baal, included fornication by which one would join himself to the god through acts of fornication, 1 Corinthians 6:13-20. Baal was the Canaanite god of fertility, and Peor was possibly a hill where the idols of the Moabite god were worshipped, Numbers 23:28.

As a result of their idolatry, God sent a plague among the people, Psalm 106:29, and the plague was only stopped when Phinehas intervened and took action, Psalm 106:30 / Numbers 25:6-9. Because Phinehas intervened, God declared that his act of righteousness would bless him and his descendants, Psalm 106:31 / Numbers 25:10-13.

'By the waters of Meribah they angered the LORD, and trouble came to Moses because of them; for they rebelled against the Spirit of God, and rash words came from Moses' lips.' Psalm 106:32-33

7. They angered God at Meribah, Numbers 20:1-13.

The Israelites had angered Moses with their continuous complaining and moaning at Meribah, Psalm 106:32 / Numbers 20:9-11. God told Moses to speak to the rock, and He promised that miraculously water would pour from it, Numbers 20:7-8.
The problem was that Moses, in his anger, didn't speak to the rock, Psalm 106:33; he struck it, Numbers 20:9-11, and as a result of his disobedience, Moses wasn't allowed to enter the Promised Land, Numbers 20:12-13.
Although Moses personally disobeyed God at Meribah and had to live with the consequence of his own disobedient actions, Israel had driven him to strike the rock out of frustration. The emphasis in these verses isn't so much focused on Moses' actions but on how the Israelites drove Moses to become angry and strike the rock.

'They did not destroy the peoples as the LORD had commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs. They worshipped their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to false gods. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.' Psalm 106:34-39

When Israel entered the Promised Land, they were supposed to destroy all the people of the land, Psalm 106:34 / Deuteronomy 7:1-6 / Deuteronomy 17-26 / Deuteronomy 20:10-18. However, they didn't do that; they ended up through trade and social interchange. Israelites married Canaanite people, Psalm 106:35-36.
Their apostasy went to the point of human sacrifices, Psalm 106:37, which practices were carried out by the Canaanites when Israel first entered the land, Deuteronomy 12:31 / Deuteronomy 19:9-10 / 2 Chronicles 33:5-6 / Ezra 16:20-21 / Ezra 20:31. They polluted the land with innocent blood, Psalm 106:38 / Genesis 4:10, they defiled themselves and prostituted themselves, Psalm 106:39 / Numbers 35:33.

'Therefore, the LORD was angry with his people and abhorred his inheritance. He gave them into the hands of the nations, and their foes ruled over them. Their enemies oppressed them and subjected them to their power. Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion, and they wasted away in their sin. Yet he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; for their sake, he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented. He caused all who held them captive to show them mercy.' Psalm 106:40-46

Because of all the sinfulness the psalmists mentioned above, God became angry with His people, and abhorred His inheritance, Psalm 106:40, that is, Israel itself, Deuteronomy 32:9 / Isaiah 19:25.
As a form of punishment, they were forced into captivity, Psalm 106:41, where they were oppressed and subjected to their power, Psalm 106:42. Throughout Israel's history, especially the history recorded in the Book of Judges, Judges 21:25, Israel went through a cycle of sin and repentance.
The nation would rebel against God, and so, God would punish them, and then they would repent. God would deliver them, but they would fall into sin again, Psalm 106:43.
However, this cycle of sin and repentance came to a conclusion when God finally determined that they were determined to commit idolatry and so, He was sent into captivity, Deuteronomy 28:36 / 2 Kings 24:1 / 2 Kings 24:10-17 / 2 Kings 25:1-21 / Jeremiah 29:10.
Despite God punishing them, He heard their cries, and for the sake of His own covenant and His great love, He relented Psalm 106:44-45. He caused those who had taken Israel captive to show them mercy, Psalm 106:46, that is, they felt sorry for Israel, Ezra 1:1-2 / Jeremiah 52:4.

'Save us, LORD, our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise. Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, "Amen!" Praise the LORD.' Psalm 106:47-48

The psalmist ends with a prayer that God will gather His people who were dispersed among the nations through the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, Psalm 106:47.

A remnant of all twelve tribes would eventually come from the nations in order to praise the Lord again in the land of promise. It would be King Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire who would allow the captives to return to their homelands, just as God had said, 2 Chronicles 36:23 / Isaiah 45:13.

When God gathers His people, they will be thankful for God's Holy Name, and they will praise God and God's glory, Psalm 106:47. When God gathers His people, they will say, 'Amen, praise the LORD', Psalm 106:48, in gratitude for what he has done. It's with these words that the fourth book of the five books of the Psalms ends.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist spoke about Israel's cycle of sin, and it's in the Book of Judges that we see this cycle highlighted.

In Judges 1:1, through to Judges 3:6, we find that the Israelites have failed to keep their part of the covenant, and they didn't entirely conquer and take control of all the land that they were promised. This problem, unfortunately, grows wildly out of control as time goes on.

In Judges 3:7, through to Judges 16, we see God raising up judges to rescue Israel several times. And what we see is this vicious cycle appearing, where the Israelites sin, then God rescues them, they worship God for a while and sin starts all over again and so forth. We see that these rescues were temporary because we find that the nation's obedience only lasted as long as the life of that particular judge.

In Judges 17, through to Judges 21, we see Israel sinking into a horrid state of moral demise and ruin. It's mainly in the tribes of Dan and Benjamin that we see just how far man has really turned from the God of Abraham. The tribe of Dan had almost completely given in to the worship of idols made by a man named Micah, even to the point that they practically defended it.

Later, the entire tribe of Benjamin are almost wiped out, down to six hundred men in a violent and vicious civil war. And it's during this time we find those sad words of Judges 21:25, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit." We must learn that we will continue in the cycle of sin if we're not totally committed to God and His ways, James 4:7 / 1 Corinthians 9:26-27.

CHAPTER 107

INTRODUCTION

In the fifth book of the Psalms, Psalms 107-150, we read about praising God and His Word. Psalms 113-118 are often referred to as the Hallel psalms; these were sung on festive occasions, such as at Pentecost, the feast of Tabernacles, and the feast of Dedication. This was probably the hymn which our Saviour and His disciples sang at the conclusion of the Passover supper, Matthew 26:30 / Mark 14:26.

In Book 1, the name 'Yahweh' is found two hundred and seventy-three times. In Book 2, the name 'Yahweh' is found seventy-four times. In Book 3, the name 'Yahweh' is found thirteen times, and finally, in Books 4 and 5, the name 'Yahweh' is found three-hundred and thirty-nine times. As you can see, the name 'Yahweh' is more popular in Book 1.

In Book 1, the name ‘Elohim’ is found fifteen times. In Book 2, the name ‘Elohim’ is found two hundred and seven times. In Book 3, the name ‘Elohim’ is found thirty-six times and finally, in Books 4 and 5, the name ‘Elohim’ is found seven times. As you can see, the name ‘Elohim’ is more popular in Book 2.

This psalm is a psalm of adoration and worship, and although the psalmist is unknown, they are confident that when they pray to God in times of distress, God will answer their prayer and come to help them.

‘Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story—those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south. Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.’ Psalm 107:1-9

The psalmist begins by asking everyone to give thanks to God for His goodness and love, which endures forever, Psalm 107:1. Giving thanks to God for His love is a theme which runs through this psalm; it’s used five times.

The psalmist calls upon those who have been redeemed to tell their own stories of redemption, Psalm 107:2 / Isaiah 43:3. The remnant of Israel was rescued out of the lands of their captivity, Psalm 107:2. God did this through Cyrus, the king of the Medo-Persian Empire, Isaiah 44:28-45:7.

The psalmist reminds their readers of their redemption from the hand of their foes, and those He gathered from the lands from all directions, Psalm 107:2-3. The historical setting of this psalm appears to be speaking about the gathering of those who had been scattered in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. It was a joyous occasion and one of thanksgiving to God.

This happened in three stages. The first stage was by the decree of Cyrus for the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple to God in 538 B.C. Ezra 1-6.

The second stage was when the religious leader was Ezra the scribe in 457 B.C. Ezra 7-10. The third stage was when Nehemiah was allowed to return to the land in order to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and enable the people to re-inhabit the city, 445/444 B.C. Nehemiah 1:1-11.

Because the remnant were discriminated against while in captivity, the Jews were given the worst of the lands in the region of their captors. Some lived in the wilderness and some through the desert wastelands, Psalm 107:4.

They were in great distress, they were hungry and thirsty, and their lives were failing, Psalm 107:5, but when they cried out to God for help, God delivered them from their distress, Psalm 107:6 / Job 23:9.

Despite not being able to find a way to a city where they could settle, God led them straight to a city where they could settle, Psalm 107:7. It was those redeemed people who are encouraged to give thanks to God for His love and His wonderful deeds, Psalm 107:8. Earlier those redeemed were hungry and thirsty but now God satisfies their hunger and thirst would good things, Psalm 107:9 / Isaiah 29:8 / Luke 1:46-55.

‘Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness, prisoners suffering in iron chains, because they rebelled against God’s commands and despised the plans of the Most High. So he subjected them to bitter labour; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness, and broke away their chains. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.’ Psalm 107:10-15

Some of those whom God redeemed were greatly suffering in prison, they were bound in iron chains in complete darkness, Psalm 107:10 / Job 3:5 / Job 10:21 / Job 36:8 / Psalm 23:4 / Psalm 44:19 / Isaiah 9:2 / Luke 1:79 / Ephesians 4:1.

These were the Jews who found themselves in captivity because they had rebelled against the will of God while in the land of Palestine, Psalm 107:11 / Daniel 9:5-8.

When God subjected those who went against His will to bitter labour, Psalm 107:12 / Genesis 41:51 / Deuteronomy 26:7 / Job 3:10 / Job 16:2, they found that there was no one to help them, Psalm 107:12, but when they cried out to God for help, God saved them from their distress, Psalm 107:13.

In other words, despite breaking God's laws, God in His mercy released them from the darkness of prison and their chains, Psalm 107:14. These ex-prisoners should also give thanks to God for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds, Psalm 107:15. They should give thanks to God because they recognise and have partaken of His grace, 2 Corinthians 4:15.

'For he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron. Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.' Psalm 107:16-22

When God freed the captives from their bondage, He broke down the gates of bronze and bars of iron, Psalm 107:16 / Isaiah 45:2. Some of those whom God gathered were fools because they rebelled and, as a result, they suffered affliction, Psalm 107:17.

They had lost their appetite, Psalm 107:18, that is, their spiritual appetite for God and they drew near the gates of death, Psalm 107:18, that is, they almost died of spiritual starvation, Romans 6:23.

Once again, when they cried out to God for help in their time of trouble, despite their rebellious ways, God in His grace, saved them from their distress, Psalm 107:19.

Notice it was the power of God's Word which healed them and rescued them from the grave, Psalm 107:20 / Matthew 8:8 / Luke 7:7. God's Word has the power to heal the spiritually sick, Psalm 105:19 / Isaiah 9:8 / Isaiah 55:11 / John 1:1-14 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 / Hebrews 4:12.

Those who God healed by His word are to offer thanksgiving offerings to the Lord, Psalm 107:21-22, and tell everyone what God has done through His sons, Psalm 107:22 / Leviticus 7:11-15 / Leviticus 22:29-30 / Isaiah 38:20 / 2 Corinthians 4:15.

'Some went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril, their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits' end. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.' Psalm 107:23-32

Some of those whom God gathered came by sea; they were merchants on the mighty waters, Psalm 107:23. The sea was viewed to be at a lower elevation because men had to go down from the land or mountains to board the ships on the sea.

Whilst on the sea, all those merchants saw the wonderful works of God, Psalm 107:24, but they also saw the high waves lifted high when God spoke, Psalm 107:25. The high waves were like a roller coaster, they went up as high as the heavens and plunged back down again to the depths, Psalm 107:26.

They are in a desperate situation, and their courage melted away, Psalm 107:26 / Exodus 15:15 / Joshua 2:9 / Joshua 2:24 / Nahum 1:5. The raging of the sea was so bad that they reeled and staggered around like drunk men; they are desperate and at their wits' end, Psalm 107:27.

They too cried out to God for help in their trouble and God in His grace brought them out of their distress, Psalm 107:28. God did this by commanding the seas to calm down, Psalm 107:29, God calmed the storm, Matthew 8:26. Once again, the psalmist calls upon those seas merchants whom God saved, to give thanks to God for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds, Psalm 107:30-31.

The psalmist calls upon those sea merchants not only to give thanks to God for His unfailing love and wonderful deeds but also to exalt God among the people and praise Him among the elders, Psalm 107:32.

'He turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, and fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there. He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs; there he brought the hungry to live, and they founded a city where they could settle. They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest; he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased, and he did not let their herds diminish. Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled by oppression, calamity, and sorrow; he who pours contempt on nobles made them wander in a trackless waste. But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks. The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths. Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving deeds of the LORD.' Psalm 107:33-43

It was because of the sin of Israel that God brought drought over the land, hence, rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, a fruitful land into a salt waste, Psalm 107:33-34 / Genesis 13:10 / Isaiah 44:26-27.

When the captives returned from captivity in repentance, God made the land fruitful, hence deserts into pools of water, parched ground into flowing springs, Psalm 107:35 / Job 39:6 / Isaiah 35:6-7 / Jeremiah 17:6.

For those who were almost ready to die of hunger, God met their needs and gave them a place to permanently live in, Psalm 107:36. They sowed fields and planted vineyards which produced fruit, Psalm 107:37.

God didn't allow their herds to diminish, Psalm 107:38, and so, God blessed the people richly and they grew in numbers, Psalm 107:38 / Genesis 13:16 / Genesis 22:17 / Genesis 26:4 / Genesis 32:12.

Just as quickly as God can increase the number of His people, He can also decrease the number of His people, Psalm 107:39. Despite all these blessings from God, despite their numbers being increased, God's people began to decrease in numbers as they experienced humility, oppression, calamity, and sorrow, Psalm 107:39.

God can also pour contempt on those who are noble, Psalm 107:40, or princes, as some translations render that word, Job 12:21. He can make them wander in a wasteland, Psalm 107:40, especially those who humiliate, oppress, cause calamity and sorrow upon others.

God can also lift up those who are in need, those who are being afflicted and increase their families like a flock, Psalm 107:41. Those who are righteous will see what God is capable of doing, Psalm 107:42, that is, they see how God brings down those who oppress and how He lifts up the needy, and they will rejoice. While the righteous rejoice, the mouths of the wicked are shut, Psalm 107:42 / Job 5:16 / 1 Peter 2:15.

The psalmist ends by encouraging the wise to heed these things and ponder on God's loving deeds, Psalm 107:43. In other words, wisdom lets us see God's great love for His people and how God hears the prayers of His people and answers them, James 5:14-15. Wisdom helps us understand why we should give thanks to God for redeeming His people and His unfailing love.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist reminded us that when we cry out to God for help, He hears us and will deliver us. One of the most frustrating parts about being a Christian and praying is when our prayers seem to go unanswered. This can be so discouraging and often can leave us wondering if God is actually listening to our prayers in the first place.

We read repeatedly throughout the Scriptures that God promises to hear our prayers, but we often forget to notice or accept the Scriptures which speak about the terms and conditions of our prayers. There are a few reasons why our prayers may not be answered.

1. This may sound obvious, but maybe you haven't asked, James 4:2.
I know this is obvious, but there are times when God actually wants us to speak to Him and specifically ask Him. Yes, God knows what we're going to say before we actually say it, but we must ask Him, we must verbalise our request to Him. This could be a reason why God doesn't answer our prayers, simply because we don't ask.

2. Intentional sinning, Psalm 66:18 / James 4:3.
Let's be honest, we all sin, and we all struggle with it, but there's a massive difference between struggling with sin and intentionally getting involved with it. If you're a lover of money, for example, and you're praying for God to help you with your finances, but in your heart, you want to use those finances for your own selfish reasons.

This may be a reason why your prayers aren't being answered. If we pray for anything which will encourage us to sin more and love sin more, then we can be sure those prayers won't be answered.

3. All mouth and no ears, Matthew 13:14-15.
Some people really have a problem listening; all they seem to do is talk, at times they actually talk at you rather than with you. As Christians, God's Word should be on our minds all the time, and when we read His Word, we need to listen to what He has to say to us.

Sometimes we get so focused on how we think God should answer our prayer that we miss how He is actually answering our prayer. Think about it, it's pretty difficult to know what God is saying if we neglect to read His Word.

He speaks to us through Bible studies, sermons, and the songs we sing, but if you aren't around when these things happen, how can you know what God is saying? These are the ways God regularly speaks to us, and maybe God has already answered your prayer, but you haven't listened for the answer.

4. Lack of faith, John 14:6 / John 14:12-14.
Although these words of Jesus are directly spoken to the apostles, we can learn some basic principles from His words. Since Jesus is the Way, we learn that it's only through Jesus Christ that we have access to the Father.

Notice we have access to the Father; we're not praying to some unknown God who's out of reach. He's our Father, and Jesus asks us to pray in His name. Maybe some prayers aren't being answered because they aren't prayed in Jesus' Name.

5. My will, not Thy will, Matthew 6:10 / 1 John 5:14-15.
Let's be honest, sometimes we pray for the wrong things. Even though it may be unintentional, we often ask for things that will increase our comfort and could harm our relationship with the Lord.

That new job might pay more money and help us to better provide for our family, but it may require us to work extra hours, which could cut into our family time. The increased earnings and security could also cause us to rely less on God, thinking that we're in total control of our lives.

How do we know what God's will is? We read His Word, and we speak to mature Christians. We know that God wants us to grow as Christians, so praying for our own spiritual growth is in accordance with His will. We know that He hates sin, and so praying for Him to give you the strength to stop sinning is in accordance with His will.

Praying in accordance with God's will is about requesting things in prayer which are in tune with what God wants for us, things that God knows will help us, encourage us, and strengthen us.

Maybe the reason our prayers don't get answered is that we're praying for our greeds instead of our needs. Maybe the things we're asking for may harm us in some way or tempt us to leave God, maybe we're praying that our will, will be done and not His.

What about if you plan to get a new job and three jobs are offered to you, which one do you take? If you choose one job over the other two, how do you know if this is God's will?

The truth is, you don't know, half the time we choose the direction we want to go in anyway because that's the direction we really want to go in, and then we try and justify the decision by saying 'this was God's will', but if things go wrong, we say, 'maybe this wasn't God's will'. We need to understand that God will always let us make the decision, but will bless our decision if we're still putting Him first in our lives.

6. Be patient, Psalm 13:1-2 / Revelation 6:10-11.
Ah, patience, there's a word we don't like sometimes, especially in today's society, where everything is at the push of a button, fast food, and we want everything now. There are times when we pray, and they seem to go unanswered, but we need to trust that God may well be working on it, but the time isn't right, 'right now'.

Just because there's no immediate answer to our prayers doesn't mean that God isn't listening and working on it and preparing you in some way or others around you.

God has a plan for each of us, but it will happen on his timetable, not ours. As Christians, we need to admit that we don't see the big picture as God does, and He always knows what's best for us and for those around us. He also has a plan for our lives, and that often involves doing things that we'd rather not do, Luke 22:42.
When we pray, it's important to remember that God loves us, and He knows what we need more than we do. He knows our heart's desires, and He knows our best interests, but we should also remember that He isn't some kind of fast food restaurant, where we put our orders in, and He keeps dishing our prayer requests out.

We should never stop asking, but at the same time, we should always be open to His answer. Look at Jesus' prayer on the night before He died. He prayed for His needs, but was open to the answer. Although it's difficult to accept, we need to trust that God always has a reason for saying 'no' to our requests.

CHAPTER 108

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is a psalm where David calls upon God for deliverance. This psalm is different because it appears to bring together the words of two other psalmists, Psalm 57:7-11 / Psalm 60:5-12, to make this one psalm.

HEADING

'A song. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a psalm and song of David.

'My heart, O God, is steadfast; I will sing and make music with all my soul. Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise you, LORD, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. Save us and help us with your right hand, that those you love may be delivered.' Psalm 108:1-6

David begins by giving God adoration in order that he be delivered, Psalm 57:7-11. David's heart is steadfast, Psalm 108:1 / Psalm 57:7, and he is confident that he will sing and make music with all his soul, that is, within his innermost part, Psalm 108:1 / Psalm 57:1-11.
David metaphorically speaks to the harp and lyre and asks them to awake, Psalm 108:2 / Psalm 57:8, that is, these are the instruments he will use to praise God, 1 Samuel 16:18. When he uses these instruments to praise God, he will awaken the dawn, Psalm 108:2, that is, he will praise God with them at the start of each day.
David will praise the LORD publicly and unashamedly among the nations and among God's people, Psalm 108:3 / Psalm 57:9. The reason for doing so is simply because of God's great love, which is higher than the heavens, Psalm 108:4, that is, it's beyond measure.
His faithfulness reaches the skies, Psalm 108:4, which again implies it is also without measure, Psalm 57:10.
Although God's love and faithfulness are without measure, David asks God to be exalted above the heavens, and His glory be over all the earth, Psalm 108:5. In other words, God and His glory are worthy of high praise, Psalm 57:11.
After praising God, David asks God to save and help not only himself but also those he is speaking on behalf of God, Psalm 108:6 / Psalm 60:5. They needed to be delivered from whatever crisis they found themselves in.
David asks that God save them with His right hand, Psalm 108:6 / Psalm 60:5, which signifies strength, and he appeals to God's love for them. Please note the KJV speaks in singular terms, as though it were David himself who was asking for deliverance.

'God has spoken from his sanctuary: "In triumph I will parcel out Shechem and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth. Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine; Ephraim is my helmet, Judah is my sceptre. Moab is my washbasin, on Edom I toss my sandal; over Philistia I shout in triumph." Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom? Is it not you, God, you who have rejected us and no longer go out with our armies? Give us aid against the enemy, for human help is worthless. With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.' Psalm 108:7-13

David now begins to prophesy, Acts 2:30. He received a message from God whilst in His sanctuary, Psalm 108:7, that is, the tabernacle. The prophecy speaks about God's ultimate victory over all the nations mentioned, Psalm 108:7-10 / Psalm 60:6-8.
God would triumph and parcel out Shechem, Psalm 108:7 / Joshua 1:6 / Joshua 13:6-7 / Joshua 14:5 / Joshua 18:10 / Joshua 19:51 / Joshua 23:4 / Psalm 78:55 / Acts 13:19. God would measure off the Valley of Sukkoth, Psalm 108:7 / Deuteronomy 27:11-13 / Joshua 8:33.

God says Gilead is His, Psalm 108:8 / Numbers 32:26 / Numbers 32:29 / Numbers 32:39 / Psalm 60:7. Manasseh is His, Psalm 108:8 / 2 Samuel 8:3, Ephraim is His helmet, Psalm 108:8, that is, the strength of my head and Judah is His sceptre, Psalm 108:8, that is, symbolic of dominion and governance, Genesis 49:8-12.

God said that He would exalt Himself over the surrounding nations, Psalm 108:9-10. Both Moab, 2 Samuel 8:2 / Psalm 60:8, and Edom, 2 Samuel 8:14, were noted for their pride, Isaiah 16:6 / Obadiah 3.

Here God gives them places of humble service, Isaiah 15:1-9. Tossing the sandal, Psalm 108:9, was possibly a symbolic act of claiming possession, Ruth 4:7. As for the Philistines, let them, if they dare, triumph over him as they had done, Psalm 108:9; he will soon force them to change their note, 2 Samuel 8:1.

David knows that Israel suffered defeat because God wasn't fighting for them, Psalm 60:10-11, but he trusts that God will lead Israel to victory over the fortified city, Psalm 108:10 / Psalm 60:9, that is, the city of Petra, Isaiah 16:1. Petra was the capital city of Edom, Psalm 108:10, and it was Joab and Abishai who led David to Edom to be victorious, 2 Samuel 9:1.

David knows that God will take them into the fortified city, despite the fact that He allowed them to be defeated, Psalm 108:11. He knows that any human help isn't enough; in fact, he knows that any human help is useless, Psalm 108:12, it's only God's help that would secure the victory, Psalm 108:12 / Psalm 60:9-12.

David ends the psalm by speaking of God giving them the total victory over their enemies, Psalm 108:12 / 2 Samuel 8:14 / 1 Chronicles 18:13.

CONCLUSION

God told David he would successfully defeat all those nations because God Himself was going to fight for him. As Christians, we too can be victorious in our own personal battles if we allow God to fight for us, Psalm 28:7 / Jeremiah 20:11.

Not only will we be victorious, but we will be 'more than conquerors', Romans 8:35-39. To conquer is to be victorious over our enemies, but to be 'more than a conqueror' means we not only achieve victory, but we're overwhelmingly victorious, Philippians 4:13.

The hard things which we suffer will not cause Him to stop loving us, but our love toward Him may stop as a result of them, Matthew 24:11-12. When in terrible suffering, we should not think that Christ has forsaken us. Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 to show that there is nothing peculiar in God's people suffering.

Psalm 44 is a long Psalm dealing with the sufferings Israel had faced. Because we are 'more than conquerors', we can abundantly and overwhelmingly conquer every obstacle. We conquer only because Christ loves us first. Through Christ, who loves us, we can overcome all the trials and hardships of life. Paul himself is an example of such conquering, 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

CHAPTER 109

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David calls upon God to deal with all those who are verbally attacking him, but as we go through the psalm, we begin to see that whoever is attacking him, God's anointed king over Israel, is actually attacking God Himself.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this was written for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. The heading also tells us this is a psalm of David.

'My God, whom I praise, do not remain silent, for people who are wicked and deceitful have opened their mouths against me; they have spoken against me with lying tongues. With words of hatred, they surround me; they attack me without cause. In return for my friendship, they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer. They repay me evil for good, and hatred for my friendship.' Psalm 109:1-5

David begins by asking the God he praises not to remain silent, Psalm 109:1. His enemies aren't using swords to attack him, but words, deceitful words against him, Psalm 109:2. He asks God not to remain silent, because he doesn't want his enemies to have the last word.
His enemies' hatred towards him is seen in their lies, and they are attacking him without cause, Psalm 109:3, that is, with no real reason, Psalm 35:7 / Psalm 69:4 / John 15:25. They were using words which were used to falsely accuse David of things he hadn't done or words which would attack his character.
All David wanted to do for his enemies was to offer them friendship, Psalm 109:4 / Romans 12:20-21, but in return, they falsely accused him of all kinds of evil, Psalm 109:5.
It's an incredible thought that even though David's enemies wanted nothing but his destruction, David prayed for them, Psalm 109:4 / Matthew 5:11-12 / Luke 23:34.
Despite doing good to his enemies, they pay him back with evil. Despite offering friendship to his enemies, they offer hatred, Psalm 109:5. This is typical behaviour of those who want to take over and gain all the power from someone else.

'Appoint someone evil to oppose my enemy; let an accuser stand at his right hand. When he is tried, let him be found guilty, and may his prayers condemn him. May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership. May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. May his children be wandering beggars; may they be driven from their ruined homes. May a creditor seize all he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his labour. May no one extend kindness to him or take pity on his fatherless children. May his descendants be cut off, their names blotted out from the next generation. May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD; may the sin of his mother never be blotted out. May their sins always remain before the LORD, that he may blot out their name from the earth. For he never thought of doing a kindness but hounded to death the poor and the needy and the broken-hearted. He loved to

pronounce a curse—may it come back on him. He found no pleasure in blessing—may it be far from him. He wore cursing as his garment; it entered into his body like water, into his bones like oil. May it be like a cloak wrapped about him, like a belt tied forever around him. May this be the LORD's payment to my accusers, to those who speak evil of me.' Psalm 109:6-20

David now asks God to help him by bringing judgment upon those who were falsely accusing him with deceitful words. He wants God to raise up someone to oppose his enemy, someone who would accuse them at their right hand, Psalm 109:6.

In other words, he wants his enemy to be in a hopeless situation with no one to defend them. Notice how David also speaks of his enemy as an individual throughout these verses, Psalm 109:6-20.

If his enemy were in a courtroom, they would be found guilty, Psalm 109:7. In other words, David is requesting that one of the same characters, a perverse accuser, be his adviser.

Because of David's enemies' slanderous attacks against the righteous leader, the prayers of the slanderous person were sinful in that they were spoken from an ungodly heart, Psalm 109:7.

Peter quoted Psalm 109:8 in Acts 1:20, when he was condemning Judas. If David's enemy dies young, then that would mean his children would become orphans and his wife would be a widow, Psalm 109:9. His children, who would be fatherless, will suffer great poverty, Psalm 109:10.

David asks that no mercy should be shown, either to him or his family, Psalm 109:12. This is not only because of the way they were treating David but also because of the way they treated the poor and needy, Psalm 109:16.

They would live as though they were cursed, Psalm 109:17, that is, their names would be blotted out, Psalm 109:13-15. David also asks that his enemy's descendants' sins be held against them and that God would never forget their sins, Psalm 109:14-15 / Exodus 20:5 / Romans 5:12-21.

His enemy never even thought of showing kindness, not only to the poor and needy but also to the broken-hearted, Psalm 109:16, which in itself is totally opposite to how God treats the broken-hearted, Psalm 34:18 / Psalm 51:17.

His enemy loved to pronounce a curse, and David asked God that his enemy reap what he was sowing, Psalm 109:17 / 1 Peter 5:5 / Job 29:14. David's enemies found no pleasure in blessing people; they found it more enjoyable to curse people.

David wants them to be dressed in their own curses, Psalm 109:18. All these curses are what David asked God to bring down on his enemies, those who were deceitful in their false accusations against him, Psalm 109:19-20 / Leviticus 19:13. David appears to be content to leave the matter in God's hands for Him to deal with at His appointed time.

'But you, Sovereign LORD, help me for your name's sake; out of the goodness of your love, deliver me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I fade away like an evening shadow; I am shaken off like a locust. My knees give way from fasting; my body is thin and gaunt. I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads. Help me, LORD, my God; save me according to your unfailing love. Let them know that it is your hand, that you, LORD, have done it.' Psalm 109:21-27

David knew he couldn't deal with his enemies on his own; he knew he needed God's help. He asks for help on the basis of God's Name and because of God's love, Psalm 109:21 / Daniel 9:18-19. In other words, he wanted God to have all the glory for delivering him.

All those lies and false accusations from his enemies are having a negative effect on David. Earlier, David says that his enemies were treating the poor and needy and the broken-hearted badly, Psalm 109:26, and here, David says that's exactly how he is feeling, poor, needy and broken-hearted, Psalm 109:22.

Physically, he felt he was wasting away like an evening shadow, Psalm 109:23, and as a result of his fasting, he had spent so much time fasting that he was physically weak, Psalm 109:24.

His fasting shows us how desperate he is to be delivered from his enemies, Hebrews 12:12. Because David is so weak, his enemies are trying to take advantage of his physical state.

We can almost imagine his enemies looking down at David and shaking their heads in pity and disgust as they pass by, Psalm 109:25 / Psalm 22:7 / Matthew 27:39.

No wonder David asks God to help him according to God's unfailing love, Psalm 109:26 / Matthew 15:21-25. David wants all his enemies to have no doubts that it was God who delivered him from his enemy's hands, Psalm 109:27. It had nothing to do with David, and what he did, the glory belongs to God and God alone, Psalm 109:27.

'While they curse, may you bless; may those who attack me be put to shame, but may your servant rejoice. May my accusers be clothed with disgrace and wrapped in shame as in a cloak. With my mouth I will greatly extol the LORD; in the great throng of worshipers I will praise him. For he stands at the right hand of the needy, to save their lives from those who would condemn them.' Psalm 109:28-31

David knows that his enemies' curses could never defeat God's blessings and when his enemies come to understand that, they would be put to shame, Psalm 109:28 / Job 6:20 / Psalm 25:2-3, and David would rejoice, Psalm 109:28.

When his enemies come to understand that their curses could never defeat God's blessings, his enemies would be clothed in disgrace and end up wearing shame like a cloak, Psalm 109:29.

On the day when his enemies are disgraced and clothed with shame, David says he will greatly extol the Lord, Psalm 109:30. In other words, he will give God all the credit for delivering him, and he will do it publicly, Psalm 109:30 / Psalm 22:25 / Isaiah 38:20.

He will praise God because He stands at the right hand of the needy, Psalm 109:31. In other words, God is their strength, and He will save them from the hands of those who sought to condemn them, Psalm 109:31.

CONCLUSION

In this psalm, David spoke about those who were falsely accusing him of doing and saying things he had never done. There's nothing more painful than being accused of something we haven't done, and just like David, those accusations make us feel lonely and very vulnerable to even more attacks from those who accuse us.

As Christians, when we're falsely accused of something, there are a few things we can do to help ourselves.

1. Remember, Jesus knows what it is like to be falsely accused, Luke 23:2-3.
2. Remember, Jesus understands and sympathises with us, Hebrews 4:15.
3. Remember, God will fight for us and will have the last word; all we need to do is be silent, Exodus 14:14.
4. Remember, not to take matters into our own hands, leave vengeance to God, Romans 12:18-19.
5. Remember, to count it all as joy, and we will be stronger by the time it's over, James 1:2-4.

CHAPTER 110

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is a psalm which is Messianic in nature and is quoted twenty-two times within the New Testament. Each of the quotes in the New Testament refers to Jesus as the Messiah and His kingdom reign.

HEADING

'Of David. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a psalm of David.

'The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." The LORD will extend your mighty sceptre from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of your enemies!" Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendour, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning's womb. The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high.' Psalm 110:1-7

David begins by telling us what the LORD, that is, Yahweh, said to the lord, that is, Adonia, that is, Jesus, David's lord, Psalm 110:1. Please note the word 'lord' used in the NIV should have a capital 'L'.
Jesus quotes these words in Matthew 22:43-45 and Mark 12:36-37, to show how David called the Messiah lord, which means that the Messiah was greater than David. Peter quoted these words in Acts 2:34-35, to show how David prophesied the deity and accession of Jesus.
Paul quotes these words in 1 Corinthians 15:25 to demonstrate the rule and dominion of Jesus. The writer of Hebrews quotes these words in Hebrews 1:13 to explain how Jesus is superior to any angel. Later, in Hebrews 10:13, the writer quotes these words again to explain the rule and dominion of Jesus.
The LORD, that is, God, the Father, spoke to the Messiah, that is, Jesus the Son, and told Him He would sit at His right hand until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet, Psalm 110:1 / Ephesians 1:20 / Hebrews 8:1. In other words, Jesus would remain there until the Father provided the victory, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 / Hebrews 2:8.
Jesus, the Messiah's authority, that is, the sceptre, would reach out to the whole world. He would dominate all the kings and nations of the earth, which meant He would rule over them, Psalm 110:2. Jesus came to Israel, but not everyone in Israel submitted to Him, John 1:11 / Philippians 2:5-11.
Nevertheless, Jesus was seated at the right hand of God to reign over all things. At this moment and time, we don't see everything in subjection to Him, Hebrews 2:8, but that doesn't mean He isn't reigning over all things.
David tells us that the Messiah's 'troops will be willing on your day of battle and arrayed in holy splendour, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning's womb', Psalm 110:3.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 110:3.

‘Every clause of the verse is obscure, though the ‘general’ idea is not difficult to perceive; that, in the day of Messiah‘s power, his people would willingly offer themselves to him, in holy robes or adorning, like the glittering dew of the morning or, in numbers that might be compared with the drops of the morning dew.’

The essential ideas are as follows.

1. He would have a ‘people’.

2. Their subjection to him would be a ‘willing’ subjection.

3. This would be accomplished by his ‘power’.

4. They would appear before him in great beauty, in robes of holy adorning.

5. They would in some way resemble the dew of the morning.

6. To him in thus subduing them, there would be the vigour of youth, the ardour of youthful hope.

In other words, Christ’s rule will be over those people alone who willingly and wholeheartedly submit themselves to His authority, Matthew 28:18 / Matthew 11:27 / John 17:2.
David continues and says that the LORD, that is, Yahweh, God the Father, has sworn, that is, made an oath and will not change His mind, Psalm 110:4. The first appearance of Melchizedek is found in the days of Abram, Genesis 14:13-20.
One thousand years later, we read about him in Psalm 110:4. We wait another one thousand years before he appears in the New Testament, Hebrews 5:5-10 / Hebrews 6:19-20 / Hebrews 7:1-25.
God declared that it was His intention that His own Son should combine in Himself the function of Kingship and Priesthood, when in Psalm 110:4, He said, ‘You are a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek’.
In Hebrews 5:1, the high priest is chosen from the people. He is for the people, He is of the people. The ordinary high priest was beset with weaknesses which Jesus didn’t have, Hebrews 5:2-3. The high priest needed to offer a sacrifice for his own sins, which Jesus didn’t need to do since He was sinless.
In the book of Hebrews, the writer tells us that this was something which God, the Father, declared, not the Son Himself, Hebrews 5:5-6 / Hebrews 5:10. The writer also tells us Jesus, the Son, is now serving and will serve forever, as a living, active High Priest for His people, Hebrews 6:20.
The writer also tells us that Jesus, the Son’s priesthood, is according to the order of Melchizedek and is better than the priestly order of Aaron, because it’s eternal and will never end, Hebrews 7:17. It is better than the priestly order of Aaron because it was founded upon the oath of God, the Father, Hebrews 7:21.
The last part of this psalm uses military terms in order to metaphorically portray the work of Jesus in His kingdom’s reign among the nations of the world. As a kingly priest, Jesus’ sovereignty would be over all the nations of the world.

Through the power of His word, millions would submit to His authority, and those who found confidence in the kings of this world would turn to the King of kings and Lord of lords, 1 Timothy 6:15.
Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, Psalm 110:5, which signifies strength. He will crush kings and judge the nations, Psalm 110:5. He will heap up the dead and crush the rulers of the earth, Psalm 110:6 / Revelation 16:16 / Revelation 19:11-21.
He will drink from a brook, and He will lift up His head, Psalm 110:7, that is, He refreshed Himself after the battle, Psalm 110:7, and He will be exalted in glory, Psalms 3:3 / Psalm 27:6 / Jeremiah 52:31.

CONCLUSION

David spoke of the importance of Jesus, the Messiah, being a High Priest, and as Christians, we are so blessed to have Jesus as our High Priest, Hebrews 2:17 / Hebrews 3:1 / Hebrews 4:14-5:10 / Hebrews 6:20 / Hebrews 7:11-8:2 / Hebrews 10:12.

As our High Priest, He mediates for us, Hebrews 7:23-25, and it's because He sacrificed Himself that we now have our sins cleansed. In the Old Testament, the priests would offer sacrifices for sin once a year, but Jesus, who had no sin, sacrificed Himself once for all, Hebrews 10:1-18.

His priesthood is based on God's authority rather than lineage, Hebrews 7:11-17, and it is also kingly, 1 Timothy 6:15-16 / Revelation 17:14 / Revelation 19:16. Because He is our High Priest, we can have the confidence to approach God with confidence in prayer, Hebrews 4:16.

CHAPTER 111

INTRODUCTION

We don't know who the author of this psalm is, and many commentators believe that this psalm and the next, Psalm 112, actually belong together as one psalm. This psalm focuses on the nature and character of God, whilst Psalm 112 focuses on the character of the righteous person.

We can't tell from our English translations, but this psalm is actually written in Hebrew alphabetical order, except for the opening three words. The rest of the psalm begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

'Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly. Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them. Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever. He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and compassionate. He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever. He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other nations. The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are established for ever and ever, enacted in faithfulness and uprightness. He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.' Psalm 111:1-10

The psalmist begins by giving praise to the LORD and declaring that they will extol the LORD with all their heart in public, Psalm 111:1, that is, in the council and the assembly. By praising God in public, the psalmist assumes that like-minded people will join in with their praise.

Their praise begins with declaring God's great works, which He had done in creation, Psalm 111:2 / Psalm 8 / Romans 1:20. When people ponder or study the greatness of God's works they will delight in them, Psalm 111:2 / Deuteronomy 32:4. They will come to know to understand how glorious and majestic His deeds are and they will know that His righteousness endures forever, Psalm 111:3.

God designed His wonders to be remembered, and those who are righteous will seek to discover God's design in the creation. They will see that God is gracious and compassionate, Psalm 111:4 / Exodus 34:6 / Psalm 86:5, and they will see His work in the lives of everyone.

God provides food for those who seek and obey Him, Psalm 111:5 / Psalm 37:25. This is possibly referring to the giving of the manna and quail in the wilderness, Exodus 16 / Numbers 11.
He will never forget His covenant, Psalm 111:5 / Genesis 12:1-3 / Exodus 24:1-18. In other words, God's work in the life of the righteous is evidence that He honours His covenants that He makes with men.
God has clearly demonstrated His power to the people; this was seen when He led them into Canaan, Psalm 111:6 / Deuteronomy 6-7. God took the land of Palestine from the ungodly nations who dwelt in it and gave it to the nation of Israel, and because of their wickedness, the nations gave up their right to the land, Psalm 111:6.
The work which God has done with His hands is faithful and just, and all his precepts are trustworthy, Psalm 111:7, that is, they are true, fair and secured forever, Psalm 111:8 / Psalm 19:9 / Matthew 5:18 / Matthew 24:35 / Luke 16:17.
God is the One who redeemed His people, Psalm 111:9. This is probably a reference to the Exodus out of Egypt, Exodus 6:6. God ordained His covenant, Deuteronomy 7:12-15.
He has shown Himself to be holy in all that He has done; therefore, His Name is not only awesome but Holy, Psalm 111:9. In other words, God's covenant and God's name are the foundations upon which Israel have their relationship with God.
After seeing and observing God's wonderful creation and what He has done for His people, the natural response would be to fear the LORD, Psalm 111:10. Fearing the Lord, that is, having total respect and reverence for Him, is the beginning of wisdom, Psalm 111:10 / Job 28:28 / Proverbs 1:7 / Proverbs 9:10 / Ecclesiastes 12:13.
Fear is the beginning of wisdom simply because we can never come to a knowledge of truth unless we recognise the authority of the word of God and are obedient to that word.

Those who follow his precepts, Psalm 111:10, that is, those who are obedient to His precepts, will have a good understanding of God and His Word, Psalm 111:10 / 1 Samuel 25:3 / Ezra 8:18 / Job 17:4 / Proverbs 3:4 / Proverbs 13:15 / Proverbs 16:22.
The psalmist began by praising God, Psalm 111:1, and now they end by declaring that God and God alone deserves our praise forever, Psalm 111:10 / Revelation 4:8.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist tells us that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, Proverbs 8:1-36 / Proverbs 9:10. We know that fearing the Lord simply means to have total respect and reverence for Him.
When it comes to wisdom, James understood that godly wisdom is required in dealing with trials and temptations and also that the outcome of enduring trials is steadfastness, which fosters perfection, completeness, and adequacy, lacking in nothing.

He explained the significance of this fact when he indicated the genuine source of true wisdom, that is, God, and the attitude, in faith, no doubting, that must underscore the request, James 1:4-5.
Solomon appreciated the significance of wisdom. He knew that wisdom is more precious than rubies and that no singular desire of man is comparable with wisdom, Proverbs 8:11.
This understanding in him is probably the reason for him to ask God for wisdom when he had the chance to make a request to God at the beginning of his reign over Israel.

In Proverbs 8:12, the wise king says, 'I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion'. This practically suggests that lacking wisdom is tantamount to lacking prudence, knowledge and discretion as all these important virtues are found in wisdom, 2 Chronicles 1:7-13.

CHAPTER 112

INTRODUCTION

We don't know who the author of this psalm is, and many commentators believe that this psalm and the previous, Psalm 111, actually belong together as one psalm. This psalm focuses on the character of the righteous person, whilst Psalm 111 focuses on the nature and character of God.
We can't tell from our English translations, but this psalm is actually written in Hebrew alphabetical order, except for the opening three words. The rest of the psalm begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

'Praise the LORD. Blessed are those who fear the LORD, who find great delight in his commands. Their children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever. Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous. Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice. Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever. They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD. Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear; in the end, they will look in triumph on their foes. They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor, their righteousness endures forever; their horn will be lifted high in honour. The wicked will see and be vexed, they will gnash their teeth and waste away; the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.' Psalm 112:1-10

The psalmist begins by praising the LORD, Psalm 112:1 / Psalms 111:1. They declare that those who are blessed are those who fear Him, Psalm 112:1 / Psalm 111:10, and those who find great delight in His commands, Psalm 112:1 / Psalm 111:2. These are the people who love what God says, that is, His Word, 2 Timothy 2:15.
Those who love what God says will have a blessing on their family, Psalm 112:2, that is, they will have a spiritual heritage, Genesis 12:2 / Genesis 17:6 / Exodus 20:6 / Psalm 25:13 / Psalm 37:25-26.
They will also be blessed with wealth and riches, Psalm 112:3, that is, financially, 1 Timothy 4:8, and their righteousness will endure forever, Psalm 112:3, that is, all their good works will be accepted as right in God's eyes.
God will bless the upright with light among the darkness, Psalm 112:4. In other words, the upright will show the right way of salvation amidst this dark world, Psalm 97:11 / Job 11:17. This light, which the upright will display to others, is God's grace, compassion, and righteousness, Psalm 112:4.
They will have mercy on those who have fallen on hard economic times, Psalm 112:5, that is, they will lend to those who are struggling freely, Psalm 112:5 / Psalm 37:5-6. They will be a good steward of those things that God has entrusted to them, Psalm 112:5 / Genesis 45:11 / Genesis 47:12 / Genesis 50:21.
The righteous will never be shaken, Psalm 112:6, that is, they will have nothing to fear and God will remember them, Proverbs 10:7. The righteous will have nothing to fear when they hear bad news, Psalm 112:7, that is, when hard times come, because they know they are still in God's care, Psalm 112:7 / Psalm 27:3 / Psalm 46:2 / Psalm 56:3-4 / Proverbs 1:33 / Hebrews 13:6.
In other words, their hearts are steadfast because they trust in the Lord to take care of their needs, Psalm 112:7 / Psalm 57:7. Since the righteous know that God is working in their lives, they know that they will be delivered from their foes, Psalm 112:8.

Because God has blessed them with wealth and riches, they are generous in blessing others, especially the poor, Psalm 112:9. The apostle Paul quotes these words in 2 Corinthians 9:9, to encourage all Christians to be generous.
Their righteousness endures forever, and their horn will be lifted high in honour, Psalm 112:9, that is, their strength will be exalted, and they will have a positive influence on others, Psalm 75:10.
In contrast to the righteous, everything the wicked hoped will vanish away, Psalm 112:10 / Psalm 58:8. The wicked will be vexed, and they will gnash their teeth, Psalm 112:10 / Psalm 37:12 / Luke 13:28, and they themselves will soon disappear, along with everything they longed for, Psalm 112:10.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist spoke of God blessing the upright with light amidst the darkness. In addition to being 'salt,' Jesus' disciples are also 'light,' namely, 'the light of the world,' Matthew 5:14-16. The purpose of light is to enable people to see. Light provides 1. Illumination, 2. guidance, and 3. warning.
Physical lights shine to dispel darkness and, in so doing, serve as guides and warnings, e.g., headlights and lighthouses. Spiritual lights should function in the same manner, Psalm 119:105 / Proverbs 4:18-19.
God wants the world to see the truth, and our lights, our lives should reveal His truth, John 8:12 / Philippians 2:15. His truth should be clearly seen in our lives, just as a city set on a hill is seen from all directions.
Think of the foolishness of lighting a lamp and then hiding its light. The purpose of lighting a lamp is to provide light for people to see. A major purpose in following Christ is to provide spiritual light for others to see.

We mustn't hide under a 'basket' for any reason, whether it is fear, indifference, love of the world, misplaced priorities, etc. Truly, we cannot be secret disciples of Christ; either the secrecy will destroy the discipleship or the discipleship will destroy the secrecy.

If we light a lamp and put it under a basket, either the basket will smother the flame and the light will go out, Matthew 13:22, or the lamp will ignite the basket, burning it away for the light to be seen by all, Jeremiah 20:9. We must let our lights shine.
The primary idea of Matthew 5:13-16 is that Jesus' disciples should have a great positive influence on those they come in contact with. This influence will never materialise if Christians are content to hide in saltshakers or under baskets. You cannot be a secret disciple!

CHAPTER 113

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 113-118 are often referred to as the Hallel psalms; these were sung on festive occasions, such as at Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Dedication. These were psalms of adoration to the Lord, which commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal, and Psalms 115-118 were sung after the meal. This was probably the hymn which our Saviour and His disciples sang at the conclusion of the Passover supper, Matthew 26:30 / Mark 14:26.

'Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, you his servants; praise the name of the LORD. Let the name of the LORD be praised, both now and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the LORD is to be praised. The LORD is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of his people. He settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 113:1-9

The psalmist begins by encouraging God's servant to praise the LORD, Psalm 113:1 / Psalm 11:1 / Psalm 112. Praising the name of the LORD means that they were directing their praise toward the character of the LORD. When praises were made in the name of the LORD, this let others know who they were praising, that He wasn't some foreign god. The Name of the LORD is to be praised now, and forevermore, Psalm 113:2, from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, Psalm 113:3, that is, the Name of the LORD should be continually praised.
It is the LORD who is exalted, and He is exalted way above the nations and His glory is exalted above the heavens, Psalm 113:4. In other words, God is greater than everything else in creation, Psalm 8:1.
There is no other who is like the LORD, God, because He sits enthroned on high above everything else, Psalm 113:5 / Isaiah 40:17-25. There is no other who stoops down to look upon the heavens and the earth, Psalm 113:6 / Psalm 8:4 / Psalm 144:3. Not only does God dwell in a heavenly realm, but He also works in His creation, working among those He created for His glory on earth, Psalm 113:6.
God's greatness isn't determined by people's financial status; He involves Himself in the lives of both the rich and poor, Psalm 113:7. He lifts up the poor to be considered as those whom men would exalt to be princes, Psalm 113:7-8. Every righteous poor person is a prince in the eyes of God, 1 Samuel 2:8. In other words, God lifts up the poor from the depths to great heights, Ephesians 2:5-6.
God also blesses the childless woman with a household of children, Psalm 113:9 / Psalm 68:6 / 1 Samuel 2:5-8, and as a result, she is more than happy to have children. No wonder the psalmist ends the psalm with the same words they began with, 'praise the LORD', Psalm 113:9.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist had many reasons to praise the LORD, and as Christians today, we too have many reasons to praise the LORD.

Here are a few reasons to praise the LORD.

1. We should praise the LORD because of His glory, Psalm 138:5.
2. We should praise the LORD because of His greatness, Psalm 145:3.
3. We should praise the LORD because of His power, Psalm 21:13.
4. We should praise the LORD because of His goodness, Psalm 107:8.
5. We should praise the LORD because of His mercy, 2 Chronicles 20:21.
6. We should praise the LORD because He has provided salvation, Luke 1:68-69.

CHAPTER 114

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 113-118 are often referred to as the Hallel psalms; these were sung on festive occasions, such as at Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Dedication. These were psalms of adoration to the Lord, which commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal, and Psalms 115-118 were sung after the meal. This was probably the hymn which our Saviour and His disciples sang at the conclusion of the Passover supper, Matthew 26:30 / Mark 14:26.

The historical setting of this psalm was Israel's crossing of both the Red Sea and the Jordan River. The other miraculous event is probably the shaking of the earth at Mount Sinai when God came down on it as a cloud. As we go through this psalm, we see that the psalmist personifies the sea, the river, and the mountains.

HEADING

'The miracles wrought by God, when he brought his people out of Egypt, are a just ground of fearing him.'

The NIV doesn't offer a heading for this psalm, but the KJV does. Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written.

The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a psalm written to remind God's people of the time He delivered them out of Egypt, hence He is to be feared.

'When Israel came out of Egypt, Jacob from a people of foreign tongue, Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion. The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned back; the mountains leaped like rams, the hills like lambs. Why was it, sea, that you fled? Why, Jordan, did you turn back? Why, mountains, did you leap like rams, you hills, like lambs? Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water.' Psalm 114:1-8

The psalmist begins by speaking about the time when Israel was redeemed from Egypt, Psalm 114:1. Israel, Jacob, and Judah, Psalm 114:1-2, are names which synonymously refer to the people of God. The twelve tribes of Israel who came out of Egyptian captivity.

Jacob left the people with a foreign tongue, Psalm 114:1, that is, the Egyptians, Exodus 20:2 / Psalm 81:5 / Isaiah 28:11 / Jeremiah 5:15. Judah became God's sanctuary, Psalm 114:2, that is, Judah became God's dwelling place, Genesis 49:10 / Genesis 49:8-12. In other words, God was in their presence, and Israel was the place of God's domain, Psalm 114:2.

The psalmist now personifies the sea, Psalm 114:3, that is, the Red Sea and the Jordan, Psalm 114:3, that is, the River Jordan and the mountains, Psalm 114:3, that is, Mount Sinai.

It was God who parted the Red Sea for Israel to escape from the Egyptian army, Exodus 14:21-31, and it was God who parted the River Jordan for His people to enter the Promised Land, Joshua 3:13-17.

The mountains leapt like rams, the hills like lambs skipped like rams, Psalm 114:4. This is a poetic description of what happened at Mount Sinai, when God displayed His presence among them, Exodus 19:16-20.

The three questions the psalmist asks are rhetorical questions, Psalm 114:5-6, which means that the sea, the Jordan, and the mountains were all powerless in the presence of God.

As a result of God's mighty power, the psalmist calls upon the earth to tremble in the presence of God, in the presence of the God of Jacob, Psalm 114:7. In other words, He is the God who has total control over all the earth.

He is the God who turned a rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water, Psalm 114:8, which is a reference to the time Israel complained to Moses about having no water, and so God supplied water from a rock. God did this twice during the Exodus, once at Mount Sinai, Exodus 17:6, and again at Kadesh, Numbers 20:8-11.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist asks three rhetorical questions to amplify the power of God over His creation. Israel had witnessed God's power over and over again in their history; it was His power which brought them out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.

As Christians, it's always useful to remind ourselves that we worship the same God and there is no other god like Him. Here are a few Scriptures to remind ourselves that nothing and no one compares with God.

1. No other god can create anything out of nothing as our God did, Genesis 1:1-2 / Psalm 33:6-9.
2. No other god can deliver people from their bondage as our God can, Exodus 13:3 / Romans 6:18.
3. No other god can look after creation like our God does, Psalm 104:3-32 / Matthew 6:25-34.
4. No other god reveals their eternal purpose for mankind, like our God does, Ephesians 3:10-11.
5. No other god promises eternal life, like our God does, John 3:16 / 1 John 2:24-25.

CHAPTER 115

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 113-118 are often referred to as the Hallel psalms; these were sung on festive occasions, such as at Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Dedication. These were psalms of adoration to the Lord, which commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal, and Psalms 115-118 were sung after the meal. This was probably the hymn which our Saviour and His disciples sang at the conclusion of the Passover supper, Matthew 26:30 / Mark 14:26.

We don't know who the author of this psalm is, but the psalmist glorifies God and encourages everyone to do the same. Idolatry is a major theme for this psalm, but because the living God isn't like man-made gods, that is, idols, He and He alone is only worthy of being praised.

HEADING

'Because God is truly glorious'

The NIV doesn't offer a heading for this psalm, but the KJV does. Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a psalm written to remind God's people that He truly is glorious.

'Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?" Psalm 115:1-2

The psalmist begins by declaring that the LORD and He alone is to be given all the glory, not people, Psalm 115:1 / Psalm 29:1-2. The reason God is to be given all the glory is because of His love and faithfulness, Psalm 115:1. In other words, there is no one, no idol, that compares to the love and faithfulness of God.
The nations appear to be asking, 'Where is their God?' Psalm 115:2. It's possible that the nations were mocking God's people, and so, the psalmist is looking to be delivered from among the nations in order that they may glorify God, Psalm 42:3 / Psalm 42:10 / Psalm 79:10.

'Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.' Psalm 115:3-8

The psalmist now answers the question the nations are asking, and they say that our God is in heaven and He does whatever pleases him, Psalm 115:3. In other words, while the nations could see and touch and feel their idols, God lives and reigns in heaven, and He does whatever He likes, whenever He likes. He isn't manmade, He is Spirit, John 4:24.
The psalmist now begins to mock the idols and those who worship them, Psalm 135:15-18. Idols are made of silver and gold and made by human hands, Psalm 115:4.
Despite idols being fashioned with expensive materials, they are only expensive statues, built by people from their own imagination. Notice idols are made with mouths, eyes, ears, noses, hands, and feet, Psalm 115:5-7. In other words, they are fashioned to resemble the human body.
These idols makers were really good at fashioning them, but yet, they couldn't make their mouths speak, Psalm 115:5, the eyes see, Psalm 115:5, the ears hear, Psalm 115:6, their noses smell, Psalm 115:6, their hands feel, Psalm 115:7, their feet walk Psalm 115:7, or even get a sound from them, Psalm 115:7, Isaiah 10:14 / Isaiah 44:9-20.

The psalmist tells us that not only will those who make idols become like them, but so will everyone else who trusts the idol, Psalm 115:8 / Isaiah 44:9-20. This is a perfect example of idol worship, where the idolater seeks to behave according to their own desires.

'All you Israelites, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield. House of Aaron, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield. You who fear him, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield. The LORD remembers us and will bless us: He will bless his people Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron, he will bless those who fear the LORD—small and great alike.' Psalm 115:9-13

After speaking about the foolishness of idolatry, the psalmist now encourages all the Israelites to trust in the LORD because He is their help and shield, Psalm 115:9 / Genesis 15:1 / Deuteronomy 33:29 / Psalm 5:12 / Psalm 18:2 / Proverbs 30:5 / John 6:68. The house of Aaron, Psalm 115:10, refers to the priesthood, and if anyone should trust God to be their help and shield, it should certainly be the priests.
Anyone who fears God, Psalm 115:11 / Acts 10:1-2 / Acts 13:16 / Acts 13:26, that is, respects and reveres Him, should also trust Him to be their help and shield. This may well be speaking of the other nations, that is, the Gentiles, 1 Kings 8:41 / Isaiah 56:6.
The psalmist says the LORD remembers His people and the psalmist is confident that He will bless His people, Psalm 115:12. He will bless Israel, the house of Aaron, those who fear Him, Psalm 115:12, He will bless everyone small and great alike, Psalm 115:13. In other words, because God has blessed them in the past, the psalmist is confident that God will not forget to bless them again in the future.

'May the LORD cause you to flourish, both you and your children. May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind. It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to the place of silence; it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 115:14-18

The psalmist now tells us the way He wants the LORD to bless His people, Psalm 115:14. He prays that the LORD will make His people flourish, including His people's children, Psalm 115:14 / Genesis 15:5 / Genesis 22:17 / Genesis 32:12.
The psalmist knows that idols can't do this. Idols didn't create heaven and the earth; only the Maker of heaven and earth can do this, Psalm 115:15. He truly is the source of all blessings.
The highest heaven, Psalm 115:16, that is, God's dwelling place, Isaiah 66:1 / Matthew 5:34 / Acts 7:49, belongs to God, but when He created the earth, He created it for mankind, Psalm 115:16. He has given the earth for the environment for men, Genesis 1:26-30.
Some commentators believe that the reference to the 'dead', Psalm 115:17, appears to be speaking about those who are spiritually dead since the righteous will continue to bless the name of the Lord, Philippians 1:21-23.
However, we know that those who die and go down to the place of silence, Psalm 115:17, won't praise the LORD, Isaiah 38:18-19 / Psalm 6:5. It's those who are still alive who will extol the LORD, both now and forevermore, Psalm 115:18, this is why the psalmist ends with the words, 'praise the LORD', Psalm 115:18, that is, Hallelujah!

CONCLUSION

The psalmist spoke of the foolishness of idol worship and told us that those who make them and those who worship them will become like them. The psalmist gave us a clear definition of what an idol is, it's simply a manmade

object, Isaiah 44:15, usually made to look like a human, with eyes, ears, feet and hands, etc., yet the body parts don't do anything, Daniel 5:23.

When we turn to God and worship Him, we turn to the living God, 1 Timothy 4:10, the Creator of all things, Genesis 1-2 / Colossians 1:16. An idol can't see anything but God sees everything, Job 28:24 / Hebrews 4:13.

An idol, can't speak but God has spoken, Hebrews 1:1-2, idols can't do anything but God is all-powerful, Jeremiah 32:17. Idols are created by mankind, but God create mankind, Genesis 1:27 / Isaiah 43:7.

When we turn to the living God and worship Him, when we begin to understand that an idol can't do anything for us or even save us from our sins, then all of us will give Him the praise that only He deserves because God is truly glorious, 1 Peter 1:3.

CHAPTER 116

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 113-118 are often referred to as the Hallel psalms; these were sung on festive occasions, such as at Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Dedication. These were psalms of adoration to the Lord, which commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal, and Psalms 115-118 were sung after the meal. This was probably the hymn which our Saviour and His disciples sang at the conclusion of the Passover supper, Matthew 26:30 / Mark 14:26.

This is a psalm which is very personal to the psalmist, and he just pours out his heart to God. It appears that God delivered him from some disease, and so, he gives thanks to God for delivering him.

HEADING

'The psalmist professes his love and duty to God for his deliverance.'

The NIV doesn't offer a heading for this psalm, but the KJV does. Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this psalm was written so that the psalmist can profess his love and duty to God for delivering him.

‘I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the LORD: “LORD, save me!” Psalm 116:1-4

The psalmist begins by declaring his love for God because God heard his prayer and his cry for mercy, Psalm 116:1 / Psalm 5:1 / 1 John 4:19. As a result of God answering his prayer, he is determined to call upon God all the days of his life, Psalm 116:2.
The psalmist looks back at where he was when he was sick. He felt close to death; he felt he was about to die, Psalm 116:3 / Psalm 16:10 / Job 10:21-22 / Isaiah 14:9 / Acts 2:24. In his distress and sorrow, he called on the Name of the LORD in faith and asked the LORD to save him, Psalm 116:4.

‘The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The LORD protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return to your rest, my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. For you, LORD, have delivered me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I trusted in the LORD when I said, “I am greatly afflicted”; in my alarm I said, “Everyone is a liar.” What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfil my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.’ Psalm 116:5-14

It appears that God not only heard his prayers and his cries for mercy but also healed him, and as a result, he now praises God because of His graciousness, righteousness, and compassion, Psalm 116:5. All these attributes were poured out on the psalmist because of his prayer for help, Hebrews 11:6.
He declares that the LORD protects the unwary. God protected him when he was brought low, Psalm 116:6. In other words, he did nothing to heal himself; it was all God’s doing; it was God who saved him, Proverbs 1:22.
God has removed his distress and sorrow, and now his soul has rest because the LORD was good to him in healing him, Psalm 116:7. He felt he was about to die from his sickness, but God saved him from death, Psalm 116:8.
In his sorrow and distress, he wept, and he had no strength in his feet, Psalm 116:8. He couldn’t walk before the LORD like those who were still alive in the land, Psalm 116:9. But now, because God has delivered him from death, he can confidently walk again along with the living, Isaiah 38:20.
As a result of his healing, despite his afflictions, he has complete trust in God, Psalm 116:10 / 2 Corinthians 4:13-14. When he was distressed and filled with sorrow, he said that ‘everyone is a liar’, Psalm 116:11. In other words, he felt that no human being was reliable to help him, Psalm 41:5-9 / Psalm 88:18 / Job 19:13-17.
He now wonders what he can give to God in return for His goodness, Psalm 116:12 / Luke 17:12-19. He says he will lift up the ‘cup of salvation’, Psalm 116:13. The cup of salvation could be referring to the drink offering, which has been given as a thanksgiving offering, Exodus 29:40 / Leviticus 23:37 / Deuteronomy 32:38 / Ezekiel 20:28. We also think of the cup of salvation that Jesus instituted in the New Testament, Luke 22:20 / 1 Corinthians 10:16.
The Lord had saved him from death, brought joy again to his life and kept him from falling and as a result, he stood faithful in fulfilling his vows to the Lord, Psalm 116:14 / Psalm 79:8.
He wouldn’t only carry out his vows that he made in sickness, he would do so publicly in order to proclaim that God had restored him, Psalm 116:14 / Isaiah 38:15 / Isaiah 38:20.

‘Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants. Truly, I am your servant, LORD; I serve you just as my mother did; you have freed me from my chains. I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfil my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the LORD—in your midst, Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.’ Psalm 116:15-19

The psalmist, despite being delivered from death, declares that all of God’s faithful servants, when they die, are precious in God’s eyes, Psalm 116:15. God is the one who gives people life, and when one of His own dies, He notices. The psalmist also declares that he truly is one of God’s servants, Psalm 116:16 / Exodus 21:5-6.

It appears that because he has been given a second chance in life, that is, freed from his deathly sickness, he is determined to rededicate his life to the LORD. He is determined to offer a thanksgiving offering to God and in His Name, Psalm 116:17.
He is also determined to fulfil his vows publicly, in the courts of the Lord's house, Psalm 116:18 / Psalm 65:4 / Psalm 84:2 / Psalm 92:13 / Psalm 96:8 / Psalm 100:4 / Psalm 135:2, and in Jerusalem where the tabernacle was located, Psalm 116:19.
Because God had delivered him from the hands of death by healing him of his life-threatening disease, it's no wonder he ends with the words 'praise the LORD', Psalm 116:19, that is, Hallelujah.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist declared his thankfulness to God for saving him from his life-threatening illness. As Christians, we often have to go through many trials and difficulties in our lives, but how often do we stop to praise God whilst we're going through those difficult times?

How often do we actually praise God afterwards for delivering us from those times? When we praise God in the midst of our difficulties, our praise actually brings many spiritual benefits to us.

1. When we praise God, it helps us to focus on God and not our difficulties, Psalm 35:28.
2. When we praise God, it helps us remember that those difficulties will help us become stronger, James 1:2-4.
3. When we praise God, it helps us to remain humble, Psalm 35:18.
4. When we praise God, it prevents us from moaning about our difficulties, Hebrews 13:15.
5. When we praise God, it helps us recognise the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, Psalm 22:3.

CHAPTER 117

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 113-118 are often referred to as the Hallel psalms; these were sung on festive occasions, such as at Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Dedication. These were psalms of adoration to the Lord, which commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt.
Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal, and Psalms 115-118 were sung after the meal. This was probably the hymn which our Saviour and His disciples sang at the conclusion of the Passover supper, Matthew 26:30 / Mark 14:26. Despite being the shortest psalm within the books of psalms, it is Messianic in nature, Romans 15:11.

HEADING

'An exhortation to praise God for his mercy and truth.'

The NIV doesn't offer a heading for this psalm, but the KJV does. Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this psalm was written to praise God for His mercy and truth.

'Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 117:1-2

The psalmist begins by encouraging all the nations to praise the LORD, and they encourage all the people to extol the LORD, Psalm 117:1 / Genesis 12:3. The nations and the people refer to all the Gentiles, and the psalmist is telling us that God isn't just the God of Israel but of everyone, from everywhere, therefore, He is worthy of being praised, Romans 15:11.
The reason all the nations should praise God is because of His love towards all the nations, all the people, Psalm 117:2. In other words, God is great in His steadfast love toward us, John 10:16 / Ephesians 2:14. The reason all the nations should praise God is that His faithfulness endures forever, Psalm 117:2 / John 1:17.
His faithfulness is sure and steadfast throughout all time, Romans 5:20 / 1 Timothy 1:14. With these great thoughts, the psalmist ends by encouraging all the nations and all the people to 'praise the LORD', Psalm 117:2, that is, the word, Hallelujah.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist tells us that God wasn't only the God of Israel but also the God of all nations, and they were encouraged to praise Him. In Romans 15:9, we get the first mention of the Gentiles, and in this chapter, Paul uses the word ten times.
Remember that the Roman church was very cosmopolitan; there was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles who all had their own cultures and religious baggage. Remember, the Gentiles were seen as unclean and dirty, and even using the word Gentile was classed as a dirty word. And so now here in Rome, we have the Jewish Christians worshipping with the Jewish Christians.

Those great promises God made to the Jewish fathers also included the Gentiles. Mercy to the Gentiles, that is, salvation, repentance to life, was an integral part of the promises made to the fathers and fulfilled in Christ, Acts 11:18.
Paul quotes several passages which show that the Gentiles were to be included in the Gospel system. 'For this reason, I will praise you among the Gentiles,' is a quote from 2 Samuel 22:50, and Psalm 18:49.
Paul quotes David, who represents himself as confessing and singing to God among the Gentiles. Romans 15:10-11 are quotes from Deuteronomy 32:43 and Psalm 117:1.

In Romans 15:10, the Gentiles are represented as being glad among the Jews. And so, the Gentiles were to rejoice and praise God along with the Jews. In Romans 15:11, the Gentiles were to praise the Lord, the one true God, along with all other peoples. And so, the design of these verses is the same, to establish mutual acceptance of each other. Romans 15:12 are quotes from Isaiah 11:1 / Isaiah 11:6-10, and so again, the Old Testament Scriptures clearly showed that the Gentiles were to have a part in the gospel system.
And so, quotations from the law, prophets, and the Psalms establish that God had promised salvation to the Gentiles along with the Jews. In the Messiah, the root of Jesse, the Gentiles would also submit and have hope.

CHAPTER 118

INTRODUCTION

Psalms 113-118 are often referred to as the Hallel psalms; these were sung on festive occasions, such as at Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Dedication. These were psalms of adoration to the Lord, which commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt.
Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal, and Psalms 115-118 were sung after the meal. This was probably the hymn which our Saviour and His disciples sang at the conclusion of the Passover supper, Matthew 26:30 / Mark 14:26.
Although there's no author named for this psalm, many commentators believe it was David who wrote it. This is because when the second temple was being founded, they sang this psalm and attributed it to David, Ezra 3:10-11.

HEADING

'An exhortation to praise God for his mercy.'

The NIV doesn't offer a heading for this psalm, but the KJV does. Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this psalm was written to encourage people to praise God for His mercy.

'Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let Israel say: "His love endures forever." Let the house of Aaron say: "His love endures forever." Let those who fear the LORD say: "His love endures forever." When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD; he brought me into a spacious place. The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in

princes. All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the LORD I cut them down. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the LORD I cut them down. They swarmed around me like bees, but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them down. I was pushed back and about to fall, but the LORD helped me. The LORD is my strength and my defence; he has become my salvation.' Psalm 118:1-14

David begins by encouraging Israel, the house of Aaron, that is, the priesthood and those who fear the LORD, that is, the Gentiles, to give thanks to the LORD because of His goodness and His love which endures forever, Psalm 118:1-4 / Psalm 115:10.
We know that Saul had murdered many priests at Nob, 1 Samuel 22:6-23, and so, when David finally became king, they would have even more reason to sing to be thankful.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'If this song was composed by King David upon the occasion of his offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving for God's raising him to the throne of Israel, such a triple repetition of praising God's loving-kindness appears understandable and highly appropriate.'

When David was being hard pressed, he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD answered his prayer by taking him to a spacious place, Psalm 118:5. In other words, God set him free in a space with no limits, a place where he confidently stands.
He knows that the LORD was with him, hence why he has no reason to be afraid, Psalm 118:6, and he can look in triumph on his enemies, Psalm 118:7. He knows that mere mortals can't hurt him because God was helping him, Psalm 118:6-7 / Isaiah 51:12 / Romans 8:31 / Hebrews 13:6.
David declares it's better to take refuge in the LORD than it is to trust humans and princes, Psalm 118:8-9, that is, those who are nobles. In other words, humans and princesses couldn't help David the way God does.
Trusting humans and princes brings limitations, but when we trust in the LORD, we can achieve more than we can ever imagine, Ephesians 3:20-21. We become more than conquerors, Romans 8:37.
David says the nations surrounded him, Psalm 118:10; they came at him from every side, they were like a swarm of bees coming from every direction, Psalm 118:11. However, he cut them down in the Name of the LORD; they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns, Psalm 118:12.
In other words, just as these thorn bushes burned very hot for a period, they quickly cease to burn, and so too would the threat from his enemies; they would cease to exist. David achieved all of this in the Name of the LORD, Psalm 118:12.
He acknowledges that it truly was God who helped him, Psalm 118:13, and without His help, he would have stood no chance against his enemies. Because God helped David, he quotes those famous words of Miriam because he knew that the LORD was his strength, his defence and his salvation, Psalm 118:14 / Exodus 15:2 / Isaiah 12:2 / Isaiah 33:12.

'Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The LORD's right hand has done mighty things! The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!" I will not die but live and will proclaim what the LORD has done. The LORD has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death. Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.' Psalm 118:15-20

After all the victories which God gave David over the nations, the shouts of joy would be heard from the tents of the righteous, Psalm 118:15. The righteous know that it was all down to the LORD's right hand, Psalm 118:15-16, that is, His authority, power, and strength. In other words, it was God who did these mighty acts and destroyed the enemies of Israel.
David knew it was God who wouldn't let him die; he would live, Psalm 118:17, and openly proclaim that it was God who protected him from death, Psalm 118:18 / Isaiah 38:5-8 / Isaiah 38:21 / Acts 27:22-25.

David appears to acknowledge that the nations rose up against him because God was chastening him, Psalm 118:18 / 2 Corinthians 6:9; however, God wouldn't allow him to be killed, Psalm 118:18.
David asks that the gates of the righteous be opened so that he can enter and give thanks to the LORD, Psalm 118:19-20. The gates of the righteous to be opened is a metaphor for a triumphant entry, which is filled with praise for the LORD, Isaiah 38:20.

'I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes. The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. LORD, save us! LORD, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine on us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.' Psalm 118:21-29

David says he will give thanks to God for answering his prayers, he would acknowledge that God is his salvation, Psalm 118:21. David appears to have Messianic thoughts concerning the stone the builders rejected and now has become the cornerstone, Psalm 118:22.
These words certainly point to Jesus, the Messiah, the stone who was rejected by the religious leaders in His day, Isaiah 28:16 / Daniel 2:34 / Matthew 21:42-43 / Mark 12:10-11 / Luke 20:17 / Acts 4:11 / 1 Peter 2:7.
Note that the KJV uses the words, has become the 'head cornerstone'. The head cornerstone was used to set the orientation of the entire building, and from the head cornerstone, the building was erected. This again points to Jesus, who is the head cornerstone of His church, Matthew 16:18-19 / Ephesians 2:20 / 1 Peter 2:7.
David knows that the LORD has built the future upon the head cornerstone, and despite his being rejected, Psalm 118:22-23, David encourages everyone to rejoice today and be glad, Psalm 118:24 / Ephesians 1:21.
These are the words which Jesus quoted these words when He made that triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Matthew 21:42 / Mark 12:10-11 / Luke 20:17. In other words, 'this very day', Psalm 118:24, which David spoke of here, was the day Jesus entered Jerusalem as both the Messiah and King, Luke 19:40.
The KJV says, 'This is the day the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.' Every day is a day which the LORD has made, and every day is a day worth rejoicing and to be glad about. In a sense, every day is a day we can rejoice about our salvation, Isaiah 38:5.
After declaring that today is the day of salvation, David says, 'LORD, save us, and grant us success', Psalm 118:25.
Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Psalm 118:25.
'The word save here seems to be used in the general sense of imploring the divine interposition and mercy. It is a part of the word which in the New Testament is rendered 'Hosanna', save now, Matthew 21:9, and is the language which the multitudes employed when they followed the Saviour as he went from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem.'
Henry, in his commentary, says the following concerning the words 'grant us success'. Psalm 118:25.
'Send me an interest in that prosperity which his kingdom brings with it to all those that entertain it. Let my soul prosper and be in health, in that peace and righteousness which his government brings, Psalm 72:3. Let me have victory over those lusts that war against my soul, and let divine grace go on in my heart conquering and to conquer.'
As Jesus entered through the gate of Jerusalem, the multitude cried, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD', Psalm 118:26 / Matthew 21:9 / Mark 11:9 / John 12:13. Jesus came in the authority of the name of God; He was coming as their Messiah and King.
We can almost imagine the priests, while they are at God's house, saying, 'We bless you', Psalm 118:26. In other words, you are welcome to come and offer your offerings of thanksgiving, Ephesians 6:24.
David declares that God is the LORD, and He has given us light in our darkest days, He had delivered us from our enemies, He has given us success and has blessed us with peace and safety, Psalm 118:27.

He says everyone is welcome to come with boughs in hand, that is, bound sacrifices, and join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar, Psalm 118:28. These were freewill offerings, which were usually bound to the horns of the altar, Exodus 27:2 / Exodus 30:2 / Exodus 37:25 / 1 Kings 2:28 / Hebrews 13:10.

There were so many sacrifices were to be offered, they were to be laid in the court even to the place of the horns of the altar of burnt offering, Exodus 10:9 / Exodus 12:14 / Exodus 23:18 / Malachi 2:3. When the people bring their freewill offerings to the altar, they would praise and extol God, Psalm 118:28, indicating that God was worthy of their worship.

David ends the psalm with the same words he began with, 'give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever,' Psalm 118:29. Worship should always begin and end by giving thanks to God for what He has done.

CONCLUSION

Despite being attacked from all sides by his enemies, David proclaims that God is good. As Christians, it can sometimes be difficult to understand how God is good, especially when we're going through tough times.

James teaches us that we should be joyful when we face hard times because God is actually working on us to help us become mature, James 1:2-4. Even in difficult times, we should give thanks to Jesus, Colossians 3:23, because in our suffering, we can display Christ in our lives, 2 Corinthians 4:11.

God is good even in our difficult times because, in those difficult times, He's allowing his good purpose, in helping us look more like Jesus, Romans 8:28-29. In a sense, we shouldn't try to get out of our trials too early; we shouldn't ask God to remove our trials, we must allow God to finish moulding us, helping us become stronger and more mature, James 1:2-4.

When we understand that God is going through those trials with us, 1 Corinthians 10:13, then we might begin to understand, as David did, that God is good all the time, Psalm 23:6.

CHAPTER 119

INTRODUCTION

This is the longest of the Psalms within the book, and the author is not known. However, a few commentators suggest it was written by Nehemiah, Ezra, or David.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'Although most judicious interpreters assign it to the times of the Babylonian captivity, yet there are so many things in it that are descriptive of David's state, experience and affairs, that I am led to think it might have come from his pen'

This psalm, which emphasises glory to God and His Word, is divided into twenty-two sections, each beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, as do many other psalms: Psalm 9 / Psalm 10 / Psalm 25 / Psalm 34 / Psalm 37 / Psalm 111 / Psalm 112 / Psalm 119 / Psalm 145.

The word ‘torah’, that is, the word ‘law’, is used twenty-five times in this psalm and refers to God’s teaching. The word ‘dabar’, that is, ’word’, is used twenty-four times in this psalm and refers to God’s spoken word.

The word ‘mispatim’, that is ‘judgements’, is used twenty-three times and refers to god’s judgments. The words ‘deut and edot’, that is, ‘testimonies’, are used twenty-three times and refer to the witness of God’s word.

The words ‘miswah and miswot’, that is ‘commandments’, are used twenty-two times and refer to the commands of God. The word ‘huqqim’, that is, ‘statutes’, is used twenty-one times and refers to God’s written word.

The word ‘piqqudim’, that is ‘precepts’, is used twenty-one times and refers to particular instructions of God. The word ‘imrah’, that is ‘word’, is used nineteen times; this word has a similar meaning to ‘imrah’ but generally means anything which God has spoken. The theme of the psalm is the glorious word, or the law of God, and our obedience to the law.

HEADING

‘This psalm contains sundry prayers, praises, and professions of obedience.’

The NIV doesn’t offer a heading for this psalm, but the KJV does. Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

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The heading tells us this psalm contains sundry prayers, praises, and professions of obedience.

ALEPH

‘Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart—they do no wrong but follow his ways. You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed. Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands. I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws. I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me.’ Psalm 119:1-8

The psalmist begins by telling us it is those who are happy, those who keep themselves blameless in reference to their obedience to God’s law, Psalm 119:1. It’s those who are blessed who constantly seek God with all their heart, Psalm 119:2 / Deuteronomy 10:12 / Matthew 22:37.
Those who are blessed are those who don’t do wrong but follow God’s ways, Psalm 119:3. It’s those people who aren’t ashamed of being obedient to God’s ways; they are totally focused on the will of God, Psalm 119:4-6. As a result of that obedience, the psalmist would praise God, learn His laws, and they would have confidence that God wouldn’t forsake them, Psalm 119:7-8.

BETH

‘How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, LORD; teach me your decrees. With my lips, I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.’ Psalm 119:9-16

The psalmist tells us that the only way a young person can purify their ways is by dedicating their life to God’s commandments, Psalm 119:9 / 2 Timothy 2:22. Anyone who keeps themselves close to God’s commands, decrees, statutes, and precepts will have a better chance of staying faithful to God and His ways, Psalm 119:10-16.
The closer we stay to God’s ways, the less chance there is of falling away from God and His ways, Psalm 119:10-11.
When we read God’s word regularly, Psalm 119:12-13, His word helps us to remain pure in His sight, Ephesians 5:26 / John 15:3, it cleanses us and keeps us pure, John 15:3 / John 17:17.
The only way a person can really rejoice as one rejoices in great riches is to have a knowledge of God’s word and follow what they are reading, Psalm 119:14. However, we must remember not only to read God’s word, but we must also listen to what it says and do it, Proverbs 2:10-12 / Matthew 4:1-10 / James 1:22.
When we meditate upon God’s word, Psalm 119:15, we will renew our minds and be spiritually transformed, Romans 12:1-2. In other words, the real joy comes when we are obedient to God’s word, Psalm 119:16.

GIMEL

‘Be good to your servant while I live, that I may obey your word. Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me. My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times. You rebuke the arrogant, who are accursed, those who stray from your commands. Remove from me their scorn and contempt, for I keep your statutes. Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on your decrees. Your statutes are my delight; they are my counsellors.’ Psalm 119:17-24

The goal of every righteous servant is to live according to God’s statutes, Psalm 119:17, and the reward is comfort and strength. When a righteous servant commits themselves to follow God’s word, they find life, insight, and guidance.
When we read God’s word, our eyes begin to see wonderful things, Psalm 119:18. In other words, our eyes are opened, Matthew 11:25 / Acts 9:18. When we commit ourselves to God’s word, we will often feel like we’re strangers on earth, Psalm 119:19. This is because we often feel like we’re the only ones who genuinely care about God and His ways, Psalm 119:20.
The world around us is full of arrogant and accursed people; it’s filled with those who have strayed from God’s commands, Psalm 119:21, and those who slander us, Psalm 119:23. In a world like this, we all certainly need God to direct our ways through His word.
The psalmist tells us that the only way they could live in a world like this was by meditating, Psalm 119:23, and delighting in God’s decrees and allowing God’s statutes to be their counsellor, Psalm 119:24 / John 14:16.

DALETH

‘I am laid low in the dust; preserve my life according to your word. I gave an account of my ways, and you answered me; teach me your decrees. Cause me to understand the way of your precepts, that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds. My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me and teach me your law. I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws. I hold fast to your statutes, LORD; do not let me be put to shame. I run in the path of your commands, for you have broadened my understanding.’ Psalm 119:25-32

It appears the psalmist is in deep spiritual distress, hence why they lie low in the dust, waiting to be renewed by God’s word, Psalm 119:25. The psalmist pleads with God for help, that He will preserve their life, Psalm 119:25. They gave an account of their lives to God, and God answered them, Psalm 119:26. He wants to be taught God’s statutes, and he wants to understand God’s precepts so that he can meditate upon God’s wonderful deeds, Psalm 119:226-27.

Their souls are weary with sorrow, Psalm 119:28, hence why they ask God to be true to them. They don’t want to live deceitfully, Psalm 119:29 / 1 Samuel 21:2 / 1 Samuel 21:8 / 1 Samuel 27:8 / 1 Samuel 27:10, but deliberately chose to live faithfully, Psalm 119:30.

The psalmist didn’t want to be put to shame, Psalm 119:31. They wanted to gain more understanding of God’s commands, Psalm 119:32. They wanted more joy, and the only way to do this was to keep very close to the commands of God.

HE

‘Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees, that I may follow it to the end. Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word. Fulfil your promise to your servant, so that you may be feared. Take away the disgrace I dread, for your laws are good. How I long for your precepts! In your righteousness preserve my life.’ Psalm 119:33-40

The psalmist wants to be taught God’s decrees in order that he will follow it until the day he dies, Psalm 119:33. They wanted to understand God’s will, Psalm 119:34, but not just for knowledge’s sake, they wanted to understand it and obey it with all their heart, Psalm 119:34.

They wanted God to direct their ways through His Word because that is where their delight was, Psalm 119:35. The only way to prevent them from going after selfish gain, Psalm 119:36 / Joshua 7:21 / Numbers 22 / 2 Samuel 11:2-17 / 1 Kings 21:1-13 / 2 Peter 2:14-16.

The only way to keep themselves away from focusing on worthless things, Psalm 119:37 / Numbers 15:39 / Job 31:1, was to keep their minds off the things of the world and focus on the statutes of God, Psalm 119:37 / Philippians 2:13 / Philippians 4:8 / Colossians 3:1-2.

The psalmist asks God to fulfil His promise, so that God may be feared, Psalm 119:38. In other words, they are asking God to fulfil His promise according to His word, Luke 1:38.

They ask God to take away the disgrace they dread, Psalm 119:39. These are the insults they received from others because they followed God’s commands, 2 Corinthians 12:10 / 1 Timothy 4:10 / Hebrews 13:13 / 1 Peter 4:14. The psalmist acknowledges that God’s laws are good, Psalm 119:39. He longs for God’s precepts and asks God to preserve him in His righteous life, Psalm 119:40.

WAW

‘May your unfailing love come to me, LORD, your salvation, according to your promise; then I can answer anyone who taunts me, for I trust in your word. Never take your word of truth from my mouth, for I have put my hope in your laws. I will always obey your law, for ever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts. I will speak of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame, for I delight in your commands because I love them. I reach out for your commands, which I love, that I may meditate on your decrees.’ Psalm 119:41-48

The psalmist is seeking God’s unfailing love and salvation, Psalm 119:41, which comes through being obedient to God’s word. When they focus on God’s word and His promises found within them, they will be able to face anyone who taunts them, Psalm 119:42.

They ask God to never take His word of truth away from their mouth, Psalm 119:43 / John 17:17 / James 1:18, that is, they want to be totally committed to obeying God’s laws, Psalm 119:44, and as a result, they would walk about in freedom, Psalm 119:45 / 1 Peter 2:16.

When a person is totally free, they will be able to boldly speak to kings without being put to shame, Psalm 119:46, that is, without being intimidated. When we trust God’s word, when we put our hope in God’s word, when we obey His laws and delight in His commands, Psalm 119:47, when we love His commands and meditate upon them, Psalm 119:48, then we are blessed with a sense of security.

ZAYIN

‘Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life. The arrogant mock me unmercifully, but I do not turn from your law. I remember, LORD, your ancient laws, and I find comfort in them. Indignation grips me because of the wicked, who have forsaken your law. Your decrees are the theme of my song wherever I lodge. In the night, LORD, I remember your name, that I may keep your law. This has been my practice: I obey your precepts.’ Psalm 119:49-56

The psalmist is obviously feeling the pressure from those who are arrogant and wicked. They are suffering, but they find hope and comfort in God’s word, Psalm 119:49. Despite the suffering he was facing from the arrogant, they continued to remain faithfully obedient to God, Psalm 119:50-51.

Their commitment to God caused them to have an anger toward the wicked, Psalm 119:53, that is, those who were disobedient. Those who forsake God’s law often lead others to do the same, Psalm 119:53 / Luke 17:1-2.

We get the impression that the more the psalmist draws closer to God’s word, the more they are aware of the sin around them. Despite being mocked, despite the wicked, the psalmist says that God’s decrees are the theme of their songs where they live, Psalm 119:54 / Acts 16:25.

The psalmist remembers God’s Name in the night so that they will keep His law, Psalm 119:55. In other words, God was constantly on their mind, Romans 10:17. Remembering God at night has been a long-time practice of the psalmist, and as a result, they are able to obey His precepts, Psalm 119:56.

HETH

‘You are my portion, LORD; I have promised to obey your words. I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes. I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands. Though the wicked bind me with ropes, I will not forget your law. At midnight, I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws. I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts. The earth is filled with your love, LORD; teach me your decrees.’ Psalm 119:57-64

The psalmist had made God his portion in life, Psalm 119:57, but despite seeking God's face, it appears that they had sinned at some point, Psalm 119:58, but repented, Psalm 119:59-60 / 2 Corinthians 7:10. This was godly repentance because immediately after repenting, they didn't waste any time in totally committing themselves to obey God's law, Psalm 119:60.

Despite being bound with ropes by the wicked, Psalm 119:61, they didn't blame God but continued to be faithful to Him and His laws. This is seen in that they gave thanks to God at midnight, Psalm 119:62.

He received a lot of encouragement from their friends, Psalm 119:63 / 1 Corinthians 15:33, that is, those who like them feared the Lord and follow His ways, Psalm 119:63 / Proverbs 1:7 / Proverbs 2:5 / Proverbs 9:10. The psalmist knows that the earth is filled with God's love, Psalm 119:64 / Psalm 86:15, and wants God to teach them His decrees, Psalm 119:64.

TETH

'Do good to your servant according to your word, LORD. Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust your commands. Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees. Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies, I keep your precepts with all my heart. Their hearts are callous and unfeeling, but I delight in your law. It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.' Psalm 119:65-72

The psalmist appears to reflect upon their life and comes to the conclusion that God has been good to them, Psalm 119:65-66, despite living in an evil world. They wanted God to teach them knowledge and good judgment, Psalm 119:66, that is, spiritual discernment, Job 34:3 / Hebrews 5:14.

They had been afflicted because they went astray, Psalm 119:67, but as a result, they drew closer to God and obeyed His word, Psalm 119:67 / 1 Thessalonians 3:3 / Hebrews 5:8 / Hebrews 12:11.

They had been afflicted because they went astray, but as a result, they learned God's decrees, Psalm 119:67-68. In other words, their once hard heart has now been softened by the word of God, Ephesians 4:19 / 1 Timothy 4:2.

Because they were committed to keeping God's law, they were arrogantly smeared, Psalm 119:69-70, but because they learned that obedience to God's laws, Psalm 119:71, was more precious than a thousand pieces of silver and gold, Psalm 119:72 / Psalm 19:7-10. God's word was now more valuable than anything the world had to offer, Luke 16:13-15.

YODH

'Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands. May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word. I know, LORD, that your laws are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me. May your unfailing love be my comfort, according to your promise to your servant. Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight. May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause, but I will meditate on your precepts. May those who fear you turn to me, those who understand your statutes. May I wholeheartedly follow your decrees, that I may not be put to shame.' Psalm 119:73-80

The psalmist reminds us that they were made and formed by God, Psalm 119:73 / Genesis 2:7 / Psalm 139:14, and since we're created by God, it's natural that we should allow God's word to continue to form our souls, Hebrews 4:12.

The psalmist says that others will rejoice when they see the transformation in the psalmist's life, Psalm 119:74 / Matthew 5:16 / Philippians 2:15. The psalmist had been afflicted by God, Psalm 119:75, and so they pray for relief from their affliction in order that they might survive their distress, Psalm 119:76.

They appeal to God's unfailing love, faithfulness and compassion, Psalm 119:76-77, in order that God will allow them to live, Psalm 119:77 / Job 1:21 / 1 Samuel 3:18 / 2 Samuel 16:11.

Their commitment to God had caused them to be persecuted by those who were arrogant, Psalm 119:78, and so, they ask that the arrogant be put to shame for wrong them without any excuse, Psalm 119:78 / Matthew 26:14-16 / Acts 5:1-11 / 1 Timothy 1:20 / 2 Timothy 4:10.

However, because of their commitment to God, Psalm 119:78, they also gained more friends, more people who were committed to God and His commands. They know if they are wholeheartedly committed to keeping God's decrees, they will not be put to shame like the arrogant, Psalm 119:79-80.

KAPH

'My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word. My eyes fail, looking for your promise; I say, "When will you comfort me?" Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget your decrees. How long must your servant wait? When will you punish my persecutors? The arrogant dig pits to trap me, contrary to your law. All your commands are trustworthy; help me, for I am being persecuted without cause. They almost wiped me from the earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts. In your unfailing love, preserve my life, that I may obey the statutes of your mouth.' Psalm 119:81-88

The psalmist appears to be in some kind of trouble; they were suffering, and so, they cry out to God for salvation, Psalm 119:81. They are desperate, their eyes are failing to look for God's promise to comfort them, Psalm 119:82 / 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 / 2 Corinthians 4:13.

Just as a wineskin gets blackened and wrinkled from smoke, Psalm 119:83, this is how they feel. In other words, their suffering is making them feel older than they actually are.

They ask God to deliver them from those who arrogantly tried to persecute them by setting traps for them, Psalm 119:84-85 / 1 Samuel 28:6-7 / Jonah 4:7-9. The traps these arrogant people are setting up weren't in accordance with God's law, Psalm 119:85 / Exodus 21:33-34.

However, despite being persecuted for no cause, Psalm 119:86 / Psalm 35:19 / Matthew 5:10-12, the psalmist turned to God's precepts for their deliverance, Psalm 119:87. They turned to God's unfailing love for life, Psalm 119:88.

LAMEDH

'Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you. If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life. Save me, for I am yours; I have sought out your precepts. The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will ponder your statutes. To all perfection I see a limit, but your commands are boundless.' Psalm 119:89-96

The psalmist appears to have been delivered from their suffering, from those who waited to destroy them, and the reason for that was simply because they turned to God's word, which is eternal and firm, Psalm 119:89-91 / Matthew 5:18 / Isaiah 40:8 / Matthew 24:35 / 2 Timothy 3:16.

Despite the world around them changing all the time, they received comfort from God's unchanging Word. It was God's law which prevented them from perishing in their affliction, Psalm 119:92, and as a result, the psalmist won't forget God's precepts, Psalm 119:93.

He then asks God to save them because they have sought God's precepts, Psalm 119:94. Despite the wicked being waiting to destroy them, they will ponder on God's statutes, Psalm 119:95.

The psalmist had learned from their own personal experience that mankind has limitations when it comes to perfection, but there are no limits, no boundaries, to perfection in God's word, Psalm 119:96 / Psalm 18:30 / Psalm 19:7.

MEM

'Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore, I hate every wrong path.' Psalm 119:97-104

The psalmist's love is clear in that they meditated upon it all day long, Psalm 119:97. Because God's commands are always with them, as they spend so much time meditating upon God's word, they are wiser than their enemies, Psalm 119:98.

They have more insight than their teachers, the elders, Psalm 119:99-100, and those who reject God's word, Acts 4:13. The psalmist didn't become arrogant, thinking they knew everything, but because they feared God, they knew this was the beginning of wisdom.

It appears that the precepts of God had greater influence in their life than the traditions that had been handed to them by the teachers and elders who appear to have rejected God's word, Psalm 119:101-102 / John 3:1-15.

The psalmist finds God's word sweet to taste, sweeter than honey, Psalm 119:103 / Psalm 23:1-3 / Psalm 8:1 / Proverbs 27:7. As a result of tasting God's sweet word, they made the deliberate decision not to follow every wrong path, Psalm 119:104.

NUN

'Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it that I will follow your righteous laws. I have suffered much; preserve my life, LORD, according to your word. Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws. Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law. The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts. Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.' Psalm 119:105-112

The psalmist tells us that mankind can't direct their own lives in order to please God. Mankind needs God's word to help us live as we are supposed to, it's God's word which is a lamp for our feet, a light on our path, Psalm 119:105 / John 8:12. In other words, it's God's word which helps us live the kind of life which God wants us to live, Ephesians 4:1 / Isaiah 57:2 / Micah 6:8 / 1 John 1:7.

They had taken an oath and confirmed that they would follow God's righteous laws, Psalm 119:106. They have suffered much, and so they ask god to preserve their life, according to His word, Psalm 119:107.

Because God's word was directing the psalmist's life, they offered freewill offerings of praise and thanksgiving, Psalm 119:108. They openly declare that their life was totally in God's hands, Psalm 119:109, and despite being surrounded by the wicked who try to trap them in a snare, Psalm 119:110, they have kept God's precepts, Psalm 119:111.

God's statutes are their heritage, and they bring joy to their heart, Psalm 119:111. They are determined to keep God's decrees all the days of their lives, Psalm 119:112, that is, they are committed to serving God all the days of their life.

SAMEKH

'I hate double-minded people, but I love your law. You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word. Away from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commands of my God! Sustain me, my God, according to your promise, and I will live; do not let my hopes be dashed. Uphold me, and I will be delivered; I will always have regard for your decrees. You reject all who stray from your decrees, for their delusions come to nothing. All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross; therefore, I love your statutes. My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws.' Psalm 119:113-120

The psalmist declares that they hate those who are double-minded, Psalm 119:113, which means they are aware of the dangers these people pose to others, 1 Kings 18:21.

The psalmist says that God is their refuge and shield, Psalm 119:114, that is, shelter and strength. They found safety only in God's word; they trusted God's word to keep them safe from those evildoers, Psalm 119:115-116 / Matthew 4:4 / Matthew 4:7 / Matthew 4:10.

They ask God to sustain, uphold, and deliver them, Psalm 119:117, so that they can live and keep their hopes alive.

The psalmist is confident that those who turn away from God's word will come to nothing, Psalm 119:118.

They will be like dross, Psalm 119:119, that is, the leftovers from the refining process, Isaiah 1:22 / Jeremiah 6:28-30 / Ezekiel 22:18-19. The psalmist is fearful of God, and as a result, they stand in awe of God's laws, Psalm 119:120.

AYIN

'I have done what is righteous and just; do not leave me to my oppressors. Ensure your servant's well-being; do not let the arrogant oppress me. My eyes fail, looking for your salvation, looking for your righteous promise. Deal with your servant according to your love and teach me your decrees. I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes. It is time for you to act, LORD; your law is being broken. Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold, and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path.' Psalm 119:121-128

The psalmist tells us that they were being unfairly oppressed. It was unfair because what they had done was righteous and just, Psalm 119:121-122. As a result of this unfair oppression, their eyes fail from looking for salvation, and from looking for God's religious promise, Psalm 119:123, and so, they cry out to God for help, Psalm 119:124 / Job 17:3.

It's sad, but the general rule is that when people do what is right, they will often receive persecution from those who are evil, Matthew 5:11 / John 15:20. When the psalmist read God's word, they were assured that they were right and their arrogant oppressors were wrong, Psalm 119:125 / Judges 21:25.

Despite their arrogant oppressors violating God's laws by persecuting a righteous and just servant of God, Psalm 119:126, the psalmist is determined to continue to love God's commandments.

They will love His commandments because they are more precious than gold, even pure gold, Psalm 119:127 / Matthew 6:24. Because of God's precepts, they are determined to hate every wrong path, Psalm 119:128, which implies they are determined not to walk on the wrong path, Matthew 7:13-14.

PE

'Your statutes are wonderful; therefore, I obey them. The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. I open my mouth and pant, longing for your commands. Turn to me and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name. Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me. Redeem me from human oppression, that I may obey your precepts. Make your face shine on your servant and teach me your decrees. Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed.' Psalm 119:129-136

The psalmist tells us that when they realise that God's statutes are wonderful, they will automatically obey them, Psalm 119:129. When they open up God's word, they find that the words give light and understanding even to the simple, Psalm 119:130, that is, the innocent. This again encourages them to obey His word.
When the psalmist opens their mouth, they pant and want more of God's commands, Psalm 119:131. As a result, they desire to be closer to God so that they can receive God's mercy, Psalm 119:132. They want God's word to direct their footsteps in order that they will stay away from sin, Psalm 119:133 / Romans 6:14 / 1 Corinthians 6:12.
By being obedient to God's word, the psalmist will find freedom from human oppression, Psalm 119:134. They want God's face to shine on them, Psalm 119:135, that is, they want God to show favour to them so that God can teach them His decrees. Notice the psalmist is deeply moved; they are moved to tears because there are some who don't obey God's law, Psalm 119:136 / Matthew 23:37-39 / Mark 3:5.

TSADHE

'You are righteous, LORD, and your laws are right. The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy. My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore your words. Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them. Though I am lowly and despised, I do not forget your precepts. Your righteousness is everlasting, and your law is true. Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands give me delight. Your statutes are always righteous; give me understanding that I may live.' Psalm 119:137-144

The psalmist declares that God is righteous and His laws are right, Psalm 119:137, and they declare that His statutes are trustworthy, Psalm 119:138. Their zeal is wearing them out because their enemies ignore God's word, Psalm 119:139 / Psalm 69:9 / John 2:13-17.
They acknowledge that God's promises have been thoroughly tested, Psalm 119:140, that is, God keeps His promises, and as a result, the psalmist loves them, Psalm 119:140.
It's God's word, which is the word of truth, 2 Corinthians 6:7. It's God's word, which is the word of life, Philippians 2:16; it's God's word, which is filled with power, Hebrews 1:3.
Despite the psalmist feeling lowly and despised, Psalm 119:141 / 1 Samuel 16:10-13 / 2 Corinthians 11, they didn't forget God's precepts, Psalm 119:141. They didn't forget that God's righteousness and law are true, Psalm 119:142 / John 18:37-38.
Despite being troubled and in distress, Psalm 119:143, the psalmist found delight in God's commands, Psalm 119:143. God's statutes give them understanding so that they may live, Psalm 119:144 / John 10:10.

QOPH

‘I call with all my heart; answer me, LORD, and I will obey your decrees. I call out to you; save me, and I will keep your statutes. I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word. My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises. Hear my voice in accordance with your love; preserve my life, LORD, according to your laws. Those who devise wicked schemes are near, but they are far from your law. Yet you are near, LORD, and all your commands are true. Long ago, I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever.’ Psalm 119:145-152

It appears the psalmist is being oppressed, Psalm 119:145, and as a result, they wake up in the morning, Psalm 119:146-147 / Mark 1:35. They are crying out to God for help because they couldn’t sleep through the night, Psalm 119:148 / Luke 6:12.

It was during this time of oppression that they cried out to God for hope, and while meditating upon God’s promises, Psalm 119:148, they received that much-needed hope.

They ask God to preserve their life according to God’s love and God’s law, Psalm 119:149, because those who were wicked were devising evil schemes against them, Psalm 119:150. These were the wicked who had no respect for God or His laws, Psalm 119:150.

Despite what those wicked people were doing, the psalmist knew that God was near, Psalm 119:151 / Psalm 73:28 / Jeremiah 23:23, and His commands were true, Psalm 119:151. They had learned from long ago that God established His statutes to remain forever, Psalm 119:152.

RESH

‘Look on my suffering and deliver me, for I have not forgotten your law. Defend my cause and redeem me; preserve my life according to your promise. Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek out your decrees. Your compassion, LORD, is great; preserve my life according to your laws. Many are the foes who persecute me, but I have not turned from your statutes. I look on the faithless with loathing, for they do not obey your word. See how I love your precepts; preserve my life, LORD, in accordance with your love. All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.’ Psalm 119:153-160

The psalmist is suffering greatly and asks God to deliver them from those who had no respect for God’s law because they hadn’t forgotten God’s law, Psalm 119:153.

They want God to defend their cause, Psalm 119:154 / Psalm 35:1 / Psalm 43:1 / Hosea 4:17, to redeem them and preserve their life as God has promised in His word, Psalm 119:154.

The psalmist knows that those who practise wickedness will not receive salvation, because they don’t seek God’s decrees, Psalm 119:155 / Galatians 5:19-21. God’s compassion is great, Psalm 119:156 / Isaiah 1:18 / Isaiah 43:22-25, and the psalmist asks God to preserve their life according to God’s laws, Psalm 119:156.

Despite their foes persecuting them, Psalm 119:157 / Matthew 13:20-21, they didn’t turn away from God’s statutes, Psalm 119:157. Despite their foes being faithless and disobeying God’s word, Psalm 119:158, they love God’s precepts because they preserve their life according to God’s love, Psalm 119:159.

The psalmist knows that God’s word is true and His righteous laws are eternal, Psalm 119:160. They have complete confidence that God will defend them, redeem them and preserve their life.

SIN AND SHIN

‘Rulers persecute me without cause, but my heart trembles at your word. I rejoice in your promise like one who finds great spoil. I hate and detest falsehood, but I love your law. Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws. Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble. I wait for your salvation, LORD, and I follow your commands. I obey your statutes, for I love them greatly. I obey your precepts and your statutes, for all my ways are known to you.’ Psalm 119:161-168

The psalmist tells us that even the rulers of the land were persecuting them without any cause; nonetheless, they were more afraid of God’s word, and they wouldn’t turn from it, Psalm 119:161.

When they read God’s promises, they rejoiced like someone who found some great buried treasure, Psalm 119:162.

They hate and detest anything which is false but love God’s law, Psalm 119:163.

They praise God seven times a day because of His righteous laws, Psalm 119:164. That is, they constantly praised God throughout the day, Leviticus 26:28. As a result of praising God, they received God’s peace, Psalm 119:165 / Philippians 4:7, and were made stronger in their faith, Psalm 119:165.

They will patiently wait on God to save them, and they will continue to follow God’s commands, Psalm 119:166.

They obey His statutes and love them greatly, Psalm 119:167, and they obey God’s precepts and His statutes because God knows all their ways, Psalm 119:168 / Psalm 139:1-24 / Matthew 10:30 / Hebrews 4:13.

God’s word was going to protect them from turning away from God’s righteousness, and because they will obey God, they will be blessed with life, peace, strength and comfort, Nahum 1:7 / John 10:10.

TAW

‘May my cry come before you, LORD; give me understanding according to your word. May my supplication come before you; deliver me according to your promise. May my lips overflow with praise, for you teach me your decrees. May my tongue sing of your word, for all your commands are righteous. May your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts. I long for your salvation, LORD, and your law gives me delight. Let me live that I may praise you, and may your laws sustain me. I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands.’ Psalm 119:169-176

The psalmist asks that his cry be heard by God and asks for understanding according to God’s word, Psalm 119:169.

They also ask that their supplication be heard by God so that God would deliver them according to His promise, Psalm 119:170.

They want to praise God continually with their mouths when God teaches them His decrees, Psalm 119:171. They want to be able to sing God’s word; they want to sing of God’s righteous commands, Psalm 119:172.

They want God’s hand to be ready to help them because they have chosen God’s precepts, Psalm 119:173, that is, they have chosen to live by God’s commandments. They long for God’s salvation because it’s God’s law, which brings the delight of salvation, Psalm 119:174 / 1 Peter 1:23.

Just as a sheep strays away in the wilderness, the psalmist asks God to continue to direct them through His commandments, Psalm 119:176 / Romans 7:21. In other words, they are asking God to renew and transform their lives, Romans 12:2. The psalmist describes themselves as a servant, Psalm 119:176 / Luke 17:10, who hasn’t forgotten God’s commands, Psalm 119:176.

CONCLUSION

Someone once said, ‘The best evidence of the Bible’s being the word of God is to be found between its covers. It proves itself.’ Indeed, were it not for the proof within its pages of the inspiration that it claims for itself, the Bible would never have become the most widely circulated book in the world.

Every Christian ought not only to believe the Bible, but he ought also to be able to thoroughly examine the foundation upon which that faith rests. For if we don’t know why we believe the scriptures are inspired by God’s Holy Spirit, our faith in them and in Christ himself may be uprooted by the cynicism and scepticism of adverse Biblical critics.

Christian evidence is the term usually applied to the study of reasons for believing in the inspiration of the Bible and the religion of Jesus Christ. Whole books have been written in this field, and it is impossible in the space allotted in this study to more than touch upon these things.

The student who would like to study these matters in greater detail should secure one or more of the several fine books which have been written in defence of the Bible. The Bible presents the highest standard of morality that the world has ever known.

Never has the world known a finer rule than the golden rule, Matthew 7:12. If anyone doubts the superiority of the Christian religion from a moral point of view, let him examine those countries in which the Bible has had little influence and see the degeneration of man.
The moral standards given by Christ are so superior to those of other religions that it is impossible to account for these principles except on the basis that they were divinely revealed.

CHAPTER 120

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find the psalmist trusting God for their future because they had trusted God in the past. They appear to be oppressed by their enemies, and so, they call upon God to bring judgment on their oppressors.

HEADING

‘A song of ascents.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a song of ascents. This psalm is the first of a series of psalms with the same heading.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Several theories of why this group of psalms is so named are available. The Jewish explanation is that there were fifteen steps from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Men in the Temple, and that each of these psalms was sung in succession on those steps. Another view is that these songs were sung in successive phases of the Jews' return from captivity. Apparently, the true explanation is that these psalms were written for the pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for the great annual feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. 'It seems most probable that these songs form a collection for the use of pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts.'

'I call on the LORD in my distress, and he answers me. Save me, LORD, from lying lips and from deceitful tongues. What will he do to you, and what more besides, you deceitful tongue? He will punish you with a warrior's sharp arrows, with burning coals of the broom bush. Woe to me that I dwell in Meshek, that I live among the tents of Kedar! Too long have I lived among those who hate peace. I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war.' Psalm 120:1-7

The psalmist begins by declaring that they will call upon the LORD while they are in distress, Psalm 120:1 / Luke 22:44, and they are confident that God will hear their call, Psalm 120:1 / Psalm 37:5-6.
Notice that they weren't facing physical abuse but verbal abuse, Psalm 120:2, which all too often can cause just as much emotional damage as physical abuse. They wanted God to save them from those who have lying lips, Psalm 120:2 / Psalm 31:18, and deceitful tongues, Psalm 120:2 / Psalms 52:4 / Psalms 57:5 / Proverbs 20:18.
The psalmist asks those who have deceitful tongues, what will God do to them? Psalm 120:3. The answer is that God will punish them with a warrior's sharp arrows, Psalm 120:4 / Ephesians 6:16, and with burning coals of the broom bush, Psalm 120:4 / 1 Kings 19:4 / Psalms 57:4 / Psalm 64:3 / Job 30:4.
The fruit of a slanderous mouth is piercing arrows of judgment, and the result of this judgement will be as a flash of intense heat that comes from burning a broom bush. In other words, these slanderous people will reap the consequences of their lying and deceitfulness, Matthew 7:1-2 / Galatians 6:7.
The psalmist appears to live in Meshech, Psalm 120:5, which was located miles away from Israel, Genesis 10:2 / Ezekiel 27:13 / Ezekiel 32:26-27 / Ezekiel 39:1. Kedar, Psalm 120:5, is located around the land of Israel, Genesis 25:13 / 1 Chronicles 1:29 / Isaiah 21:16-17 / Jeremiah 49:28.
Kedar was a son of Ishmael, Genesis 25:13, and hence, the name was given to an Arabian tribe descended from him, Isaiah 42:11 / Isaiah 60:7 / Jeremiah 49:28. In other words, they felt that living among those with lying lips and deceitful tongues was like living with savages.
It's clear the psalmist couldn't stand living among those who hate peace, Psalm 120:6. They longed for peace, but every time they speak of peace, their enemies speak of war, Psalm 120:7.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist longed for peace, and within the pages of Scripture, we find there are three types of peace.

1. There is the absence of hostility or having no enmity.

Generally, when people call for peace, this is what they mean. They are looking for a time when there will be no wars or fighting.

2. The second type of peace is tranquillity, which is freedom from disturbance or a calm feeling.

3. The final peace is reconciliation.

When two people who have been at odds with one another are brought together, they have peace or reconciliation.

Jesus said, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid,' John 14:27.
Notice in this statement, Jesus refers to two types of peace, the peace the world gives and the peace that He gives. The world seeks peace, but what is meant is they seek the absence of hostility, no enmity.

The peace that Jesus promises isn't necessarily the absence of hostility; it is, as Paul describes, 'the peace of God, which passes all understanding,' Philippians 4:7.
The Christians in Philippi very much understood this peace because they saw it demonstrated in Paul and Silas when the Gospel was first preached in the city of Philippi. Paul and Silas were beaten and cast into prison.

Did they enjoy the world's peace, the absence of hostility? Of course not, they had been beaten. Did they enjoy the peace of Christ? Yes, and that peace was demonstrated in their praying and singing praises unto God, Acts 16:22-25.
Christ's peace is the tranquillity of mind, but it is more than just that. It is having peace with God. By 'peace with God,' we mean harmony or reconciliation with God. In fact, the second type of peace, tranquillity of mind, stems from the third type of peace, a reconciliation that is, being reconciled unto God.

The demonstration of such reconciliation is what 'passes understanding.' When a person obtains reconciliation or peace with God, he or she will have peace or tranquillity of mind, the peace that passes understanding.

From an earthly standpoint, what Paul and Silas did while in the Philippian jail rises above our thoughts. It doesn't make earthly sense to rejoice in suffering, but this is what Paul and Silas did, and this is what Peter exhorts us to do, 1 Peter 4:13.
How can I have the peace Jesus promised? The short answer is by being reconciled to God. We are reconciled by or through the blood of the cross of Jesus, Colossians 1:20-22 / Ephesians 2:13-16.

CHAPTER 121

INTRODUCTION

The psalmist appears to be on a journey, possibly on their way to the tabernacle to celebrate one of the Jewish feasts, and so, they ask God to protect them on their way.

HEADING

'A song of ascents.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

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4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a song of ascents. Psalms 120-134 all have the same heading.
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Several theories of why this group of psalms is so named are available. The Jewish explanation is that there were fifteen steps from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Men in the Temple, and that each of these psalms was sung in succession on those steps. Another view is that these songs were sung in successive phases of the Jews' return from captivity. Apparently, the true explanation is that these psalms were written for the pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for the great annual feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. 'It seems most probable that these songs form a collection for the use of pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts.'

'I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.' Psalm 121:1-8

The psalmist begins by asking, Whilst they look to the mountains, where does their help come from? Psalm 121:1.
We can imagine the psalmist looking at one of the mountains near Jerusalem and getting excited as they get closer to the city.
They confidently announce that their help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, Psalm 121:2 / Genesis 1-2. In other words, His help was the Creator of the universe.
They are confident that God won't let their feet slip on the journey, Psalm 121:3, that is, they will stand on firm ground, Psalm 38:16 / Ephesians 6:11 / Ephesians 6:13.
God is watching over the psalmist and watching over Israel, Psalm 121:4 / 1 Kings 18:27. They know that God doesn't slumber, Psalm 121:4, that is sleep, Isaiah 27:3 / Psalm 139:11-12. In other words, God never takes His eyes off His people; He looks, He cares, and He protects them.
He is at the right hand, which is a sign of authority, Psalm 121:5 / Psalm 16:8 / Psalm 109:31, and it appears that He's using His authority to provide a cloud which will shelter the psalmist from the heat, Psalm 91:1 / Isaiah 4:6 / Isaiah 25:4.
We can imagine the psalmist walking in very hot conditions, with the sun beating down constantly on them, hence why they say that the LORD is their shade, Psalm 121:6 / Isaiah 25:4.
The moon won't harm them at night, Psalm 121:6, which is probably a reference to some superstitions which some held, but the point is that God would protect them day and night, Psalm 121:6.
The LORD will protect them from all harm, Psalm 121:6, which possibly speaks of protecting them from any robbers they may come across on their journey to Jerusalem.
The psalmist is confident that the LORD will watch over them, Psalm 121:7-8. He will watch over His people's coming and going constantly, all the time, Psalm 121:7-8 / Deuteronomy 28:6 / Job 5:24.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist was confident that God was watching over them on their journey to Jerusalem, and as Christians, we too should be confident that God will protect us on our journey to heaven. Often we think that God is up in heaven and He doesn't see us, but He does, Psalm 32:8 / Proverbs 15:3.

When we remember Stephen after being stoned, and he is about to die, he lifted his eyes to heaven and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, Acts 7:54-59. Jesus wasn't sitting, He was standing because He saw what was happening and He cared and He was concerned about what was happening to His servant, Stephen.

He wants to help us get to heaven even more than we do at times, but until then, He won't take His eyes off His children, Job 36:7, especially when they are in trouble, Matthew 10:22.

CHAPTER 122

INTRODUCTION

This psalm of David speaks about the annual festive journey made to Jerusalem by God's people.

HEADING

'A song of ascents. Of David.'

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'I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem.' Psalm 122:1-2

David begins by telling us that he rejoiced with others when he was invited to go to the house of the LORD, Psalm 122:1. The house of the LORD could be speaking about the tabernacle, but if it refers to the temple, David was

anticipating the excitement when his son, Solomon, finally built it after David's death, 1 Chronicles 22:2-16 / Isaiah 2:3.
This really was a time of excitement as the people longed to go to the temple in Jerusalem to meet with like-minded people who had come together from throughout the Promised Land, Exodus 23:17.
We can almost imagine the excitement in David's voice when he was invited, and we can almost imagine the excitement as everyone gathered together to make this annual trip to Jerusalem.

We can imagine them making this journey together with friends and family, people who love God, and we can imagine the fellowship along the way and the songs they sang.

The people would have had their offerings with them, and they would be excited about making those sacrifices to the LORD. Imagine as they get closer and closer to Jerusalem, imagine the excitement after making the journey to Jerusalem and their feet finally stand in the city gates, Psalm 122:2.

'Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together. That is where the tribes go up—the tribes of the LORD—to praise the name of the LORD according to the statute given to Israel. There stand the thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David.' Psalm 122:3-5

After reaching the city gates, we can imagine how proud they were of their city, the city of David, Jerusalem, Psalm 122:3. It was closely compacted together, Psalm 122:3, that is, it was built in an orderly way, 2 Samuel 5:11-12. It was a city that was united together as the centre of reference for the nation of Israel.
It was the gathering place for all tribes of Israel, Psalm 122:4, for the Passover feast, the feast of Tabernacles and Unleavened Bread. When David captured and conquered Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 5:6-10, it became the capital city of both the political and religious life of Israel.
It came to symbolise the reunification of the twelve tribes that had throughout the year been scattered to their farms. The whole purpose of Israel's trip to Jerusalem was to praise the Name of the LORD, that is, to give Him thanks; this was done according to the statute given to Israel.

The statute of Israel, Psalm 122:4, is the ark of the covenant, Exodus 25:22 / Exodus 27:21 / Numbers 1:53. The ark represented the presence of God among His people, Exodus 16:34 / Exodus 25:16 / Exodus 25:21 / Exodus 40:3 / Exodus 40:20 / Exodus 30:6 / Exodus 30:36 / Exodus 31:18.
David made Jerusalem the centre of politics and religion in Israel, that is, the thrones of the house of David, Psalm 122:5 / 2 Samuel 15:4, and why he mentions the thrones for judgment, Psalm 122:5.
This made Jerusalem a city of justice, a city where good would be honoured and evil would be corrected. As it was located at the city gates, everyone would see the throne of judgment and see justice being served, Ruth 4:1-12 / Matthew 19:28.

'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May those who love you be secure. May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels." For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, "Peace be within you." For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your prosperity.' Psalm 122:6-9

David encourages everyone to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, Psalm 122:6. The name Jerusalem means peace, Hebrews 7:2. He prays for peace and security within the walls of Jerusalem and he asks that the city also be secure, Psalm 122:6. In other words, he wants not only peace for the city but also prosperity for the city, Job 3:26 / Job 12:6 / Romans 5:1.
David probably asked them to pray for peace because Jerusalem was continually involved in wars and conflicts over the years. Israel took great pride in Jerusalem, and the temple and the city brought a sense of security and peace to everyone, Psalm 122:6.

Then David prayed that peace prevail within the walls of the city, Psalm 122:7, so that the city could prosper, 1 Kings 16:18 / 2 Kings 15:25 / Isaiah 25:2. David wanted God to bless all his family and friends, and as he requested peace for Jerusalem, he requested that peace be within his family and friends, Psalm 122:8. When there was peace, the people lived in prosperity and for the sake of the tabernacle or later the temple, the house of God, Psalm 122:9.

CONCLUSION

We can almost sense the excitement in David's words, as he was invited to go to the house of the LORD. We can almost sense the excitement as they begin that journey together and finally set foot inside the city gates. I wonder if we as Christians ever get that excited about coming to meet together to worship God each week?

Remember the 'church' is the people, not a building, and we are so blessed to be a part of the house of God, with Jesus as our head, Ephesians 1:21-22 / Colossians 1:24, and Jesus is the Son of the house, Hebrews 3:5-6 / Hebrews 10:21 / 1 Peter 2:5 / 1 Peter 4:17.
The Israelites were excited because they were going to be in the presence of God. As Christians, we have God, His Son and the Holy Spirit within us, John 14:23 / 1 Corinthians 3:16, we're constantly in His presence, and He is constantly in our presence. That's exciting, and that's worth singing songs of praise and thanking Him for His presence in our lives.

CHAPTER 123

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist appears to be struggling emotionally because of the ridicule and contempt they were receiving from others, and as a result, they cry out to God for help.

HEADING

'A song of ascents.'

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1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

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'Several theories of why this group of psalms is so named are available. The Jewish explanation is that there were fifteen steps from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Men in the Temple, and that each of these psalms was sung in succession on those steps. Another view is that these songs were sung in successive phases of the Jews' return from captivity. Apparently, the true explanation is that these psalms were written for the pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for the great annual feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. 'It seems most probable that these songs form a collection for the use of pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts.'

'I lift up my eyes to you, to you who sit enthroned in heaven. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a female slave look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he shows us his mercy. Have mercy on us, LORD, have mercy on us, for we have endured no end of contempt. We have endured no end of ridicule from the arrogant, of contempt from the proud.' Psalm 123:1-4

The psalmist is in distress, but the first thing they do is lift their eyes toward God, Psalm 123:1. They couldn't find any help from anyone on earth, hence why they turn to the One who is enthroned in heaven, Psalm 123:1. In other words, they focused their attention on God and not their problems.
The psalmist shares two metaphors: first, of a slave whose eyes look to the hand of their master and second, a female slave looks to the hand of her mistress, Psalm 123:2.
In other words, as the slave looks to the master, who has full control over their lives to meet their needs, as the female slaves look to the hand of their mistress, who has full control over her life, to meet her needs, the psalmist looks to God, who has full control over their life, to help meet their needs.

Notice, however, that the psalmist is patiently looking to God, they say, till God shows His mercy, Psalm 123:2. Despite being in a lot of emotional turmoil, they are patient with God and will wait for God to answer their prayer, in God's time.
The psalmist appears to be speaking on behalf of others, hence why they use the word 'us', Psalm 123:3, but their plea for God to have mercy on them is a plea of desperation, hence why they ask God to have mercy on them twice, Psalm 123:3.
It appears that the psalmist and others have experienced no end of contempt from the proud, and they've experienced no end of ridicule from those who are arrogant, Psalm 123:4 / Acts 5:41. The emotional distress they were experiencing was becoming too much for them, Job 22:19, hence why they turned to God for help.
Despite suffering as they were, the psalmist is quite happy to wait on the Lord to show them mercy. And although the psalmist didn't receive an answer from God straightaway, many commentators believe that the following psalm, Psalm 124, is God's answer to their plea.

CONCLUSION

Despite the psalmists going through emotional turmoil because of the ridicule and contempt they were experiencing at the hands of those who were arrogant and proud, they firmly fixed their eyes on the one who is enthroned above. As Christians, we must firmly fix our eyes on Jesus if we want to endure all the suffering which comes our way, Hebrews 12:2.
During the Olympics, the Emperor would often participate, but most times he would be in the audience, and the runners would focus their eyes on him. We can finish the race by glueing our eyes on Jesus.

We need to get our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus. This is a call for us to have a determined focus. We are to be looking at Jesus and nothing else! We are not to have divided attention, Luke 16:13.
Too often, we are being distracted by the world. We are being distracted by all of these things that are not necessarily sinful, but they are taking our attention away from Jesus. The writer of Hebrews is calling for us to have a determined focus.

Get your eyes on Jesus and off of sin! Colossians 3:1-2. Get your eyes on Jesus and off of possessions! Get your eyes on Jesus and off of work! Get your eyes on Jesus and off of money! What are our minds focused on? What are we looking at when we fix our eyes on Jesus?
1. What Jesus did!

Jesus is described as the pioneer and the perfecter of our faith. We have seen this description used before by the writer of Hebrews. In Hebrews 2:10, we see the same language: Jesus is our trailblazer. Jesus has blazed the path for us to follow.
We are not going down an unknown road. We are going down the road that Jesus has blazed for us. He is our pioneer, our leader, who has led the way of faith for us. Not only this, but by following Jesus, He will 'bring our faith to completion,' Hebrews 12:2. Jesus has shown us the road we need to walk.
2. How Jesus endured.

How did Jesus make it? Jesus made it the same way that those in Hebrews 11 made it. They had their eyes fixed on the promised reward, not here on earth. Jesus did the same. What does the text say that Jesus was focused on? He was focused on 'the joy set before Him,' Hebrews 12:2.
Jesus did not look at the physical but at the goal. He looked at the purpose. Jesus was able to endure because He saw the joy that was set before him. That's how Jesus endured the cross.

He held the shame of the cross in no regard. He was able to look through the cross. He did not simply see the cross and consider its weight and meaning. He could look beyond the cross.

He could see the joy of the salvation that would be offered by His act. He did not focus on the temporary suffering of the cross. He did not focus on the mocking and shame of the cross. He counted these earthly things as nothing. He disregarded those things and saw the joy set before.

This is how we are to endure our suffering. Do not focus on the suffering. Fix your eyes on Jesus. See through the suffering and see the joy that will come from having endurance. We have a greater promise given to us that we are able to place our hope upon.

CHAPTER 124

INTRODUCTION

This psalm appears to follow the previous psalm, Psalm 123, where the psalmist cries out to God for help because of the ridicule and contempt they were experiencing at the hands of those who were arrogant and proud. In this psalm, God answers their pleas.

HEADING

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‘If the LORD had not been on our side—let Israel say—if the LORD had not been on our side when people attacked us, they would have swallowed us alive when their anger flared against us; the flood would have engulfed us, the torrent would have swept over us, the raging waters would have swept us away. Praise be to the LORD, who has not let us be torn by their teeth. We have escaped like a bird from the fowler’s snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.’ Psalm 124:1-8

David begins this psalm by reminding Israel twice that if the LORD wasn’t on their side, they would have failed against their enemies, Psalm 124:1-2. In other words, God was working among His people, and they would never have been able to overcome their enemies without God’s help, 2 Samuel 5:17-25.
Notice how David describes their enemies, they would have swallowed them up, Psalm 124:3 / Numbers 16:32-33 / Psalm 106:17. They were angry, really angry, and he describes them as a flood which would have engulfed them, Psalm 124:4. They were like torrents and raging waters which would have swept them away, Psalm 124:4-5. These are metaphors which speak of destruction, Psalm 18:16 / Psalm 42:7 / Psalm 69:1-2 / Isaiah 8:7-8 / Lamentations 3:54. In other words, David is emphasising that Israel would have had no chance against them if God didn’t intervene to rescue them.
No wonder David praises the LORD because He hasn’t let them be torn by their enemies’ teeth, Psalm 124:6, that is, Israel weren’t devoured by their enemies because God rescued them. David again uses the metaphor of a bird which escapes from the fowler’s snare, Psalm 124:7.
A fowler’s snare is a trap specifically designed to trap birds. Sometimes it is something thrown at or around the legs of birds to keep them from flying. David again acknowledges that it was God who broke the snares and helped them escape, Psalm 124:7.
Israel’s help was in the Name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, Psalm 124:8 / Genesis 1-2. Israel knew the same God who created all things, Colossians 1:13-17, was powerful enough to help them.

CONCLUSION

David says throughout this short Psalm that if it weren't for God's intervention, Israel would have been wiped out. As Christians, we too must totally rely on God for all things.

As Christians, we must learn what it means for Jesus to be truly ours, all in all, 1 Corinthians 15:28 / Colossians 3:11. We are totally reliant upon Christ for everything because it's in Christ we both live and move and have our being, Acts 17:28.
Christ is the source of our joy and our movement, and it's important to remain in Him, John 15:4-5, and go to Him for strength to go through all things we experience in this life, Philippians 4:13.

CHAPTER 125

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, we find the psalmist speaking about the security they find in Jerusalem, Mount Zion. Jerusalem, especially the temple, represented the presence of God among His people.

HEADING

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‘Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people both now and forevermore. The sceptre of the wicked will not remain over the land allotted to the righteous, for then the righteous might use their hands to do evil. LORD, do good to those who are good, to those who are upright in heart. But those who turn to crooked ways the LORD will banish with the evildoers. Peace be on Israel.’ Psalm 125:1-5

The psalmist begins by reminding the people that those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which can’t be shaken and endures forever, Psalm 125:1. In other words, those who trust in the LORD will have God Himself as their refuge and strength.

There’s no doubt that those who were walking to Jerusalem would have been impressed as they approached Mount Zion, the hill on which Jerusalem was built, 2 Samuel 5:6-9.

There’s no doubt they would have had a sense of security. Jerusalem was a symbol of stability, and the people found strength in its presence as the capital city of Israel, Psalm 48:1-14 / Matthew 2:1.

Just as the mountains surround Jerusalem, the LORD surrounds His people; they, too, have total protection and security from God, Psalm 125:2. This promise of God’s presence, God’s protection and security was to last both now and forever, Psalm 125:2. This is exactly what Jesus offers and promises us today, Matthew 28:20.

The sceptre of the wicked won’t remain over the land allotted to the righteous, Psalm 125:3, that is, the strength and evil influences of the wicked wouldn’t be permitted to spread in the land, just in case the righteous got involved in their evil. In other words, because the Lord was the security of Israel, the wicked wouldn’t be able to take possession of that which was given to the people, Psalm 125:3.

The psalmist asks the LORD to do good to those who are good and those who possess an upright heart, Psalm 125:4. They ask God to work on behalf of those who trust Him and have committed themselves to Him.

When it comes to doing good, we think of God sending His Son, Jesus, John 3:16. He spent His whole life doing good, Acts 10:38, and lovingly sacrificed Himself for each of us, Romans 5:6-8.

While the good and the upright are blessed with God’s security, those who are crooked in their ways have only the judgment of God to look forward to, Psalm 125:5 / Judges 5:6 / Ezekiel 33:12-13 / Matthew 7:22-23 / Matthew 25:11-12.

The psalmist ends by saying, ‘peace be on Israel’, Psalm 125:5, which basically means they want Israel to enjoy the blessings of trusting in God, one of which is peace, Galatians 6:16 / Isaiah 54:13 / Isaiah 55:12 / Isaiah 57:2 / Isaiah 66:12 / John 14:27 / John 16:33 / Ephesians 2:17 / Philippians 4:7.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist spoke of the safety and refuge that those who trusted in God enjoyed because God Himself was their safety and security. When Christians put their faith and trust in God, they, too, like the mountains, become strong, secure, and stable.

If we want to have a strong faith in the LORD, we must build our faith upon the solid ground of Christ’s teaching; otherwise, our faith will crash when difficulties come our way, Matthew 7:26.

If we want to have a strong faith in the LORD, we must remove all doubts from our minds that God can do what He says He can do; otherwise, we end up being blown and tossed around by the seas of doubt, Isaiah 57:20 / James 1:6.

If we want to have a strong faith in the LORD, we must become spiritually mature, we must grow in our faith and knowledge of Jesus; otherwise, we will end up being tossed back and forth by every wind of false teaching which comes our way, Ephesians 4:14.

CHAPTER 126

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist appears to be speaking about the time when Israel returned from Babylonian captivity. Israel had been taken into captivity because of their idolatry, 2 Chronicles 36:6-21, but after they repented, God allowed them to return to the land.

HEADING

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'When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Restore our fortunes, LORD, like streams in the Negev. Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.' Psalm 126:1-6

The psalmist begins by speaking about the time when Israel returned to the land from captivity. This was the time the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, Psalm 126:1.
Israel only dreamed of this happening, Psalm 126:1. They could hardly believe that God would use a foreign king to make this happen, but when it did, Genesis 45:26 / Luke 24:11 / Acts 12:9, it was a time of laughter and singing songs of joy, Psalm 126:2 / Job 8:21.
When Israel returned to the land, it really was a great thing which God had done, Psalm 126:2, and the nations around knew it was all God's doing; it really was a time when the Jews were filled with joy, Psalm 126:3 / Ezra 1:1-4.

The psalmist once again asks the LORD to restore their fortunes, Psalm 126:4, which implies that there is still work to be done, the city needed rebuilding, and the temple needed to be rebuilt.
The psalmist asks God to move quickly, like streams in the Negev Psalm 126:4, to help them complete the work which needed to be done in rebuilding the city and the temple. The Negev was a desert region south of Palestine, and so, when the rain fell, rivers would flow quickly and flood the land.
The time of sowing, Psalm 126:5, is a time of labour and toil, and harvest time is a time of joy, Psalm 126:5, when the labourer receives the reward of their patient labours.
In other words, when Israel went into captivity, it was a time of tears, Psalm 126:6, but when they returned, it was a time of singing songs of joy, Psalm 126:6 / Isaiah 9:3, they will carry the sheaves with joy in their hearts, Psalm 126:6.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist tells us that to Israel, returning to the land was like a daydream, something they never believed would ever happen. When we think of the promise of heaven for Christians, Matthew 25:23, we must also think about the promise of destruction for those who aren't Christians, Matthew 13:42.
And it's possible that some Christians and those who aren't don't think their eternal destination will ever happen. Jesus spoke to a young man one day and told him that he wasn't far from the kingdom, Mark 12:34. The young man wasn't in the kingdom, but very close, and so, we could say, he was near to salvation and yet lost.
What will it be like if you don't enter the kingdom? How can we explain when we are to stand before the judge and be divided between the sheep and the goats? What is going to be like for those who aren't Christians today, who are close to the kingdom but won't go in?

To hear the songs of the righteous and the others going off wailing! To know the brightness of His glory and yet to go into utter darkness! To be with Him in heaven, and for some to go to hell! To have living water at your feet and for some to be parched! To see the bread and yet be dying of hunger!

CHAPTER 127

INTRODUCTION

This psalm was written by Solomon and is a wisdom psalm which focuses on the joy which comes in our daily lives. The joy mentioned in this psalm is the joy which is the guarantee of a heritage through our children.

HEADING

'A song of ascents. Of Solomon.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a song of ascents, written by Solomon. Psalms 120-134 all have the same heading. Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Several theories of why this group of psalms is so named are available. The Jewish explanation is that there were fifteen steps from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Men in the Temple, and that each of these psalms was sung in succession on those steps. Another view is that these songs were sung in successive phases of the Jews' return from captivity. Apparently, the true explanation is that these psalms were written for the pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for the great annual feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. 'It seems most probable that these songs form a collection for the use of pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts.'

'Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves. Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior, are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.' Psalm 127:1-5

Solomon begins by reminding us that unless the LORD builds, the builders' labour is in vain, Psalm 127:1. In other words, without the LORD and His blessings, any labour in building is a waste of time.
A strong house and guards who watch over the city are no use unless the LORD Himself watches over the city, Psalm 127:1. These verses speak of security, and so, without the LORD guarding the city, Israel would have no security.
Solomon says that if we rise early and stay up late to toil in labour to produce food to eat, it's in vain, Psalm 127:2 / Proverbs 6:6-11. It's in vain because God isn't involved; it's being self-reliant.
However, those who trust in God and not in themselves are blessed with sleep, Psalm 127:2. In other words, they know that God is looking after them, Matthew 6:25-34, and they know that God is watching over them, so they can sleep easily, 2 Samuel 12:25.
Solomon recognises that children are a blessing from God; he recognises that children who are born to a young father are his strength when he is old, Psalm 127:3.
Just as arrows are used in defence, the children will take care of their aged parents and assume the responsibility of protecting them in their old age, Psalm 127:4.
Children are a blessing from God, and there is a great blessing, Psalm 1:1, and happiness to be found in having 'a quiver full of them', Psalm 127:5, that is, having multiple children.
Those children won't be put to shame, Psalm 127:5 / Job 6:20, when they contend with their opponents in court, Psalm 127:5. The KJV refers to the 'gate'. In other words, the children would be given a place of prominence within the community.
Since the elders assembled at the city gates to make decisions, Deuteronomy 21:19 / Ruth 4:1-11, the children would stand for their parents against all who would falsely accuse them.

CONCLUSION

Solomon spoke about the blessings of having children, and to the Jews, having no children was a sign of being cursed by God; after all, God did command Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, Genesis 1:28.
Is a woman cursed by God because she can't have or doesn't have any children? There are many people who believe so; however, when we take a moment to read the Scriptures, we soon come to a different conclusion.

There are many examples of women in the Scriptures who were barren and couldn't have children without God's intervention, such as Sarah, Genesis 11:30; Rebecca, Genesis 25:21; Rachel, Genesis 29:31; Hannah, 1 Samuel 1:6; Samson's mother, Judges 13:2, and Elizabeth, Luke 1:7. All these women were barren but later went on to conceive with God's help.
We also know of other godly women mentioned in the Scriptures who were barren all their lives, such as Michal, 2 Samuel 6:23. There are no Scriptures to suggest that women like Dinah, Miriam, and Deborah had children, which may suggest that they, too, may have been barren.
These women may have been barren all their lives and had no children, but that didn't mean they were cursed, Isaiah 56:3-5. God used each of them and blessed each of them despite having no children, Luke 23:29.

CHAPTER 128

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is similar to the previous psalm, Psalm 127. Some suggest it's following on from the previous psalm because it speaks of the blessings which come from fearing the LORD, and one of those blessings is having children, who then go on to have children of their own.

HEADING

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'Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in obedience to him. You will eat the fruit of your labour; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Yes, this will be the blessing for the man who fears the LORD. May the LORD bless you from Zion; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you live to see your children's children—peace be on Israel.' Psalm 128:1-6

The psalmist begins by reminding us that those who fear the LORD will be blessed by Him, Psalm 128:1. Those who totally respect God will be blessed by Him because they are obedient to Him, Psalm 128:1 / Psalm 111:10 / Job 28:28 / Proverbs 1:7 / Proverbs 9:10 / Ecclesiastes 12:13.

One of the blessings of being obedient to God is seen in the success of a person's farming efforts, Psalm 128:2 / Genesis 3:17-19. They will be blessed with much fruit and prosperity for their hard labour efforts, Psalm 128:12 / Isaiah 3:10.

Another blessing from being obedient to God is seen in that their wives will be like a fruitful vine, Psalm 128:3 / Song of Songs 7:8-13 / Judges 9:13. In other words, they will have many children, Genesis 15:5 / Genesis 22:17 / Genesis 32:12.

Their children will be like olive shoots around their table, Psalm 128:3, that is, the children will be a rich blessing to their parents. The psalmist reminds us that these are the blessings which come from fearing and being obedient to the LORD, Psalm 128:4.

They ask the LORD to bless His people out of Zion, and they ask that God's people see prosperity in Jerusalem all the days of their lives, Psalm 128:5. In other words, the psalmist recognises that God will be good to His people if they continue to fear Him and be obedient to Him.

Another blessing from fearing the LORD and being obedient to Him is seen in how the psalmist asks that the parents live long enough to enjoy the blessings which come from having grandchildren, Psalm 128:6.

The final blessing which comes from fearing and being obedient to God is peace, Psalm 128:6. This isn't only peace for the individual but peace within the whole nation, Psalm 128:6 / Psalm 125:5.

CONCLUSION

Obedience is a word that a lot of people don't like; however, as we saw in this psalm, obedience comes with a whole host of blessings. It's clear that one of the many ways we worship and glorify God is through our obedience to Him.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us that if we are obedient to God, then He will take care of our future, Isaiah 1:19. We may not see the benefits of obedience just as a child doesn't see the benefits from being obedient to their parents. Here are three things to put into practice to help us obey better.

1. Reflect upon the importance of obedience.

When you read the Scriptures, notice how over and over again, it is stressed that obedience is important to God, 1 Samuel 15:22 / Luke 6:46.

2. Think about God's promises in relation to obedience.

God wants to bless us with so much if we are obedient to Him, Joshua 1:8.
3. Our obedience to Him demonstrates our love for Him and others.

If we want to really know the heart of God, we cannot ignore His desire for us to be obedient to Him, John 14:15 / 1 John 5:2-3.

CHAPTER 129

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist appears to be speaking on behalf of the nation of Israel. They speak of the oppression Israel faced, which God allowed them to face because of their disobedience to God; however, the good news is that God eventually delivered them from the hands of their enemy.

HEADING

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'They have greatly oppressed me from my youth," let Israel say; "they have greatly oppressed me from my youth, but they have not gained the victory over me. Ploughmen have ploughed my back and made their furrows long. But the LORD is righteous; he has cut me free from the cords of the wicked." May all who hate Zion be turned back in shame. May they be like grass on the roof, which withers before it can grow; a reaper cannot fill his hands with it, nor one who gathers fill his arms. May those who pass by not say to them, "The blessing of the LORD be on you; we bless you in the name of the LORD." Psalm 129:1-8

The psalmist begins by telling us that they, that is, Israel, were greatly oppressed from their youth, Psalm 129:1. This refers to the time when Israel was in Egypt, Jeremiah 2:2 / Ezekiel 23:3 / Hosea 2:15. From the time Israel was a young nation, oppression was brought on the people because of their rebellious apostasy.
The psalmist now encourages all of Israel to say they have greatly oppressed me from my youth, but the good news is their enemies didn't gain a victory over Israel, Psalm 129:2. In other words, God didn't allow them to go out of existence.
The psalmist uses a metaphor to describe the oppression they faced, 'ploughmen have ploughed my back and made their furrows long', Psalm 129:3. This is a description of the suffering and the domination they faced, Exodus 35:33 / Jeremiah 17:1 / Isaiah 53:5.
The good news is that the righteous LORD, the one who keeps His promises, cut the cords of bondage, Psalm 129:4, and they were delivered from their enemies, Jeremiah 30:8.
The psalmist requests that all who hate Zion be shamed and forced to turn back, Psalm 129:5, and they request that they become like grass that would spring up on the roof of a house but quickly dries up when scorched by the sun before it gets a chance to grow, Psalm 129:6 / Isaiah 37:27.
In other words, they are asking that their enemies be short-lived. They want their enemies to become like grass, which is useless for the reaper and useless for those who gather grain.

The psalmist doesn't want Israel's enemies to receive the blessed greeting when they pass by, Psalm 129:7. They didn't want them to say the words which Boaz said to his harvesters, 'the LORD be with you!' and they answered, "The LORD bless you!" Psalm 129:8 / Ruth 2:4.
In other words, the psalmist doesn't want anyone who hates Zion, that is, Jerusalem and God's people, to benefit from any of the blessings which God showed His city and people.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist ended by speaking about the blessed greeting which was said when the Jews met each other. Today, as Christians, we don't really greet one another with the words, 'the LORD be with you!' and if we do, we don't hear the words, 'the LORD bless you!' in return, Ruth 2:4.
In most places, we don't even greet one another with a holy kiss, Romans 16:16 / 1 Corinthians 16:20 / 2 Corinthians 13:12 / 1 Thessalonians 5:26 / 1 Peter 5:14. But what is it that these verses teach?
1. We must remember that throughout Bible times this was the customary, familiar mode of greeting, Genesis 27:27 / Genesis 31:28.
2. Outside of the family relationship, it was the way in which men greeted men and women greeted women, 1 Samuel 10:1 / 1 Samuel 20:41 / 2 Samuel 19:39 / Ruth 1:9.
3. But this ancient, familiar custom could hold hidden dangers, as we see in the account of the treachery of Joab, David's uncle, 2 Samuel 20:9.
4. The kiss was also a familiar mode of greeting in New Testament times, Matthew 26:48-49 / Luke 15:20 / Luke 22:48.
5. Furthermore, this was the expected mode of greeting in the days of Jesus, Luke 7:44-45.
6. In those days, it was not the custom to shake hands in greeting or parting; it would have been better for Amasa if they had! Instead, the use of the kiss followed rules which had been set by custom.

7. The holy kiss and the church.

The kiss was given during the service, it was before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and it was intended to show that those who met at the Lord's Table met in harmony and love.

Today, we normally 'greet each other with a warm handshake' and just as it takes two to kiss, it takes two to be friendly. Fellowship is not a one-way street. As congregations, we need to make a greater effort to show ourselves interested in people. When visitors and strangers attend our services, what do we do?

Do we sit or stand around speaking to our special friends? Or do we realise that, as members of the Lord's Body, it is both our responsibility and privilege to extend a welcoming hand to someone who may be finding it both unfamiliar and strange to be in our service?

I am thankful that there are many friendly people in our congregations, but if it were to be left to others, visitors may well form a poor opinion of us! Be friendly! Make an effort. Just remember that if at some time, someone had not made an effort to speak to you, you probably would not be in the church today.

CHAPTER 130

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist appears to be deeply repentant of the sins they've committed in their lives, and so, they plead with the God of all grace to forgive them.

HEADING

'A song of ascents.'

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Jerusalem for the great annual feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. 'It seems most probable that these songs form a collection for the use of pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts.'

'Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.' Psalm 130:1-8

The psalmist begins by crying out to the LORD from the depths of their despair, Psalm 130:1 / Psalm 69:2 / Psalm 69:14. Notice they cry out to the LORD, that is, Yahweh, and ask the Lord, that is, Adonia, to hear their voice, Psalm 130:1-2 / Psalm 5:1.

They ask that the Lord's ears be attentive to their cry for mercy, Psalm 130:2. They acknowledge that if the LORD, Psalm 130:3, that is, Yahweh, kept a record of every sin people commit, Psalm 130:3. Without grace and forgiveness, no man could be saved, Romans 3:9-10 / Romans 6:23.

They acknowledge that without God's grace and mercy, no one could stand before the Lord, Psalm 130:3, that is, Adonia, Psalm 1:5 / Romans 14:4. In other words, they want the Lord to hear their cry requesting God's forgiveness, Psalm 130:4.

The psalmist obviously knows God very well, hence why they declare that with God there is forgiveness, Psalm 130:4. There is nowhere else the psalmist can turn to except God for forgiveness.

They want to be forgiven so that they can revere God and serve Him, Psalm 130:4, and so, for the psalmist to revere God, they first must obey Him and ask for forgiveness, 1 John 1:7.

The psalmist is happy to wait for the LORD, with their whole being, Psalm 130:5. They are happy to trust God's word and put their hope in it, Psalm 130:5. In other words, while they are waiting, they are happy to remind themselves of God's great promises of forgiveness which God has revealed in His word. God has promised His forgiveness, and so, we have hope for forgiveness because He has stated that He will remember our sins no more, Hebrews 10:16-17.

Notice again they are waiting upon the LORD, Psalm 130:5, that is, Yahweh and the Lord, Psalm 130:6, that is, Adonia. The psalmist was confident in the forgiveness of God, and they are confident in the mercy of God; they are more confident in receiving God's mercy than the watchman who had confidence that the sun would rise, Psalm 130:6.

If the LORD is gracious enough to forgive the psalmist of their sins, then the LORD is more than willing to forgive those in Israel who also have a repentant heart, Psalm 130:7.

The psalmist encourages the nation of Israel to put their hope in the LORD because with the LORD, there is unfailing love and full redemption, Psalm 130:7 / Isaiah 55:7. They called on all of Israel to come to the Lord for forgiveness, Psalm 130:7-8.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist pleaded with God for forgiveness, and they encouraged the nation of Israel to do the same. Before the cross, all those who lived under the law of Moses looked forward to the cross, the coming of the Head Crusher, the seed of the woman, Genesis 3:15, that is, Jesus, the Messiah.

However, after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ on the cross, everyone now looks back to the cross for forgiveness. We can receive forgiveness today; however, there are certain conditions which must be met.

We must hear God's Word, Romans 10:17, believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, John 3:36, confess His name before men, Romans 10:9-10, repent of whatever sin is in our lives, Luke 13:3, and be baptised for the forgiveness of our sins, Mark 16:16.

On the day of Pentecost, after the Jews had been reminded by Peter that they had crucified Jesus, Peter tells them that they need to be baptised for the forgiveness of their sins, Acts 2:37-38. We read that baptism gives us a clear conscience, 1 Peter 3:21; that's something the old sacrificial system couldn't give, Hebrews 9:9-10.

Even after a person has been baptised for the forgiveness of their sins, they will sin again at some point. Another condition for forgiveness is found in confessing our sins to God, 1 John 1:9. Forgiveness is also conditional upon our willingness to forgive others, Matthew 6:15 / Ephesians 4:32 / Colossians 3:13.

CHAPTER 131

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David totally humbles himself because he knows he is ignorant when it comes to knowledge; his pride quickly disappears when he acknowledges that it's only God who knows everything. This suggests that the historical setting for this psalm was sometime early in the reign of David.

HEADING

'A song of ascents. Of David.'

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The heading tells us this is a song of ascents, written by David. Psalms 120-134 all have the same heading. Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Several theories of why this group of psalms is so named are available. The Jewish explanation is that there were fifteen steps from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Men in the Temple, and that each of these psalms was sung in succession on those steps. Another view is that these songs were sung in successive phases of the Jews' return from captivity. Apparently, the true explanation is that these psalms were written for the pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for the great annual feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. 'It seems most probable that these songs form a collection for the use of pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts.'

‘My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child, I am content. Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.’ Psalm 131:1-3

David begins by saying to the LORD, that his heart is not proud, Psalm 131:1. In other words, he acknowledges that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble, Proverbs 3:34 / James 4:6 / 1 Peter 5:5.
He says to the LORD that his eyes are not haughty, Psalm 131:1, that is, he didn’t look down arrogantly upon people, thinking he was better than them, Philippians 2:4.
David says that he didn’t concern himself with great matters or things too wonderful for him, Psalm 131:1. In other words, he didn’t want to become more than what God had planned for him. He was content with the position God had put him in, and he was content to wait on the Lord to lift him up in His time, Luke 14:8-11 / Philippians 3:12-14.
These great matters and wonderful things can also be speaking about David’s intellect, that is, he may have thought that he knows more than God Himself, Deuteronomy 29:29 / Job 40:1-5 / Job 42:1-6.
Because David refused to let his pride rule him, he chose to quiet himself and, as a result, he found himself being calm, Psalm 131:2 / Isaiah 38:13. In other words, he found contentment in who he was and what he had.
Because David refused to let his pride rule him, he found himself being like a weaned child, Psalm 131:2, that is, like a child who draws close to their mother for love and comfort, he wants to draw closer to God to be embraced in His love and comfort, Isaiah 28:9 / Isaiah 49:15 / Isaiah 66:13. He wants to be closer to God because, with God, he will be content.
David ends by encouraging all of Israel to put their hope in the LORD, both now and forever, Psalm 131:3 / Luke 2:47, because it’s only in the LORD that they can find real contentment.

CONCLUSION

David speaks about being content with who God made him and what God had given him. If I could pick a song that could sum up our culture in my lifetime, I would pick a song called ‘I can’t get no satisfaction’.

I remember that song when I was a kid, and it’s just as true today, that people are running around saying, ‘I just can’t be content, I can’t get no satisfaction’. We’re bombarded every day from the moment we turn on our radios in the morning to the moment we turn off that TV set at night.

Bombarded by propaganda that you’re never really going to be happy until you move into this neighbourhood, or until you buy that car, until you wear this suit, until you put this perfume on, until your kids go to this school and wear those clothes and get into this college.

The apostle Paul knew exactly what it meant to be content; he said, ‘I’ve learned the secret of being happy at any time and anything that happens,’ Philippians 4:12. Paul learned three things which made him content in any situation.
1. Paul learned to be satisfied with his blessings, Philippians 4:11-12 / Philippians 4:19 / 1 Timothy 6:6-8.
2. Paul learned to be sustained by God’s strength, Philippians 4:13 / 2 Corinthians 12:9.
3. Paul learned to surrender to God’s will, Philippians 1:20-21 / Hebrews 13:8.

CHAPTER 132

INTRODUCTION

This psalm appears to be speaking of a time in which the Davidic throne was still standing, and when the sacred ark of the covenant was not yet irrecoverably lost. The religious ceremonies of Israel were joined with the civil laws that governed the people. This psalm focuses on the faith and government of the people.

Although the author is unknown, many commentators attribute the psalm to David as the writer or Solomon, as Psalm 132:8-10 is quoted in 2 Chronicles 6:41-42. The coming of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem is referred to in Psalm 132:6-9.
Psalm 24 and Psalm 68 also refer to this event, which is described more fully in 1 Chronicles 15-16. This psalm is quoted twice in the New Testament: Psalm 132:5 / Acts 7:46 / Psalm 132:11 / Acts 2:30.

HEADING

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'LORD, remember David and all his self-denial. He swore an oath to the LORD, he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob: "I will not enter my house or go to my bed, I will allow no sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, till I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob." We heard it in Ephrathah, we came upon it in the fields of Jaar: "Let us go to his dwelling place, let us worship at his footstool, saying.' Psalm 132:1-7

The psalmist begins by asking the LORD to remember David and his self-denial, Psalm 132:1. It was David who desired to build a temple for the Lord in Jerusalem, 1 Chronicles 28:1-6.
These self-denials were David's struggles to escape the killing hand of Saul. These afflictions included his efforts to accomplish his desire to find a permanent place for the ark of the covenant, 1 Kings 5:3 / 1 Chronicles 22:8.
Although there is no evidence of an oath made by David to the LORD in 2 Samuel 7, the heart behind it was recorded, Psalm 132:2. The reference to 'the Mighty One of Jacob', Psalm 132:2, speaks of how God guided, protected and blessed Jacob, Genesis 49:24 / Isaiah 41:16.

David said in his oath and vow that he wouldn't enter his house, go to bed or sleep, Psalm 132:3-4, which are figures of speech, Proverbs 6:4. He wouldn't do any of these things until he found a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob, Psalm 132:5 / Genesis 49:24 / 1 Chronicles 16:43 / Isaiah 41:16. In other words, David was absolutely determined to deny himself of many things until the work was done.
We must remember that God doesn't need a place to live. The ark of the covenant came to symbolise the presence of God, and so, David wanted to permanently locate the ark in a permanent structure in Jerusalem.

We must also remember that God originally intended that the ark be housed in the tabernacle, so it could be easily moved annually throughout the territories of Israel, 2 Samuel 6:1-19 / 2 Samuel 7:1-29.
When Israel heard about it, that is, they knew the ark was lost, but now, under David's guidance, they found it again, 1 Chronicles 13:3. They heard about it in Ephratah, Psalm 132:6, which is probably the region of Kirjath-Jearim where the ark was located for many years before it was moved to Jerusalem, 1 Samuel 7:1-2.
They came upon it in the fields of Jaar, Psalm 132:6 / 1 Samuel 7:1 / 1 Chronicles 13:5. After the ark was found, they couldn't wait to go to God's dwelling place, Psalm 132:7, that is, the tabernacle, to worship the LORD, at his footstool, Psalm 132:7. The high priest would go once a year into the holy of holies and bow before the ark, and the presence of God was symbolised to be above the ark, Psalm 99:5.

'Arise, LORD, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. May your priests be clothed with your righteousness; may your faithful people sing for joy.'" For the sake of your servant David, do not reject your anointed one. The LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath he will not revoke: "One of your own descendants I will place on your throne. If your sons keep my covenant and the statutes I teach them, then their sons will sit on your throne for ever and ever." Psalm 132:8-12

When they were on their way to worship, they asked the LORD to arise, Psalm 132:8 / Numbers 10:35, and come to His resting place, Psalm 132:8. The ark was a sign of God's might, Psalm 132:8 / 2 Chronicles 6:41-42.
The priests remembered their roles and were clothed with God's righteousness, and as a result, God's people would sing songs of joy, Psalm 132:9 / Psalm 35:26 / Psalm 65:13 / Psalm 93:1 / Psalm 104:1 / Isaiah 61:10 / 1 Peter 5:5.
The psalmist asks the LORD not to reject David, His servant and anointed one, Psalm 132:10. This was something which God had already promised He wouldn't do, Psalm 132:11 / 2 Samuel 7:14-16. The psalmist is asking God to fulfil His promises to David, and the fulfilment of this was Jesus, the Messiah, God's anointed, Matthew 1:1 / Acts 2:30.
The oath which the LORD made concerning David is found in 2 Samuel 7:5-16, and so the psalmist was confident that God wouldn't revoke His promise concerning one of David's descendants being placed on the throne, Psalm 132:11 / Acts 2:30.
The terms and conditions of the covenant are seen in the word 'if', that is, if David's sons keep God's covenant and statutes, then their sons will sit on David's throne forever, Psalm 132:12 / 2 Samuel 7:12-16 / Psalm 89:3-4 / Psalm 89:30-37 / Luke 1:31-33.

'For the LORD has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling, saying, "This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it. I will bless her with abundant provisions; her poor I will satisfy with food. I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her faithful people will ever sing for joy. "Here I will make a horn grow for David and set up a lamp for my anointed one. I will clothe his enemies with shame, but his head will be adorned with a radiant crown." Psalm 132:13-18

The psalmist reminds Israel that it was God who chose Zion, Psalm 132:13, that is, Jerusalem, for His dwelling place, Psalm 132:13. We must remember that it was actually David who chose Jerusalem for the central government of Israel, but God allowed David's choice, and so, credit is given to God for making the choice.
When the ark finally arrived in Jerusalem, this was to be God's resting place forever, it would be there where God would sit on His throne, Psalm 132:14. God says, He would bless Jerusalem and Israel with abundant material

provisions, Psalm 132:15 / Genesis 25:28 / Deuteronomy 7:13 / Deuteronomy 28:8-12 / Job 38:41. He also says that He will meet the needs of the poor who needed food, Psalm 132:15.

Earlier, the psalmist says that God's priests would be clothed with righteousness, Psalm 132:9, and here they tell us that the priests will be clothed with salvation, Psalm 132:16 / 2 Chronicles 6:41. As a result, God's faithful people will sing songs of joy, Psalm 132:16 / 2 Chronicles 6:41.

Jerusalem was going to be the place where God would make a horn grow for David, Psalm 132:17. That is, when God anointed David, he was anointed with authority, and so, God promised that David's descendants would grow strong, Psalm 75:4 / Psalm 89:17 / Psalm 89:24 / Psalm 92:10 / Psalm 112:9 / Daniel 7:8 / Daniel 8:5.

Jerusalem was the place where God would set up a lamp for His anointed one, Psalm 132:17, that is, a light which would continually shine in the lineage of David, 1 Kings 11:36 / 1 Kings 15:4. This was completely fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah, the Lord's anointed one, Luke 1:69.

While the priests are clothed with righteousness and salvation, God's enemies will be clothed with shame, Psalm 132:18, because they refused to acknowledge God's ultimate anointed one, Jesus, who is adorned with a radiant crown, Psalm 132:18 / Psalms 29:10.

CONCLUSION

It has been said that there are more than three hundred distinct prophecies in the Old Testament relating to the Messiah. The Jews in the time of Christ were earnestly looking for this deliverer. When the apostles preached Christ to the Jews, they proved by the prophecies that he was the Messiah or 'anointed one.'

The Old Testament clearly foretells both the tribe and family from which the Messiah was to come. Of his tribe it is prophesied, 'The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his,' Genesis 49:10.

The sceptre is the emblem of kingly authority, and the fulfilment is found in Hebrews 7:14. Christ was to come from the family of Jesse, the father of David and was to be a descendant of King David himself, Psalm 89:3-4 / Isaiah 11:1. Paul shows that this is fulfilled in Christ when he says of David, 'From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Saviour Jesus, as he promised,' Acts 13:23.

What is the significance of the amazing correspondence between these prophecies and their fulfilment?

1. They prove the inspiration of the Bible.

2. They show that the New Testament cannot be completely understood without a knowledge of the Old Testament.

3. They prove that Jesus is the Christ and that as the Christ, His commands must be obeyed, and His promises may be relied upon.

CHAPTER 133

INTRODUCTION

In the psalm, David speaks about the importance of unity when the tribes of Israel came together to celebrate the different national feasts.

HEADING

'A song of ascents. Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a song of ascents, written by David. Psalms 120-134 all have the same heading. Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Several theories of why this group of psalms is so named are available. The Jewish explanation is that there were fifteen steps from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Men in the Temple, and that each of these psalms was sung in succession on those steps. Another view is that these songs were sung in successive phases of the Jews' return from captivity. Apparently, the true explanation is that these psalms were written for the pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for the great annual feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. 'It seems most probable that these songs form a collection for the use of pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts.'

> 'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there, the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.' Psalm 133:1-3

David begins by declaring how good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity, Psalm 133:1 / Genesis 49:15 / 2 Samuel 1:26 / Proverbs 15:26. There is power and strength in unity; when we're united as a people, we are united with God, John 17:20-23 / Ephesians 1:9-10.
That unity with God brings joy to us all, Revelation 18:14, and helps us stay at peace with all those around us, Romans 12:18 / Matthew 23:8 / John 17:21. For unity to remain, we must have the desire to spend time together, and when we love one another, then unity will prevail, John 13:34-35.
Unity is very precious, like precious oils being poured on our heads, Psalm 133:2 / Luke 7:46 / Exodus 29:7. The oil being poured on a guest's head would run down their beard and onto their garments. This was very refreshing for the one receiving the oil, which also gave them a pleasant aroma, Isaiah 61:3.
David mentions the oil running down Aaron's beard, which then flowed on the collar of his robes, Psalm 133:2. This is a reference to the time when Aaron was anointed as the high priest of Israel, Exodus 30:22-30.
All of these references to the oil speak of the preciousness and value of unity among God's people. The fact that the oil ran down the beard of Arron and then onto his collar tells us this wasn't just a sprinkling of oil; it flowed and therefore speaks of the abundant blessings which unity provides for God's people.

David now speaks of unity in terms of the dew falling from Hermon into Mount Zion, Psalm 133:3. The mountain regions of Mount Hermon in northern Palestine were at a high altitude, and there would be dew on the mountains in the summer, and frost in the winter. In other words, unity is refreshing when God's people are united, their lives thrive, and they are healthy, Genesis 27:28 / Hosea 14:5.

The dew fell on Mount Zion, Psalm 133:3, that is, God's blessing would come upon Jerusalem, and their unity would be shown to everyone, and everyone would enjoy the blessings which come from being united, Proverbs 19:12 / Isaiah 18:4 / Hosea 14:5 / Micah 5:7.

David says from Jerusalem the LORD bestows his blessings, even life forevermore, Psalm 133:3. In other words, unity comes from the LORD and is commanded by the LORD, John 17:20-23 / Ephesians 1:9-10 / Romans 12:18. There is security in national unity and being united to each other and to God truly does bring life.

CONCLUSION

David speaks about the preciousness of unity among God's people, but how can the individual Christian help to keep this unity?

1. By being 'filled with the Spirit,' Ephesians 5:18.

The filling of the Spirit is not a one-time event. The tense of the words should be understood as saying, 'keep on being filled by or with the Spirit'. Remember the first time the New Testament records the coming of the Holy Spirit, Pentecost.

There was a tremendous sound, which filled the house and was heard outside the house, so that the people congregated in the house to find out what was happening.

The apostles emerged from the house and must have made their way to the temple, probably to the 'Court of the Gentiles', which would be large enough to accommodate the size of the crowd which Acts 2 indicates came together. The crowd heard the apostles, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming the wonderful deeds of God. And they could not understand what was happening. We are told that they were 'amazed'. 'Amazement' is the loss of the ability to collect one's thoughts.

They didn't understand what was happening. They were 'perplexed'. When their minds began to function, they recognised that they could find no explanation for what was happening. They 'criticised'. The only thing they could find to say was, 'These men are full of new wine'. They are drunk! Acts 2:1-12.

And what was Peter's response? Not in the way you think, they're drunk! It is only nine o'clock in the morning! Yes! They are drunk! But not with the spirit you are thinking about. This is what the prophet Joel spoke about. They are 'filled with the Spirit of God,' Acts 2:4.

Have we ever been accused of being drunk with our faith? The world today sees very little in the church that amazes it, perplexes it, or moves it to criticism. The world is not at all 'critical' of the church, because the church is not disturbing it!

If it thinks about the church at all, it sees it as something like a prehistoric, out-of-date, harmless old body. Gone are the days when a Spirit-filled church so worried the world that people said of the Christians, 'these men have turned the world upside down and now they have come here also, Acts 17:6.

2. By maintaining the unity of the Spirit, Ephesians 4:3.

Please note we're not commanded to create unity but maintain it, which suggests that unity should already exist among God's people. We are to 'make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit', and how do we do this, 'through the bond of peace'. When the Holy Spirit rules in a congregation, there is unity and peace, and so, this unity must be maintained.

CHAPTER 134

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist speaks of the blessing which was given to the priests as they began their priestly duties within the temple. As many pilgrims came to offer their sacrifices at the temple, the priests would encourage each other to carry out their duties.

HEADING

'A song of ascents.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this is a song of ascents. Psalms 120-134 all have the same heading. This is the last of the fifteen psalms relating to songs of ascents
Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Several theories of why this group of psalms is so named are available. The Jewish explanation is that there were fifteen steps from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Men in the Temple, and that each of these psalms was sung in succession on those steps. Another view is that these songs were sung in successive phases of the Jews' return from captivity. Apparently, the true explanation is that these psalms were written for the pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for the great annual feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. 'It seems most probable that these songs form a collection for the use of pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts.'

'Praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD who minister by night in the house of the LORD. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD. May the LORD bless you from Zion, he who is the Maker of heaven and earth.' Psalm 134:1-3

The psalmist begins by encouraging all the priests to praise the LORD, as they minister in the temple by night, Psalm 134:1. Some translations add the word 'stand', Psalm 135:2 / Deuteronomy 10:8. The idea is that those who stood at night would continue to praise the LORD, while others were sleeping, Exodus 27:21 / Leviticus 8:35 / 1 Samuel 3:3. We must remember that the priests served God in the temple both day and day, Psalm 134:1 / 1 Chronicles 9:33 / Revelation 7:15. The priest's work was in the sanctuary, and so, they lifted up their hands, Psalm 134:2, as an outward expression of reverence, holiness and praise directed toward God, Psalm 134:2 / Psalm 28:2 / Psalm 141:2 / Lamentations 2:19 / 1 Timothy 2:8.

The LORD was called upon to bless those who gave their service at the house of God, and since Zion, that is, Jerusalem, which symbolised the presence of God, it was out of Jerusalem that the blessing of God would go, Psalm 134:3 / Isaiah 2:1-4. The blessing would come from the LORD Himself, who is the Maker of heaven and earth, Psalm 134:3 / Genesis 1-2.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist reminds us of this joyous time when the priests worked day and night in the temple serving the LORD, Psalm 134:1. As Christians, it's helpful to remember that we weren't just called to be saved but also called to serve the LORD as His priests, 1 Peter 2:4-5.

1. We are to serve as His priests, 1 Peter 2:9.
2. We are to present our bodies as living sacrifices, Romans 12:1.
3. We are to offer the sacrifice of a living faith, Philippians 2:5-8.
4. We are offering the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, Hebrews 13:15.
5. We are the fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable to God, 2 Corinthians 2:15.

CHAPTER 135

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist simply encourages everyone to praise God because of His creative power. When the psalmist compares the LORD with those who make and worship idols, there is no comparison; God is far greater.

HEADING

'An exhortation to praise God for his mercy'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

Although the NIV offers no heading, the KJV tells us that this psalm was used to encourage God's people to praise God for His mercy.

'Praise the LORD. Praise the name of the LORD; praise him, you servants of the LORD, you who minister in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God. Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant. For the LORD has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his treasured possession. I know that the LORD is great, that our Lord is greater than all gods. The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths. He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.' Psalm 135:1-7

The psalmist begins by encouraging everyone to praise the LORD and to praise His Name, Psalm 135:1. They encourage the priests, God's servants, those who serve and minister the LORD in His house, Psalm 135:2, that is, the temple, Psalm 134:1, and in the courts of God's house, Psalm 135:2 / 2 Chronicles 4:9 / Matthew 21:12.
Those who served in the temple were to lift their voices in praise to God, Psalm 135:3. They proclaimed God's goodness, Psalm 135:3 / Psalm 73:1 / Psalm 143:10 / Mark 10:18, and sang praises to God's Name, which they found pleasant, Psalm 135:3. God's Name is gracious, and so, brings peace of mind to those who respond to His existence.
The LORD chose Jacob, Psalm 135:4, that is, Israel, to be His own treasured possession, Psalm 135:4. In other words, Israel was a chosen people of God, and so, God's prized possession among the nations, Exodus 19:5 / Deuteronomy 7:7-8 / Deuteronomy 32:9 / 1 Kings 8:53. They were chosen with the purpose of bringing Jesus, the Messiah into the world, Genesis 12:3 / Genesis 18:18 / Genesis 22:18 / Genesis 26:4.
The psalmist declares that the LORD, Psalm 135:5, that is, Yahweh, the Lord, Psalm 135:5, that is, Adonai, is greater than any manmade idol, Psalm 135:5. These 'gods' obviously didn't exist but came from the imagination of men.
The LORD's power is seen in that He can do whatever He pleases in the heavens, earth, and the seas, Psalm 135:6. In other words, nothing is too great for Him.
The LORD has the power to make the clouds rise from the end of the earth, Psalm 135:7 / Job 26:8 / Job 38:25-28. He has the power to send lightning with the rain, Psalm 135:7 / Job 28:26, and the power to control the wind, Psalm 135:7 / Job 38:22. In other words, the LORD should be praised because His power is clearly seen in creation, Psalm 8 / Romans 1:20.

'He struck down the firstborn of Egypt, the firstborn of people and animals. He sent his signs and wonders into your midst, Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants. He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings—Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan, and all the kings of Canaan—and he gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to his people Israel.' Psalm 135:8-12

The psalmist now tells us that God's power was also seen when He delivered Israel from Egypt. It was God Himself who struck down the firstborn of the people and the animals, Psalm 135:8 / Exodus 11:5. It was God who sent signs and wonders to Egypt, Psalm 135:9, that is, Pharaoh and his servants witnessed God's power in the plagues He sent, Psalm 105:27-36.
After being delivered from Egypt, the LORD's power was seen in the way He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings, Psalm 135:10. It was Sihon, king of the Amorites and Og, king of Canaan, who attacked God's people, Psalm 135:11 / Numbers 21:21-35 / Deuteronomy 3:11.
Because the Amorites, and those of Bashan, rose up against God's chosen possession of people, the land of these nations were given to Israel, Psalm 135:12.

‘Your name, LORD, endures forever, your renown, LORD, through all generations. For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them. All you Israelites, praise the LORD; house of Aaron, praise the LORD; house of Levi, praise the LORD; you who fear him, praise the LORD. Praise be to the LORD from Zion, to him who dwells in Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.’ Psalm 135:13-21

Because of the greatness of the LORD, the psalmist declares that His Name will endure forever, and His reputation will go on from one generation to the next, Psalm 135:13.
It’s the LORD who will vindicate, Psalm 135:14, that is, judge His people, which is good news because this means that God is for them, not against them, Psalm 135:14 / Deuteronomy 32:36 / Romans 8:31.
After speaking about the greatness of the LORD, the psalmist now goes on to speak of the foolishness of idolatry. These manmade idols, which are made from silver and gold, Psalm 135:15, represented those who rebelled against God, Psalm 115:4-8.
The psalmist mocks the idols by telling us they have mouths but can’t speak, Psalm 135:16; they have eyes but can’t see, Psalm 135:16; they have ears but can’t hear, Psalm 135:17, and there is no breath in their mouths, Psalm 135:17. Because people worshipped these idols, the people became evil and turned from God, Isaiah 44:9, and as a result, God gave them over to the things they made up in their imagination, Romans 1:18-32. As in most cases of those who worship idols, they begin to behave as their ‘gods’, they do whatever they like, Psalm 135:18.
The psalmist now encourages Israel to praise the LORD, which includes the house of Aaron and the house of Levi, who were the spiritual leaders of God’s people and all who fear Him, Psalm 135:19-21.
The psalmist reminds Israel that God’s praise isn’t limited to Zion, Psalm 135:21, that is, Jerusalem, despite God dwelling there, Psalm 135:21. When compared to these manmade idols, it’s only God, because of His greatness and power, who is worthy to be praised. This is why the psalmist encourages everyone to praise the LORD, Psalm 135:21, with their final words, just like they began.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist declared that all should praise the LORD because of His greatness and power, and as Christians, we too have many reasons to praise the LORD.

1. We should praise the LORD because He commands us to praise Him, Psalm 150:6 / Psalm 100:4 / Hebrews 10:19.
2. We should praise the LORD because our praise encourages us to keep serving Him, Psalm 17:5-6.
3. We should praise the LORD because when we praise Him, we focus on Him and not our troubles, Isaiah 61:3.
4. We should praise the LORD because He and He alone is worthy of our praise, 1 Chronicles 16:34 / Revelation 5:12.
5. We should praise the LORD because He saved us, 1 Peter 1:3-5.

CHAPTER 136

INTRODUCTION

The structure of this psalm is different from all the other psalms, as each sentence ends with the words, 'His love endures forever'. These words are found throughout the Old Testament: 1 Chronicles 16:7 / 1 Chronicles 16:34 / 1 Chronicles 16:41 / 2 Chronicles 5:13 / 2 Chronicles 7:3 / 2 Chronicles 7:6 / 2 Chronicles 20:21 / Jeremiah 33:10-11 / Ezra 3:11.

The psalmist focuses on God's great love, and many commentators believe that the first line of each sentence would be read out loud by the priests, and the rest of the congregation would say the last words of the verse.

HEADING

'An exhortation to give thanks to God for particular mercies.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

Although the NIV offers no heading, the KJV tells us that this psalm was used to encourage God's people to give thanks for God's mercies.

'Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever. To him who alone does great wonders, His love endures forever. Who, by his understanding, made the heavens. His love endures forever. Who spread out the earth upon the waters, His love endures forever. Who made the great lights—His love endures forever. The sun to govern the day, His love endures forever. The moon and stars to govern the night; His love endures forever.' Psalm 136:1-9

The psalmist begins by declaring that everyone should give thanks to the LORD because of the goodness of God, Psalm 136:1 / 1 John 4:8 / 1 John 4:16. The congregation would then respond with the words, His love endures forever, Psalm 136:1.

These words are repeated throughout this psalm, twenty-six times, 1 Chronicles 16:37-41. The psalmist is telling us that God's love never ends; it continually goes on.

The psalmist gives us another reason why we should give thanks to God, and that is, that He is the God of gods and He is Lord of lords, Psalm 136:2-3. In other words, He is greater than any other god, He is greater than any other lord, Deuteronomy 10:17.

He is the true God, and God is the Master of those who are lords among men over their servants. Jesus assumed this position when He ascended to the right hand of God, 1 Timothy 6:15, and Jesus will maintain His position of King of kings and Lord of lords until He comes again, 1 Corinthians 15:26-28 / Revelation 19:16.

The psalmist tells us that only the One who miraculously created all things has the power to do great wonders, Psalm 136:4, that is, the miraculous. God's great wonders are seen in creation when he created the heavens and the earth, Psalm 136:5 / Genesis 1:1-2, and they speak of his never-ending love towards His people, Psalm 136:5 / Proverbs 3:19 / Proverbs 8:24-31.

The psalmist now speaks about God's great wonders as seen in the first four days of creation. They speak of how God spread out the earth above the waters, Psalm 136:6 / Genesis 1:1-19 / Psalm 24:2 / Acts 14:17. This great wonder also declares God's enduring love for His people, Psalm 136:6.

God's great love is also seen in the great lights, Psalm 136:7, He created in creation, Genesis 1:14. These include the sun, Psalm 136:8 / Genesis 1:16, the moon and stars, Psalm 136:9 / Genesis 1:16. All of creation tells us that God's love really does go on, it never ends, Psalm 136:7-9.

'To him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, His love endures forever. And brought Israel out from among them. His love endures forever. With a mighty hand and outstretched arm, His love endures forever. To him who divided the Red Sea asunder, His love endures forever. And brought Israel through the midst of it, His love endures forever. But swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea; His love endures forever. To him who led his people through the wilderness, His love endures forever. To him who struck down great kings, His love endures forever. And killed mighty kings—His love endures forever. Sihon, king of the Amorites, His love endures forever. And Og, king of Bashan—His love endures forever. And gave their land as an inheritance, His love endures forever. An inheritance to his servant Israel. His love endures forever. He remembered us in our low estate. His love endures forever. And freed us from our enemies. His love endures forever. He gives food to every creature. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.' Psalm 136:10-26

The psalmist now turns their attention to Egypt. It was God who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, Psalm 136:10, and it was God who brought them out of Egypt, Psalm 136:11 / Exodus 12:29 / Psalm 135:8-9.

But He brought them out of Egypt with a mighty and outstretched hand, Psalm 136:12, that is, He delivered them in a powerful way, Exodus 6:6 / Deuteronomy 4:34 / Deuteronomy 5:15 / Deuteronomy 7:19 / Deuteronomy 26:8 / Jeremiah 32:21, which again is a demonstration of God's enduring love, Psalm 136:10-12.

God not only delivered them out of Egypt, but when Pharaoh and his army chased them, Pharaoh and his army drowned in the Red Sea, Psalm 136:15 / Exodus 14:21-22 / Exodus 14:29 / Isaiah 33:9, which again is a demonstration of God's enduring love, Psalm 136:15.

It was God who led His people through the wilderness, Psalm 136:16 / Deuteronomy 29:5, and cared for their needs by providing food, Exodus 16:12-15, and water, Exodus 15:25, which again is a demonstration of God's enduring love, Psalm 136:16.

God's enduring love is seen when He struck down great kings and killed mighty kings, Psalm 136:17-18 / Deuteronomy 3:11-13 / Amos 2:9. These kings were Sihon, king of the Amorites, Psalm 136:19 / Numbers 21:23-24, and Og, king of Bashan, Psalm 136:20 / Numbers 21:33-35. As a result of defeating these kings, Israel was given their land as an inheritance, Psalm 136:21-22 / Psalm 135:10-12.

The psalmist tells us that God remembered Israel in their low estate, Psalm 136:23. In other words, the psalmist has now moved on from what God has done in the past and is looking at the present.

God's enduring love is seen in the fact that He still remembers Israel in their current condition and freed them from their enemies, Psalm 136:24. God's enduring love is seen in how He provides food not just for mankind, Psalm 104:27-28 / Psalm 115:16, but for every creature, Psalm 136:25 / Genesis 9:8-17.

The psalmist ends by encouraging Israel to give thanks to the God of heaven, Psalm 136:26, the God who exists in a heavenly realm, 2 Chronicles 36:23 / Ezra 1:2 / Ezra 5:11-12 / Daniel 2:18 / Daniel 2:44 / Daniel 5:23, the God whose love endures forever, Psalm 136:26.

CONCLUSION

Over and over again, the psalmist reminds us of how God's enduring love has been clearly demonstrated not only in creation but also by the way He protected and cared for the needs of His people.

When we turn our attention to those beautiful descriptions of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, we note that Paul reminds us that love not only bears all things, Galatians 6:2, but love also endures all things.
It's the love of God which helps us endure all the difficulties we face in life, 1 Peter 2:20-21 / Romans 5:5. It's God's enduring love for us which motivates us to share that love with others, Hebrews 12:7-11.

CHAPTER 137

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, the psalmist reflects upon the time when they were in Babylonian captivity. The psalmist speaks very strongly about what they would like God to do to their captors because of the suffering they were enduring.

HEADING

'The constancy of the Jews in captivity.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

Although the NIV offers no heading, the KJV tells us that this psalm speaks of the faithfulness of the Jews when they were in captivity.

'By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land? If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy. Remember, LORD, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. "Tear it down," they cried, "tear it down to its foundations!" Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is the one who repays you according to what you have done to us. Happy is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.'
Psalm 137:1-9

The psalmist begins by reflecting upon the time they were by the rivers of Babylon, Psalm 137:1, which would be the Euphrates and the Tigris. It was there that, in captivity, they sat and wept as they remembered Zion, Psalm 137:1, that is, Jerusalem. This must have been the first generation of captives because they remembered Jerusalem from which they had been taken.
The suffering they endured is seen in that they hung their harps on the poplars, Psalm 137:2, that is, willow trees, Isaiah 15:7; they had no reason to sing any joyful songs with their harps, Psalm 137:2 / Ezra 2:41.

They were being tormented by their captors to sing songs of joy about Jerusalem, Psalm 137:3, but because they had been taken captive, they didn't have any songs of joy to sing, Psalm 137:4. They couldn't sing joyful songs of Jerusalem whilst being captive in a foreign land, Psalm 137:4.

The psalmist declares they will not forget Jerusalem, and even pronounced a curse upon themselves if they did. The psalmist says if they forget Jerusalem, then their right hand would forget the skill of playing the harp, Psalm 137:5. If they forgot Jerusalem, their tongue would lose the ability to sing and speak, Psalm 137:6 / Ezekiel 3:26.

The psalmist now speaks to the LORD and asks Him to remember what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell, Psalm 137:7 / Jeremiah 12:6 / Jeremiah 25:14 / Lamentations 4:21-22 / Ezekiel 25:12.

It's important to remember that the Edomites didn't take part in the destruction of Jerusalem, but they did rejoice when it happened, Obadiah 10-16. In 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell to the Babylonian army of King Nebuchadnezzar, and they destroyed the temple and the city, tearing down the stone buildings to the ground, Psalm 137:7.

The psalmist now turns their attention to the future generation of Babylon. They tell the daughter of Babylon that they are doomed to destruction, Psalm 137:8. In other words, God was going to judge and destroy the Babylonian empire, Isaiah 1:8 / Isaiah 13:19-22.

The psalmist declares a blessing upon the one who brings judgment upon the Babylonians; they will be happy, Psalm 137:9 / Isaiah 13:16. Babylon was repaid for what she had done to Jerusalem; the Babylonians would reap what they had sown, 2 Kings 8:12 / 2 Kings 25:7 / Nahum 3:10 / Hosea 13:16.

It appears the psalmist remembers what the Babylonians had done to their children but declares a blessing upon the one who would do the same to the Babylonian children, Psalm 137:9 / Isaiah 13:16. We must remember that these words are used metaphorically to describe the eventual extinction of the Babylonians.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist is clearly homesick; they desired to be back in Jerusalem, where they would be safe and free from bondage. As Christians, we often feel homesick for heaven; we long to be with the Lord in the safety and security of heaven.

The apostle Paul says, 'I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far,' Philippians 1:23. What is a tent? A tent is not your home; a tent is a place you sleep in because you're going somewhere else. Then you fold up that tent, and you pack it up so that you can go where you are going.

That's what Paul says, he said, 'this isn't my home; this isn't where I belong, because I'm ready to go home'. Our tents, that is, our bodies, are getting older and breaking down; they aren't meant to last a long time, it's not meant to be permanent, 2 Corinthians 5:1-2.

Why did Paul want to die and go to Jesus? Maybe part of it was to get some release from the kingdom pressure, maybe part of it was the burden of the churches.

But the main reason Paul wanted to go was simple: Paul wanted the company of Christ. Paul says, 'When he goes, he's going to have Christ, like he's never had him before.' He's going to have a union with Christ.

Let me ask you something: Do you ever get homesick for heaven? Do you ever just hurt inside to get to heaven? Do you know how sometimes we don't? Because we need to improve our personal relationship with Jesus. We need to get to the point where we're so obsessed with Christ and so in love with Christ that the thought of having more Christ just makes your heart ache.

CHAPTER 138

INTRODUCTION

This psalm was written by David, and most commentators believe it was written sometime after the Babylonian exile.

HEADING

'Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading simply tells us that this is a psalm of David. Psalms 138-145 are all accredited to David.

'I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; before the "gods" I will sing your praise. I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your unfailing love and your faithfulness, for you have so exalted your solemn decree that it surpasses your fame. When I called, you answered me; you greatly emboldened me. May all the kings of the earth praise you, LORD, when they hear what you have decreed. May they sing of the ways of the LORD, for the glory of the LORD is great. Though the LORD is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly; though lofty, he sees them from afar. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes; with your right hand, you save me. The LORD will vindicate me; your love, LORD, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands.' Psalm 138:1-8

David begins by proclaiming that he will praise the LORD with all his heart, Psalm 138:1, that is, with everything he's got, Psalm 9:1. These are the words of a man who has totally given themselves over to the total worship of God, John 4:24.

Although it would be difficult to understand why David would sing God's praises before the 'gods', Psalm 138:1, he could be referring to those who had created gods after their own image, or to those who had set themselves up as gods among men.

David says he will bow down toward God's holy temple, Psalm 138:2, that is, he would bow down and pray facing the temple of God, 2 Chronicles 6:20 / Psalm 5:7 / Daniel 6:10. Since David wasn't around to see the temple, this leads some to think that it was written by someone else or that David is referring to the tabernacle.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'In this passage, it undoubtedly refers to the tabernacle.'

There are some writers who take the word 'temple', Psalms 138:2, as a reference to that of Solomon. To the Jews, the temple was the representation of God among His people, Israel, in their promised land, and so, in their worship, they paid homage to God, as well as maintained their nationalism by praying toward the temple in Jerusalem.

David will praise God for His unfailing love and faithfulness, Psalm 138:2, that is, love and faithfulness were what David focused on when he praised God. God's love and faithfulness are exalted and surpass His fame by His decree, Psalm 138:2, that is, in and through His word, Isaiah 42:21 / Psalm 19:1-14.

The Name and word of God are inseparable. Jesus came in the name of God, but was the revealed word of God, John 1:1-14. In other words, with the Name of God comes His word, both of which are exalted above all things.

David could praise God because when he cried out to God, He answered him, and when God answered his prayer, God blessed him with boldness and strength, Psalm 138:3.

Although David was a king, he looked forward to the time when all the kings of the earth would praise the LORD, after hearing God's word being proclaimed, Psalm 138:4 / Psalm 68:31-32 / Isaiah 49:23.

Those same kings would also sing the ways of the LORD when we come to understand the greatness of God's glory, Psalm 138:5. Although God is great and exalted, He still has a special place for those who are lowly, Psalm 138:6.

It's God's nature and it should be the nature of His children to be concerned about the lowly in society, Proverbs 3:34 / James 4:6 / 1 Peter 5:5. The lofty, Psalm 138:6, that is, the proud, are those who have no regard for the lowly, it's those people whom God sees from afar, Psalm 138:6.

Because of the greatness of God and His concern for the lowly in society, David was confident that God would preserve his life, despite the troubles he faced, Psalm 138:7.

He was confident that God would save him with His right hand from his angry foes, Psalm 138:7. In other words, he was confident that God would not only help him through his troubles but sustain his life.

David is also confident that the LORD will vindicate him, Psalm 138:8, that is, God has plans for David, Philemon 1:6. Because God's love endures forever, David appeals to that love and asks God not to abandon the works of His hands, Psalm 138:8. In other words, it was God who created David and He would abandon him in the midst of his troubles, Hebrews 13:5.

CONCLUSION

David began this psalm by declaring that he would praise the LORD with all of his heart, Psalm 138:1. It should be the desire of all Christians to praise the LORD wholeheartedly, but how can we do that?

1. To praise the LORD wholeheartedly, we need to love Him with everything we've got, Luke 10:27.
2. To praise the LORD wholeheartedly, we need to give Him our undivided attention, Matthew 6:24.
3. To praise the LORD wholeheartedly, we need to be obedient to His commands, 1 John 5:3.
4. To praise the LORD wholeheartedly, we need to concentrate on Christ and Christ alone, Hebrews 12:2.

CHAPTER 139

INTRODUCTION

It's argued by some that this psalm is one of the greatest Psalms ever written by David. It was written for the director of music, which implies it was to be sung. It's a Psalm which brings much comfort to the Christian, especially when they feel alone or abandoned.

The main focus of the Psalm is to remind us of the fact that God is omniscient, that is, all-knowing, and God is omnipresent, that is, He is everywhere. In other words, David is reminding us that God is in total control of everything.

Have you ever had moments where you feel like you've been abandoned by God? This Psalm reminds us that God is always with His people, no matter where they are or where they go.

HEADING

'For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. Psalms 138-145 are all accredited to David.

GOD IS OMNISCIENT

'You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue, you, LORD, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.' Psalm 139:1-6

David begins by reminding us that God is omniscient, that is, God knows everything. Notice how personally God know each of us, David uses words like 'me', 'I', and 'my', Psalm 139:1-6.
God knows everything about us, Psalm 139:1 / Matthew 10:20. He knows our inner thoughts, our motives, Psalm 139:2. He knows where we are at all times, Psalm 139:3, and our words, even before they are spoken, Psalm 139:4. There's not a place in heaven or earth where we can hide our thoughts and deeds from the Lord; He knows everything. Even before we think about our thoughts, He already knows what we're going to think.

David says God hems him in behind and before, and God lays His hand upon him, Psalm 139:5. In other words, God surrounds us and protects us, He knows our past and knows our future, and He gently lays His hand upon us, signifying protection and security.

When we speak, God is well aware of the reasons and motives behind our words. When we try to understand God, it's too wonderful for us, Psalm 139:6; it's way beyond our human comprehension.
There's no way we can understand God's omniscience; there's no way we can understand how God knows everything. We just can't get our heads around God because His infinite knowledge goes beyond any human comprehension, Psalm 139:6 / Isaiah 55:8-9.

GOD IS OMNIPRESENT

'Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.' Psalm 139:7-12

David continues with his psalm, and here he reminds us that God is omnipresent, that is, God is everywhere at all times, Psalm 139:7. He refers to the Spirit because it was the Spirit who created us, Genesis 1:26 / Psalm 104:30 / John 4:24.
David says if he goes up to the heavens, God is there; if he makes his bed in the depths, God is there, Psalm 139:8. Some translations have the word 'Sheol', which simply means the grave. In other words, even in death, God is still present.
The words, 'rise on the wings of the dawn' and the words, 'settle on the far side of the sea,' Psalm 139:9, are poetic in nature and are used to define opposite directions, Psalm 103:12.
David knows that even if he rises on the wings of the dawn or settles on the far side of the sea because God is there, he knows that God's hand will still guide him, God's right hand will still hold him fast, Psalm 139:10 / Psalm 118:15-16.
Many people think that what they do in the darkness goes unnoticed, but once again, we're reminded that God is there, Psalm 139:11 / Romans 13:12 / Ephesians 5:11. In ancient times, light was typically associated with divine presence, Numbers 6:25-26, while darkness was associated with chaos and death.
David suggests that if he were in the darkness, the place of chaos and death, the place that is absent of light, then perhaps finally he would find a place apart from God, Psalm 139:11.
However, David quickly recognises the fault in his own logic, because he knows that even in the darkest of places, they are not dark to God, Psalm 139:12. The darkness quickly ceases to be dark because of the radiant light of God, John 8:12. His very presence casts out all darkness, 1 John 1:5.
Coffman, in his commentary, shares a funny story about an old-fashioned teacher who was an atheist.

'He wrote on the blackboard the words, 'God is nowhere!' but a little primary school child stood up and walked over to the blackboard and made an adjustment to his words, which now read, 'God is now here!' She told the teacher, he forgot to put in a space, and the teacher was left speechless.'

As a child, I used to love playing hide and seek, and we would sometimes hide for hours waiting to be found. Let me ask you, who invented the game of hide and seek?

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, and God called the man and asked, 'Where are you?', Genesis 3:9, Adam said, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid,' Genesis 3:10.
When we look at our world today, many people still try to hide from God; they use drugs, alcohol and work, and they use anything to help them think that God doesn't notice them or what they are doing.

GOD IS OUR CREATOR

'For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.' Psalm 139:13-16

David reminds us that God isn't only omniscient and omnipresent, but God is also our Creator. It's so easy to think that God is so big and awesome, that He knows everything and is everywhere at the same time, and when we do, we may end up thinking that He doesn't know every little detail about us.

David tells us that God knows how we were created because God is the one who created us in the first place. In fact, He knew each and every one of us even before we were being formed in our mother's womb, Psalm 139:13 / Jeremiah 1:5.
James Watson and Francis Crick are credited with discovering human DNA, and when we think of the trillions of cells we have in our bodies, it's simply mind-blowing.

We are 'fearfully and wonderfully made', Psalm 139:14, by God, and because we can never fully understand the process by which a human being is developed from a fertilised egg in the womb of a woman, we are left in awe of God.
When David refers to 'the secret place' and 'the depths of the earth', Psalm 139:15, he's referring to the darkness of the womb. God knows exactly what we're going to look like even before we are formed, Psalm 139:16.
David says his days were preordained by God and visible to Him long before they had actual existence, Psalm 139:16. This isn't predestination, where people have no choice. We must remember that God can foresee without predestining something to happen; this is called free will.
It's helpful to remind ourselves that we are not here by accident and we must remind ourselves that we are not here by chance. Just as it is God's will for us to be born, it's also God's will that we die, Hebrews 9:27.

GOD KNOWS ME BETTER THAN I KNOW MYSELF

'How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you. If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.' Psalm 139:17-24

David reminds us that God isn't only omniscient, omnipresent, and our Creator, but he also reminds us of God's knowledge. David now moves from thinking about his own thoughts about God, to how much God knows about him.

He isn't interested in what others think about him. He's only interested in what God thinks about him, Psalm 139:17 / 1 Corinthians 4:3-4. God's knowledge is so vast that it can't even begin to be counted. Try going to the beach and count the number of sand grains there are! Psalm 139:18.
David says it makes no difference if he wakes up after a good night's sleep; God's presence and His knowledge are still present, Psalm 139:18. God protects His people by delivering them from the hands of their enemies, Psalm 139:19, which often results in the destruction of our enemies.

The wicked are described as being bloodthirsty, Psalm 139:19, having evil intent and misusing the Lord's Name, Psalm 139:20. The wicked are described as being God-haters, rebellious and enemies of God, Psalm 139:21. Our attitude towards the wicked should be the same as God's attitude towards the wicked, Psalm 139:22. We should love the sinner but hate the sin, John 3:16 / Revelation 2:6 / John 8:10-11.

After listing the behaviour of the wicked, it's no wonder David asks God to search his heart, Psalm 139:23. David knows that if he behaved in any way like the wicked described here, then he has to admit that he is an enemy of God himself.

David is pleading with God to deliver him from the dangers of committing some sin that he isn't aware of, Leviticus 4:2 / Leviticus 4:13 / Leviticus 4:22 / Leviticus 4:27 / Leviticus 5:1-6. We must admit we're all sinners, Romans 3:23 / 1 John 1:5-10.

David wants God to examine him so that God can help him remove any sin he's committing that he's not aware of. He asks God to test him, Psalm 139:24, which is God's way of helping us grow, James 1:2-3, and he also asks God to 'lead him in the way everlasting', Psalm 139:24, that is, in God's ways, Psalm 1:1-6 / Psalm 27:11.

CONCLUSION

We've been reminded that God is omniscient, omnipresent, our Creator, and His knowledge is vast, and those thoughts just leave us in awe of God. They also give us a great sense of comfort, knowing that we're never on our own or abandoned by God, Hebrews 13:5.

Most of us, if we have a health problem, will quickly go to the doctors for an examination, and sometimes we go for a routine check-up because it's important for our physical health.

But if having a routine check-up is important for our physical health, how much more important is having a routine spiritual check-up? When was the last time you went to God for a spiritual check-up?

When was the last time you asked God to perform spiritual heart surgery on you? When was the last time you asked God to remove anything from your life which shouldn't be there? Galatians 5:19-21 / Colossians 3:8-9.

CHAPTER 140

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David asks God to deliver him from his enemies, and he asks God to bring judgment upon all those who persecute God's people.

HEADING

'For the director of music. A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of David is for the director of music. Some commentators believe that the 'director of music' is God Himself, and others believe that it is a song leader who led choirs or musicians, 1 Chronicles 6:33 / 1 Chronicles 16:17 / 1 Chronicles 25:6. Psalms 138-145 are all accredited to David.

'Rescue me, LORD, from evildoers; protect me from the violent, who devise evil plans in their hearts and stir up war every day. They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent's; the poison of vipers is on their lips. Keep me safe, LORD, from the hands of the wicked; protect me from the violent, who devise ways to trip my feet. The arrogant have hidden a snare for me; they have spread out the cords of their net and have set traps for me along my path.' Psalm 140:1-5

David begins by asking God to deliver him from evildoers, those who are violent, Psalm 140:1, and those who devise plans to stir up war, Psalm 140:2. In other words, these evildoers had evil in their hearts and were trying to start a war, Matthew 15:19, and David wants God to protect him from such evil.
David's enemies are described as having tongues as sharp as a serpent, and the poison of vipers is on their lips, Psalm 140:3. In other words, David feels the sting and poison which came from their words. In the New Testament, when the apostle Paul is describing the sinfulness of man, he quotes these words in Romans 3:13.
You may notice at the end of verse three, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it's likely that it means to pause.

It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates the sinfulness of his enemies.

David again repeats his plea to God to keep him safe from those who are wicked, violent, those who devise ways to trip him up, Psalm 140:4. It's clear the arrogant tried to trip David up as they set hidden snares, spread out nets and they set up traps for him, Psalm 140:5. In other words, they tried everything possible to ensure David but notice that David sees all their traps, he was aware of all devices.
You may notice at the end of verse five, some translations have the word, 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates how God will keep him safe from all these snares which have been placed by the arrogant.

'I say to the LORD, "You are my God." Hear, LORD, my cry for mercy. Sovereign LORD, my strong deliverer, you shield my head in the day of battle. Do not grant the wicked their desires, LORD; do not let their plans succeed. Those who surround me proudly rear their heads; may the mischief of their lips engulf them. May burning coals fall on them; may they be thrown into the fire, into miry pits, never to rise. May slanderers not be established in the land; may disaster hunt down the violent.' Psalm 140:6-11

Despite all the traps set by those evildoers, David continues to trust in God, and he openly confesses that God is his God, Psalm 140:6. This gives David confidence that God would hear his cry for mercy, Psalm 140:6.
He acknowledges that the LORD is sovereign, He is David's strong deliverer and shield on the day of battle, Psalm 140:7. In other words, God was his strength and God is his salvation.

Because God had previously shielded, Psalm 140:7, that is, protected David in times of battle in the past, he called upon God to protect him once again, Psalm 140:8 / 1 Kings 10:25 / Ezekiel 39:9-10.
He asks God that his enemy's desires and plans fail, Psalm 140:8, that is, he's asking God to work with His people and go against the wicked. He's asking God not to allow the wicked to go without punishment.
You may notice at the end of verse eight, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause.

As mentioned earlier, it's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates the outcome of the wicked.

David feels like he's being surrounded by his enemy, those who proudly rear their heads, Psalm 140:9. Some commentators suggest this is speaking about Doeg, who was not only a violent man but also gave a false report about David, 1 Samuel 21-22. Other commentators suggest this may be speaking about Saul and his violence towards David, 1 Samuel 24:1-7 / 1 Samuel 26:7-11.
David asks that the mischief of these proud people's lips engulf them, Psalm 140:9, that is, he prays that they will receive the evil they had spoken against him. David asks that burning coal fall on them as they had poured out burning coal on others, Psalm 140:10.
This reminds us of Sodom and Gomorrah, which suffered total destruction because of their wickedness, Genesis 19:24-25 / Ezekiel 16:49. In other words, he prays that they will reap what they sow, Galatians 6:7-8.
David wants them to be thrown into the fire, Psalm 140:10, that is, he wants them to be punished. He wants them to be thrown down into miry pits and never rise again, Psalm 140:10, that is, he wants them to be thrown into a deep pit with no way out; he wants them to be totally gone, Genesis 37:20 / Genesis 37:24 / Psalm 9:15 / Psalm 35:7 / Jeremiah 41:7.
David asks that the slanderers have no place in the land, this is because of the influence they have on others, Psalm 140:11 / James 3:2-12. He also asks that disaster hunt down the violent, Psalm 140:11. In other words, he wants those violent people who were hunting him down to become the hunted; he prays that they will reap what they sow, Galatians 6:7-8.

'I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy. Surely the righteous will praise your name, and the upright will live in your presence.' Psalm 140:12-13

David is confident that the LORD will secure justice for those who are vulnerable in society, Psalm 140:12. God would defend them and protect them from all the injustices they were facing from those who were using slanderous words to persecute them.
He declares that the righteous will praise God's Name because God will help His people, Psalm 140:13 / Psalm 9:18 / Psalm 10:2 / Psalm 18:27 / Psalm 22:24. The righteous and upright will have the security and blessing of living in the presence of God, Psalm 140:13.

CONCLUSION

David, in his psalm, asked God that burning coals fall upon his enemies in reference to their destruction. When we turn to the New Testament, we see the use of burning coal in a positive sense.

The apostle Paul teaches us that not only are we to refrain from vengeance, Romans 12:17-19, but are to take a positive action for the good welfare of our enemies, and so, returning good for evil, Romans 12:20-21.

Paul then tells us that when we treat our enemies right, then 'you will heap burning coals on his head', which is quoted from Proverbs 25:21-22. This is a figure of speech showing strong, positive results. It will fill them with shame and remorse and melt their enmity. As the old saying goes, 'the best way to get rid of enemies is to make friends out of them.'

Paul writes to Christians and says, 'do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good', which is the Christian way of dealing with our enemies. The Christian always does right and never permits the actions of others to determine their own actions.

If the Christian seeks with their own hands to take vengeance, they themselves become evil, which is disobedience to God. However, if the Christian does good to their enemy, it is the greatest of all ways to overcome evil, that is, obeying God.

The Christian does not overcome evil by doing evil; the principle of doing good for evil is the basic principle by which we live, and it's the fundamental virtue of a follower of Christ.

CHAPTER 141

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David cries out to God to help him live his life right for God. This is seen in that he doesn't want to say or do anything evil or be associated with anyone who doesn't want to live righteously.

HEADING

'A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this psalm of David. Psalms 138-145 are all accredited to David.

'I call to you, LORD, come quickly to me; hear me when I call to you. May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil so that I take part in wicked deeds along with those who are evildoers; do not let me eat their delicacies. Let a righteous man strike me—that is a kindness; let him rebuke me—that is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it, for my prayer will still be against the deeds of evildoers. Their rulers will be thrown down from the cliffs, and the wicked will learn that my words were well spoken. They will say, "As one ploughs and breaks up the earth, so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave." But

my eyes are fixed on you, Sovereign LORD; in you I take refuge—do not give me over to death. Keep me safe from the traps set by evildoers, from the snares they have laid for me. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety.' Psalm 141:1-10

David begins by calling out to the LORD, in desperation, he wants God to come quickly and hear his prayer, Psalm 141:1 / Psalm 22:19. He asks that his prayer be set before the LORD like incense, Psalm 141:2, that is, as incense is pleasing to the senses, so David asked that his prayers be accepted by God as pleasing incense, Luke 1:9-10 / Revelation 5:8.

The lifting up of hands was the posture by which David prayed, Psalm 141:2 / Psalm 28:1 / Psalm 63:4 / 1 Timothy 2:8, and he prayed that his prayers would be like the evening sacrifice, Psalm 141:2. The priests offered incense to the LORD every morning and evening, Exodus 29:39 / Exodus 30:7-8 / Leviticus 2:2 / Numbers 28:4.

Because David asked that his prayers be accepted by God as pleasing incense, he didn't want to be a hypocrite. In other words, he asks God to guard his mouth and keep watch over his lips, Psalm 141:3, in order that he wouldn't speak of anything evil.

David is aware that all his evil thoughts come from the heart; hence, he asks God that he doesn't get drawn into any evil, Psalm 141:4 / Matthew 6:13. He knows that if he allows his heart to be ruled by evil, he will get involved with those people who are wicked, Psalm 141:4.

The best way to avoid the wicked is to separate ourselves from them. Here, David didn't want anything to do with the wicked, hence why he asks God not to let him eat their delicacies, Psalm 141:4; that is, he didn't even want to eat with them, just in case he was influenced by their wickedness, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Although David didn't want to be associated with the wicked, he was happy to be rebuked by those who were righteous, Psalm 141:5. He knew that being lovingly rebuked by the righteous was a sign of true fellowship and love. Being rebuked by the righteous was also like oil being poured on his head, Psalm 141:5, that is, it would bring healing, Mark 6:13 / Luke 4:18-19. Despite accepting the rebuke of the righteous, he will continue to pray against those who practice wickedness, Psalm 141:5.

He says that the rulers of the wicked will be thrown down from the cliffs, Psalm 141:6, which is a judgement against them, 2 Chronicles 25:12 / Luke 4:29. These rulers maintained their position with the people through their lofty words, but David knew that eventually, the people would discover the well-spoken words of truth that came from him, Psalm 141:6 / 1 Samuel 24:1-7.

The wicked say, 'as one ploughs and breaks up the earth, so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave', Psalm 141:7, which probably implies the way David and the righteous felt because of their enemies.

However, despite feeling this way, David was determined to fix his eyes on the LORD, Psalm 141:8 / Hebrews 12:2. He would fix his eyes on the Sovereign LORD, his refuge because God would protect him from death at the hands of his enemies, Psalm 141:8.

He asks that the wicked fall into their own nets, Psalm 141:9-10, that is, that they fall into the very nets they set as traps for him and the righteous. He prays that they will reap what they sow, Galatians 6:7-8, while he passed by them safely, Psalm 141:10 / Job 5:13.

CONCLUSION

David was determined to live right for God and deliberately chose not to associate with the wicked. He also asked God to guard his mouth against speaking evil, which he knew would begin in his heart.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught the disciples how to pray. He says, 'lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one,' Matthew 6:13, or 'keep us from evil', Luke 22:31-32.
Prayers for forgiveness are heard regularly, but not for the prevention of sin. Faithful disciples of Christ should pray to be delivered from the evil one; they should pray to be able to escape the severe temptations that the devil may present to them.

May we endeavour to develop hearts that are pure, Matthew 5:8. May we meditate upon those things that are noble, pure, and virtuous, Philippians 4:8. May we be distinct from the world and not possess 'eyes full of adultery', 2 Peter 2:14.
May we, like Job, make a covenant with our eyes and decide not to look intently upon others lustfully, Job 31:1. If we can keep adulterous thoughts out of our hearts, physical infidelity will never be a problem.
We should make sure our words are always carefully chosen from a heart filled with love that seeks the best interests of others, Philippians 2:3-4. If words flow from your mouth that are abusive and injurious, beware, for the fire of hell approaches, James 3:5-6.

CHAPTER 142

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David is clearly in a lot of distress, and so he cries out to God to help him and protect him from his enemies. He also asks God to bring judgement upon those who were persecuting him.

HEADING

'A maskil of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this is a prayer of David, a 'maskil'. No one really knows what the word maskil means; some believe it's a musical term or a literary term. The word is used thirteen times throughout the Psalms: Psalm 32 / Psalm 42 / Psalm 44 / Psalm 45 / Psalm 52 / Psalm 53 / Psalm 54 / Psalm 55 / Psalm 74 / Psalm 78 / Psalm 88 / Psalm 89 / Psalm 142. The word is also used in Amos 5:13.
The cave mentioned here is possibly the Adullam cave, 1 Samuel 22:1, or the caves of En Gedi, 1 Samuel 24:1. Psalms 138-145 are all accredited to David.

‘I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble. When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way. In the path where I walk, people have hidden a snare for me. Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to you, LORD; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.” Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.’ Psalm 142:1-7

David begins by crying out to the LORD, Psalm 142:1 / Psalm 3:4, and he raises his voice in asking for mercy, Psalm 142:1 / Psalm 30:8. In other words, he desires not only for God to hear him but also to be in the presence of God.
He wasn’t concerned about making known his complaints to the Lord because he knew God knows him and what he was going through because of his enemies, Psalm 142:2. He handed all of his worries and anxieties over to God, Philippians 4:6 / 1 Peter 5:7.
When David’s spirit grew faint, Psalm 142:3, that is, when he was at his lowest, he was confident that God would watch over his ways, Psalm 142:3. Even though he didn’t know where the snares were, which had been set by his enemies, he was confident that God knew where they were and so would guide his steps and protect him from those snares, Psalm 142:3.
We can almost feel the desperation of David here, as he feels that there is no one at his right hand, he has no refuge and there is no one was concerned about him, Psalm 142:4.
These are words of a man who is feeling lonely and abandoned, hence, why he cries out to the LORD for help, Psalm 142:5. It’s possible that God answered his prayer here when his brothers join him in the cave, 1 Samuel 22:1-2.
When David was feeling lonely, he felt that he had no refuge; however, when he cried out to the LORD, he knew that God Himself is his refuge, Psalm 142:5, that is, his place of safety and security. It’s the Lord who is his portion in the land of the living, and he was confident that the LORD would maintain his inheritance in the land, Psalm 142:5.
David is clearly in a desperate situation and asks God to rescue him from his enemies because they’re simply too strong for him to fight on his own, Psalm 142:6. In other words, he knew it was better to rely on God’s strength to defeat his enemies rather than relying on his own strength to defeat them.
The prison David speaks of here, Psalm 142:7, is not literal, it’s a figure of speech which speaks of being constrained, Psalm 107:10 / Isaiah 42:7. He wants God to set him free so that He can praise God for doing so, Psalm 142:7.
He wants God to set him free so that he could be surrounded by his righteous friends, and in turn, they would see the goodness in him, Psalm 142:7. In other words, when the righteous realise that the wicked leaders were leading them in the wrong direction, then they would accept the righteous leadership of David, 1 Samuel 22:1-2.

CONCLUSION

David found himself in a desperate situation, and therefore, he sought to be among like-minded people, where he could be encouraged. As Christians, it’s really important to spend more time with our brethren, especially because of all the evil which surrounds us in the world, Galatians 6:9-10 / Ephesians 4:28 / 1 Timothy 6:18.
God created us to be social beings, and to help us live the kind of lives He wants us to live He blessed us with the church, that is fellow believers, Acts 13:13 / Acts 19:29 / Philippians 4:3. The more time we spend with our brethren the less time we’ll have to think about sin or getting involved in the sinfulness of the world, 1 John 2:15.
When we spend more time outside of worship times, we can encourage each other, continue to love each other and help each other in our good deeds, Hebrews 10:24-25. In short, when we spend more time together as a church, we can listen to each other’s struggles and learn from others who have struggled in their faith.

CHAPTER 143

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David pours his heart out to God in distress, and he calls upon God to help him. He longs for God to hear him and reflects upon his relationship with God in times past.

HEADING

'A psalm of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this psalm of David. Psalms 138-145 are all accredited to David.

'LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief. Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you. The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in the darkness like those long dead. So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed. I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done. I spread out my hands to you; I thirst for you like a parched land.' Psalm 143:1-6

We don't know the historical setting for this psalm, but David begins by asking the LORD to hear his cry for mercy, Psalm 143:1 / Psalm 4:1 / Psalm 5:1. He's pleading to God, on the basis of God's faithfulness and righteousness, Psalm 143:1, that is, knowing that God would be faithful in His answer and bring him relief.
He pleads that God doesn't bring him into judgment based on his own righteousness because there is no one living who is righteous before God, Psalm 143:2 / Ecclesiastes 7:20. He pleads for God's mercy based on God's righteousness, not his own, 2 Samuel 12:7-12.
In other words, he requested justice that was lessened with grace and mercy, for he knew that no one can stand before God justified, Job 4:17 / Job 9:2 / Job 9:20 / Job 15:14-16 / Job 25:4-6 / Romans 3:9-10 / Romans 3:23 / Romans 11:32 / 1 John 1:10.
David describes the effects of being pursued and crushed by his enemies, they make him dwell in the darkness like those long dead, Psalm 143:3 / Psalm 72:4 / Psalm 89:10 / Job 6:9.
In other words, they treated him as if he had been long dead. David was suffering as if in death, and his heart was faint; he was dismayed, Psalm 143:4, because of the oppression he was receiving from his enemy, Matthew 26:38.
It's natural when we're in a dark place to reminisce about days long ago. Here, David thinks back to the time when life was better and probably easier, Psalm 143:5.

When he thinks back to days long ago, he remembers how he meditated on God's works and the things God had done with His hands, Psalm 143:5. It's interesting to note that David didn't reflect upon the things he had done in the past; he reflected upon the things which God had done in the past.

When David reflects upon the things God had done in days long ago, he spreads out his hands to God, Psalm 143:6, that is, he prayed to God to draw closer to God so that God might draw closer to him, James 4:8. Despite being in a dark place, his soul still thirsts for God like a parched land, Psalm 143:6 / Isaiah 32:2 / Matthew 5:6.

You may notice at the end of verse six, some translations have the word 'selah', although no one really knows what this word means, it likely means to pause. It's a time to stop and reflect upon what has just been said. We can almost imagine David pausing for a breath as he contemplates feeling close to God again.

'Answer me quickly, LORD; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me, or I will be like those who go down to the pit. Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life. Rescue me from my enemies, LORD, for I hide myself in you. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. For your name's sake, LORD, preserve my life; in your righteousness, bring me out of trouble. In your unfailing love, silence my enemies; destroy all my foes, for I am your servant.' Psalm 143:7-12

David is in a desperate way, maybe he felt he was about to die, and so, he asks God to answer his prayer quickly, Psalm 143:7 / Daniel 9:17-18 / Ephesians 2:1. He obviously doesn't feel God's presence in his life, and so, he asks that God doesn't hide His face from him, Psalm 143:7 / Romans 8:31.

As far as David was concerned, if he didn't feel God's presence, he would be like those who go down to the pit, Psalm 143:7, that is, the grave. In other words, he feels that he can't go on without God's presence in his life. He's desperate to feel God's presence in this time of distress; he's desperate to hear a word of God's unfailing love, Psalm 143:8. To hear words of assurance from God in the morning would give him the encouragement to face the rest of the day, Lamentations 3:22-23.

David asks the LORD to show him the way he should go because he trusts God with his life, Psalm 143:8. This tells us that David didn't only want to feel God's presence in his life; he didn't only want to hear of God's unfailing love, but he also needed God's guidance.

Because his enemies were pursuing him and crushing him, he asks God to rescue him from his enemies because he hides himself in God, Psalm 143:9. In other words, he didn't rely on himself to defend himself against his enemies but found refuge in God, knowing that God would defend him from his enemies.

David not only wanted God to show him the way he should go, but he also wanted God to teach him His will, Psalm 143:10. God is David's God, Psalm 143:10, and he knows if he wants to enjoy hiding in God's comfort, then he needs to be obedient to God's word.

This was going to happen through the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would lead him on level ground, Psalm 143:10, that is, He would guide his steps, Galatians 5:16 / Galatians 5:18 / Galatians 5:25.

David pleads with God to preserve his life, Psalm 143:11, that is, save his life, save him from the trouble he found himself in, Psalm 143:11. Notice he doesn't plead for his own sake or his name's sake, but for the LORD's Name's sake, for the sake of the LORD's reputation, Psalm 143:11.

David is asking God to save him, in order that he may give God all the glory for doing so. He acknowledges that he is only a servant of God and so, he asks God to silence his enemies and destroy all his foes on the basis of God's unfailing love, Psalm 143:12.

CONCLUSION

David declared that no one living could stand before God on the basis of their own righteousness, and in the New Testament, no one learned this lesson better than the apostle Paul. Paul had 'inheritance advantages', and he had 'performance advantages', Philippians 3:5-6, yet he understood that no one was righteous, Romans 3:10.
He understood that he couldn't confidently stand before God based on his own righteousness; he needed to stand on Christ's righteousness, Romans 3:20-21. Paul says his righteousness gains him nothing, Philippians 3:4 / Philippians 3:7-8, but Christ's righteousness gains him everything.
We must learn not to rely on our own merit or good deeds to be right with God; we must accept and trust Christ's redeeming work to make us righteous before God, 1 Peter 3:18 / 2 Corinthians 5:21.

CHAPTER 144

INTRODUCTION

In this psalm, David speaks as the king of Israel and the prosperity of the nation. Because God gave Israel victory over their enemies, and Israel put their trust in God, God blessed them richly, and they became a people full of joy.

HEADING

'Of David.'

Although the headings aren't inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us this psalm of David. Psalms 138-145 are all accredited to David.

'Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.' Psalm 144:1-2

David begins by praising the LORD, who is his rock, Psalm 144:1. He praises Him because God trained his hands and fingers for battle, Psalm 144:1, that is, he became a great warrior for God because God gave him the skills to do so, 1 Samuel 17:48-50 / 1 Samuel 18:26-27.
To David, God is a loving God, his fortress, stronghold, deliverer, shield, and refuge, Psalm 144:2. In other words, God was his all in all; he was totally dependent upon God for his strength, protection, love, and comfort, Psalm 18.

It was God who subdued peoples under David, Psalm 144:2. This is probably referring to the time when David subdued mighty men under his authority, 1 Samuel 22:1-2, or it could be referring to the time when David became king over all of Israel, 2 Samuel 5:1-5.

'LORD, what are human beings that you care for them, mere mortals that you think of them? They are like a breath; their days are like a fleeting shadow. Part your heavens, LORD, and come down; touch the mountains, so that they smoke. Send forth lightning and scatter the enemy; shoot your arrows and rout them. Reach down your hand from on high; deliver me and rescue me from the mighty waters, from the hands of foreigners whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful. I will sing a new song to you, my God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you, to the One who gives victory to kings, who delivers his servant David.' Psalm 144:3-10

David asks the LORD two questions: what are human beings that He cares for them, and who are mere mortals that you think of them? Psalm 144:3. These two questions are basically the same questions, which imply that David is amazed that God would show any interest in mankind. He's amazed that God cares for mankind, Psalm 8, especially in light of the fact that life is short and fleeting, Psalm 144:4.
David asks the LORD to part the heavens and come down, touch the mountains so that they smoke, Psalm 144:5, that is, he's seeking God's presence, as God appeared to Israel at Mount Sinai, Exodus 19:16-20.
He wants God to send lightning in order to scatter his enemy; he asks God to shoot His arrows and rout them, Psalm 144:6 / Psalm 18:4. These are metaphorical words, which David uses to ask God to destroy his enemies.
He asks God to reach His hand down from on high to deliver him and rescue him from the mighty waters, from the hands of foreigners, Psalm 144:7, who were full of lies and deceit, Psalm 144:8 / Genesis 14:22 / Exodus 6:8 / Deuteronomy 32:40 / 1 Samuel 22:6-10 / 1 Samuel 23:19-20. In other words, David sought to be delivered from the oppression of wicked nations that overcame Israel as a flood of waters.
When God delivered David from his enemies, he would have reason to sing a new song; he would have reason to use the ten-stringed lyre to praise God with, Psalm 144:9 / 1 Samuel 16:18 / Psalm 33:2 / Isaiah 5:12.
He would have reason to praise the One who gives victory to kings, the One who delivered His servant David from the hands of his enemies, Psalm 144:10 / 1 Samuel 17:34-36 / 1 Samuel 23:24-29.

'From the deadly sword, deliver me; rescue me from the hands of foreigners whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful. Then our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace. Our barns will be filled with every kind of provision. Our sheep will increase by thousands, by tens of thousands, in our fields; our oxen will draw heavy loads. There will be no breaching of walls, no going into captivity, no cry of distress in our streets. Blessed is the people of whom this is true; blessed is the people whose God is the LORD.' Psalm 144:11-15

It was God who would deliver David from the deadly sword, Psalm 144:11, and deliver him from those foreigners who are filled with lies and deceit, Psalm 144:12 / 2 Samuel 7:26 / Psalm 18:50.
Because David mentioned these foreigners twice, it tells us that they must have been causing him a lot of trouble, hence why he pleads with God to help him. When God delivers David and deals with these foreigners, then blessings from the LORD would come, Leviticus 26:1-13 / Deuteronomy 28:1-14 / Psalm 132:13-18.
Israel's sons and daughters would begin to feel secure; the sons would be like well-nurtured plants, and their daughters would be like pillars carved to adorn a palace, Psalm 144:12 / Zechariah 9:15 / Titus 2:3-5, which means that because they were safe and secure, Israel's future would be secure.
Israel's farmers would also be blessed in having plenty of provisions in their barns, Psalm 144:13, which means their barns are full. Because they've been blessed with good crops, which in turn means that they can not only feed themselves but also their livestock, Psalm 144:13. When God delivers David and deals with these foreigners, then Israel's livestock would increase abundantly.

Another blessing which will come is seen when Israel prospers. They will be so prosperous that no one will breach the walls, no going into captivity, and no cry of distress in our streets, Psalm 144:14. This could refer to Israel's security, in that no enemies would come to wage war against them and lead them into captivity.
David declares a blessing upon God's people and says that the people who are in that state of security, those who people who have God as their LORD, are blessed, Psalm 144:15 / Proverbs 14:34. Those blessings only come when we stay true to God and His promises, Psalm 144:15 / Exodus 24:3-8.

CONCLUSION

David described how God would richly bless Israel; however, those blessings came with terms and conditions, Deuteronomy 7:1-19 / Deuteronomy 28:1-54 / Deuteronomy 30:19.
This tells us that God's blessings aren't guaranteed; they are based upon adhering to His terms and conditions. The word 'if' is used in Scripture to describe the terms and conditions for receiving God's blessings.

1. If we want God to provide for us, we need to wait on God to provide, Psalm 27:14 / Psalm 37:7 / Isaiah 40:31.
2. If we want God to direct our lives, then we must trust Him to do so, Psalm 25:1-3 / Psalm 62:8 / Proverbs 3:5-6.
3. If we want God to bless us, then we must obey His word, Exodus 19:5 / Deuteronomy 7:12 / Joshua 24:15 / 1 Chronicles 28:7 / Psalm 25:10.
4. If we want God to reward us, we must be willing to endure difficult times, Galatians 6:9 / James 1:12.

It is often argued by some that a Christian cannot lose their salvation, but Paul uses the word 'if', concerning women being saved through childbirth, which clearly implies terms and conditions, 1 Timothy 2:15.
Jesus uses the word 'if' in the same manner when it comes to remaining in Him, John 15:5-10. John uses the word 'if' in the same manner when it comes to confessing our sins, 1 John 1:5-10.
There are many passages which suggest that a person can lose their salvation, 1 Corinthians 10:6-12 / Galatians 5:4 / 2 Peter 2:20-22. Look at what Jesus clearly says, 'the one who stands firm to the end will be saved,' Matthew 24:13.
It is important to note that for every positive statement, like this one, there is also an implied 'opposite' which would also be just as true, 'the one who DOESN'T stand firm to the end will NOT be saved', Revelation 2:10.

CHAPTER 145

INTRODUCTION

This psalm of David was commonly used along with the Jews in their daily prayers. It focuses on the greatness of God and His love for those who love Him. David calls upon all of mankind to glorify God because of His care for His people.

HEADING

‘A psalm of praise. Of David.’

Although the headings aren’t inspired by God, they are important because they give us some understanding of the Psalm, and they help us to see why it was written. The headings usually tell us four things.

1. Who wrote them, probably wrote them, or possibly wrote them.

2. Information about the historical background to the Psalm. Why was it written?

3. They tell us of the tune the Psalm was written to.

4. How it was used.

The heading tells us that this psalm of praise was written by David. Psalms 138-145 are all accredited to David.

‘I will exalt you, my God, the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendour of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.’ Psalm 145:1-7

David begins by declaring that he will exalt God the King and praise His Name forever and ever, Psalm 145:1. Even though David was king of Israel, he knows who the real King is.
He praises God and extols His name every day, Psalm 145:2, which means this was a part of his daily worship, Lamentations 3:23 / Romans 12:1-2. David continues with his praises and declares God’s greatness, which no one can fathom and that He is worthy of being praised, Psalm 145:3 / Job 5:9 / Job 9:10 / Job 11:7-8.
He speaks of how one generation will speak of God’s works and His mighty acts to the next generation, Psalm 145:4. They will also speak to the next generation of the glorious splendour of God’s majesty, Psalm 145:5 / Isaiah 38:19.
Notice David also says his praise will also include meditating on God’s wonderful works, Psalm 145:5, which speaks of God’s awesome power and great deeds, Psalm 145:5-6.
In other words, David continually has the praise of God on his mind, and he will speak of the good that God has done for His people, Proverbs 18:4 / Proverbs 1:23 / Proverbs 15:2 / Proverbs 15:28. When God’s people celebrate God’s abundant goodness, a song of praise will continually be on their lips, Psalm 145:7.

‘The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.’ Psalm 145:8-9

David declares that the LORD is gracious, compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love, Psalm 145:8, which are the words Moses used to describe God, Exodus 34:6 / Numbers 14:18 / Nehemiah 9:17 / Psalm 86:15 / Psalm 103:8 / Psalm 145:8 / Joel 2:15 / Jonah 4:2. God is sympathetic and kind, and He is slow to bring judgment upon His children.
Notice, David says that the LORD is good to all, not just Israel. He has compassion on all He has made, Psalm 145:9, that is, all of creation, not just Israel, Matthew 5:45 / Acts 14:17.

‘All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you. They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendour of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.’ Psalm 145:10-16

David tells us that all of creation praises the LORD, Psalm 145:10 / Psalm 8 / Psalm 98:8 / Romans 1:20, and God’s faithful extol Him, Psalm 145:10, that is, they should praise Him too.

The sovereignty of God is manifested through His creation. All that exists manifests the greatness of God and His creative power and majesty, Psalm 145:101 / Malachi 3:16.

David alludes to the fact that God's people will speak to others about the greatness of who God is and what He has done, Psalm 145:11-12. They will speak of the One who is King of this kingdom because His kingdom is everlasting and because His dominion endures through all generations, Psalm 145:13 / Daniel 4:34. This is a good reason to praise Him.

God's kingdom reign is trustworthy, and His promises won't go away, Psalm 145:13. Jesus ascended to the right hand of God in order to assume this kingdom reign, and He is presently reigning over all things, Matthew 28:18 / Ephesians 1:20-22.

It's the LORD who upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down, Psalm 145:14. In other words, God is there for everyone. Though He is majestic in power and awesome in comparison to His creation, He considers His people and is there for them when they fall, James 4:6-10.

David tells us that the eyes of all, which includes mankind and all God's creation, look to God because He feeds them at the proper time, Psalm 145:15 / Matthew 6:11.

It's God who opens His hands to satisfy the desires of every living thing, Psalm 145:16 / Matthew 6:26-30. In other words, God provides for everything He has created, and nothing is left out.

'The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfils the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.' Psalm 145:17-21

David now declares that the LORD is righteous in all His ways and faithful in all He does, Psalm 145:17 / Romans 3:26. In other words, God is just in all His work with man, which is another reason why He is worthy of praise.

The LORD is near to all who call on Him in truth, He isn't distant from them, Psalm 145:18. He is near to those who fear Him and those who cry out to Him, and He not only hears them but saved them, Psalm 145:19, he fulfilled their desires, Matthew 6:25-34 / John 4:24 / Acts 17:28. He will come to the aid of all those who obey Him, Psalm 34:15 / Matthew 7:7-8 / John 14:13 / 1 John 5:14.

Another reason for praising God is seen in it's the LORD who watches over all who love Him, Psalm 145:20, that is, He saves them from danger and preserves them, Luke 21:16-18. He is also worthy of praise because, in His righteousness, He will destroy the wicked, Psalm 145:20.

David ends his psalm by declaring that his mouth will speak in praise of the LORD, Psalm 145:21, that is, he will continually speak to everyone and anyone who will listen, about the sovereignty and majesty of the LORD. He encourages every creature, not just humans, to praise God's holy Name forever and ever, Psalm 145:21.

CONCLUSION

In his psalm, David has numerous reasons why all creation, including humans, should praise the LORD. As Christians, we have several reasons why we should praise God daily, Romans 12:1-2.

1. God has delivered us from a dark kingdom, Colossians 1:13.
2. God has set us free from the bondage of sin, Romans 8:2.
3. God will never give up on us, even when we give up on Him, Hebrews 13:5.
4. God has commissioned us to tell others about His life-changing message, Mark 16:15-16 / Matthew 28:19-20.
5. God listens to every prayer we make, 1 John 5:14.

6. God not only see everything we're going through, but He also empathises with us, Hebrews 4:15.
7. God promises to go through all our trials with us, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

CHAPTER 146

INTRODUCTION

In Psalms 146-150, the focus is purely on praising God. There are no requests, and there are no cries of distress; they are all simply psalms of praise, where the psalmists praise God for who He is and what He's done. In this psalm, the psalmist simply praises God because He is the only One who has the power to save, protect and meet everyone's needs.

'Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, my soul. I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day, their plans come to nothing.' Psalm 146:1-4

The psalmist begins by declaring the great hallelujah, that is, praise the LORD, Psalm 146:1. They will praise him with their soul, Psalm 146:1, that is, their inner being.
They will praise Him with their life, Psalm 146:2, that is, with everything they've got, with their entire being, they will praise Him all the days of their lives, Psalm 146:2 / Psalm 104:33.
The psalmist tells his readers that princes, Psalm 146:3, that is, the rulers, and human beings, shouldn't be praised because they can't save, Psalm 146:3, that is, they are merely mortals, Isaiah 2:22 / Jeremiah 17:5.
When princes and rulers die, their spirit departs from them, and they return to the ground, Psalm 146:4 / Genesis 3:19 / Ecclesiastes 12:7 / Isaiah 2:22. On the day they die, their plans come to nothing, Psalm 146:4. In other words, the very thoughts of mortal man stop being an advantage to those who are still alive, Luke 12:19-20.

'Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God. He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—he remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 146:5-10

After telling us that princes and human beings can't save us, the psalmist now tells us that God has the power to do so. We're blessed when we put our hope in the LORD our God, the God of Jacob, Psalm 146:5, instead of humans. It's only God who can help us, and those who put their trust in God are assured of His help, Psalm 146:5. Princes and human beings don't possess the power to create anything, whereas God is the Maker of heaven, earth, the sea, and everything in them, Psalm 146:6.
In other words, we should put our hope in God because He is the creator of everything. If God is powerful enough to create everything out of nothing, Genesis 1-2, then surely He has the power to take care of those who put their trust in Him.
Unlike princes and human beings, God remains faithful forever, Psalm 146:6, that is, He never changes. He is trustworthy. He never breaks His promises to those who are faithful to Him.

He speaks up and defends those who are oppressed, and He provides food for the hungry, Psalm 146:7 / Luke 1:53.
The LORD can be trusted because He sets prisoners free, Psalm 146:7, that is, He vindicates the righteous, and so, frees them from their oppression, Job 36:8-9.
The LORD can be trusted because He gives sight to the blind, Psalm 146:8, that is, it's through truth, and we come to know God, Isaiah 35:5 / Matthew 9:27-29. The LORD can be trusted because He lifts up those who are bowed down, Psalm 146:8; that is, those who are humbled through grief are encouraged, Luke 13:11-13.
The LORD can be trusted because He loves the righteous, Psalm 146:8, that is, those who live right in God's eyes, Matthew 13:43 / Matthew 25:46. The LORD can be trusted because He watches over the foreigner, Psalm 146:9, that is, He protects and looks after those who aren't Israelites, Exodus 12:49 / Exodus 22:21 / Exodus 23:9 / Leviticus 19:33 / Deuteronomy 1:16 / Deuteronomy 10:18-19 / Isaiah 56:3 / Isaiah 56:6 / Matthew 8:5-10.
The LORD can be trusted because He sustains the fatherless and the widow, Psalm 146:9, that is, He cares for the needs of those who are vulnerable in society, Luke 7:12-15 / James 1:27.
The LORD can be trusted because He frustrates the ways of the wicked, Psalm 146:9, that is, He will execute justice on all those who practice wickedness, Matthew 21:12.
The psalmist ends by declaring to all of Zion, Psalm 146:10, that is, Israel, that their God, their LORD, can be trusted because He shall reign forever, He shall reign through all generations, Psalm 146:10 / Exodus 15:18. The psalmist ends their psalm in the same manner they began, Psalm 146:1, with the great hallelujah, praise the LORD, Psalm 146:10.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist simply praises God over and over again, because He is a God who can be trusted. Most of us enjoy relationships with others, and these relationships are built on the foundation of trust. Sadly, many relationships fall apart because trust becomes a major issue.

People start lying to each other, people start to change their minds, they make promises but fail to fulfil them. All of these things bring about distrust and can easily bring any relationship to an end.

The good news is that God can be trusted because He isn't like humans; He doesn't lie, He doesn't change His mind, He acts upon what He says He's doing to do, and He fulfils the promises He makes, Numbers 23:19.
Although human relationships break down, which often results in one person leaving the other, our God can be trusted because He promises that He will never leave us or forsake us, Hebrews 13:5.

CHAPTER 147

INTRODUCTION

In Psalms 146-150, the focus is purely on praising God. There are no requests, and there are no cries of distress; they are all simply psalms of praise, where the psalmists praise God for who He is and what He's done.

In this psalm, the psalmist simply praises God because of His work in creation, Hebrews 1:3. The historical background to this psalm appears to be when Israel returned from captivity in order to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

'Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him! The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel. He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit. The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.' Psalm 147:1-6

The psalmist begins by declaring the great hallelujah, Psalm 147:1, that is, praise the LORD. They remind themselves and others that it's good to sing praises to God because it is pleasant to do so, Psalm 147:1 / Psalm 33:1.
In view of all that God has done and continues to do in His creation, it's fitting to give Him praise, Psalm 147:1. The psalmist turns their attention to Jerusalem. It's the LORD who builds the city, and it was the LORD who gathered the exiles of Israel, Psalm 147:2.
This tells us that the historical setting of this psalm was when the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity, Nehemiah 12:27. The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.
The psalmist describes the goodness and greatness of God, so he and others would have reasons to praise God. The first reason is God's active care for Jerusalem, perhaps a reference to its restoration after the exile.

The Jews had been taken into Assyrian captivity in 722/21 B.C. and Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. and were dispersed among the nations. The psalmist gives God all the credit for gathering the twelve tribes of Israel together to bring them back to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the city and the temple, Isaiah 11:12 / Isaiah 56:8.
God should be praised because He not only cares for the broken-hearted but He also heals the broken-hearted, Psalm 147:3 / Isaiah 61:1 / Luke 4:18, and binds up their wounds, Psalm 147:3 / Isaiah 1:6.
God should be praised because he determines the number of stars and calls them by name, Psalm 147:4, that is, His majesty and power are seen in what He created in the universe, Genesis 22:17 / Isaiah 40:26.
God should be praised because He is mighty in power, and His understanding has no limit, Psalm 147:5, that is, no one has the power God has and no one has the knowledge God has, Isaiah 40:28.
God should be praised because He sustains the humble but casts down the wicked to the ground, Psalm 147:6, that is, He raises up the humble but humbles the proud, Proverbs 3:34 / James 4:6 / 1 Peter 5:5.

'Sing to the LORD with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp. He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of the warrior; the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.' Psalm 147:7-11

The psalmist once again calls upon the Israelites to sing to the LORD with grateful praise and make music to God on the harp, Psalm 147:7 / Isaiah 5:12. It's the LORD who covers the sky with clouds which supply rainwater for the grass to grow on the hills, Psalm 147:8.
He provides the rain, Psalm 147:8 / Job 5:10 / Job 28:26 / Job 36:27-28 / Job 38:28 / Job 38:37, and He provides the food for the cattle and for the young raven when they call, Psalm 147:9 / Job 38:41. In other words, God is to be praised for the continuity of vegetation that provides food for the living, Psalm 8 / Romans 1:20.
Despite creating the horse's strength and the legs of a warrior, God's delight isn't in the strength of the horse, or the legs of a warrior, Psalm 147:10. His delight is found in those who fear Him, those who put their hope in Him, Psalm 147:11 / Job 39:19-25.

'Extol the LORD, Jerusalem; praise your God, Zion. He strengthens the bars of your gates and blesses your people within you. He grants peace to your borders and satisfies you with the finest of wheat. He sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes. He hurls down his hail

like pebbles. Who can withstand his icy blast? He sends his word and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow. He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws, and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 147:12-20

The psalmist now extols Jerusalem, Zion, Psalm 147:12, that is, the people, to praise God again, Psalm 147:12. This time, because God has strengthened the bars of the city's gates and blessed the people within Psalm 147:13. The security of the nation was in the strength of Jerusalem to withstand the enemy.

God strengthened Israel and was able to defend her against all her enemies. They wouldn't be able to break through the gates into the city. He blessed them with peace and blessed them with the finest wheat, Psalm 147:14, that is, the best the land had to offer.

The psalmist now speaks of God's presence and work within the natural world. He sends His command to the earth, and His word runs swiftly, Psalm 147:15, that is, whatever God commanded, it was done quickly without any delays. The snow, frost, Psalm 147:16, ice, cold, Psalm 147:17, heat and wind, Psalm 147:18, all obeyed His commands, 2 Thessalonians 3:1 / Hebrews 1:3. God's power is seen in the snow, Job 37:6, ice, Genesis 18:5 / Judges 19:5, and cold. In other words, we succumb to the cold, but God controls all that controls the cold. He can simply speak a word, and the snow and ice melt away, Psalm 147:18 / Job 37:10-12.

God not only commands and controls the elements, but He also has revealed His word, His laws, and decrees to Jacob, who is representative of the nation of Israel, Psalm 147:19 / Romans 3:1-2.

God should be praised because He only revealed His word and His laws to Israel and no other nation, Psalm 147:20.

The psalmist ends their psalm in the same manner they began, Psalm 147:1, with the great hallelujah, praise the LORD, Psalm 147:20.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist announces that God should be praised because of His work in creation. They tell us that even the elements hear His word and obey Him. God's word was given to the nation of Israel and no one else.

When we turn our attention to the New Testament, we read about God's final revelation to mankind. The Hebrew writer tells us that God spoke through His Son, Hebrews 1:1-3.

This suggests finality; God's final speech was through His Son. God's message is complete, and so, God isn't still speaking at many times and in many ways by the Son; God has spoken, that's past tense, by the Son. God has revealed His total truth, and that truth is now out.

That final truth wasn't revealed through prophets; it was revealed through the Son! 'Whom he appointed as heir of all things', which shows authority. God has spoken through His Son, and the Son carries great authority.

The Son has been appointed heir of all things, and because He has this authority, the Son can make good on the words He has declared. The authority of the Son is so great that it is through the Son that 'all things were created'.

The Son is authoritative; the Son's word is authoritative. The Son is the final, completed message of God. As the apostle John would write later, the Son is the 'logos', the Word, John 1:1.

CHAPTER 148

INTRODUCTION

In Psalms 146-150, the focus is purely on praising God. There are no requests, and there are no cries of distress; they are all simply psalms of praise, where the psalmists praise God for who He is and what He's done. In this psalm, the psalmist encourages all of God's creation to simply praise Him for His majesty.

'Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun, and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created, and he established them for ever and ever— he issued a decree that will never pass away.' Psalm 148:1-6

The psalmist begins by declaring the great hallelujah, Psalm 148:1, that is, praise the LORD, Psalm 148:1. They call upon all of the heavenly beings and bodies to praise Him, Psalm 148:1.
The angels and heavenly hosts are also encouraged to praise Him, Psalm 148:2, that is, all the spiritual beings who dwell in the heavenly realm, Isaiah 1:9 / Revelation 4:8.
The sun, moon and shining stars are also encouraged to praise Him, Psalm 148:3 / Psalm 98:7-8 / Isaiah 55:12. The personification of the sun, moon and stars demonstrates the majesty of God and the fact that it is right that only He be praised, for He was the Creator of all.
The highest heavens, Psalm 148:4, that is God's dwelling place, Deuteronomy 10:14 / 1 Kings 8:27 / 2 Chronicles 2:6 / Nehemiah 9:6 / Psalm 115:16, are called upon to praise Him, along with the waters above the skies, Psalm 148:4 / Genesis 1:7.
It was God who commanded them to be created, Psalm 148:5. We must remember that God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were all involved in creation, Genesis 1 / Colossians 1:16.
All of the heavenly beings and bodies were not only created and established by God at His command, but they will also continue because of His decree, Psalm 148:6 / 2 Peter 3:7 / 2 Peter 3:10 / 2 Peter 3:13.

'Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and women, old men, and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendour is above the earth and the heavens. And he has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his faithful servants, of Israel, the people close to his heart. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 148:7-14

After calling upon all the angelic beings and all the heavenly bodies, the psalmist now calls upon all of the creatures on the earth to praise God, Psalm 148:7. The great sea creatures, Psalm 148:7 / Job 7:12 / Ezekiel 29, and all creatures who live in the depths of the ocean are called upon to praise Him, Psalm 148:7.
All the phenomena of weather, that is, lightning, hail, snow, clouds, and wind, Psalm 148:8, are also encouraged to praise God. Everything on the land, things which don't move, the mountains and hills, fruit trees, and cedars, Psalm 148:9, and all the living animals, Psalm 148:10, are also encouraged to praise God.
The psalmist now encourages all humans to praise God. The kings of the earth, all nations, princes, rulers, Psalm 148:11, young men and women, old men, and children, Psalm 148:12. Life and the created world should praise the One who brought all things into existence.
The very name of God confirms His existence, Psalm 148:13, and so, His right to be praised by those who recognise His existence. He deserves praise because He alone is God and His splendour is clearly seen above the earth and the heavens, Psalm 148:13, that is, He is more glorious than all the things on earth.
God should be praised because He has raised up for His people a horn, Psalm 148:14, that is, He gives His people power and prosperity, Psalm 89:17 / Psalm 92:10 / Psalm 112:9.

He should be praised because He has come closer to His people, Psalm 148:14 / Deuteronomy 4:7 / Deuteronomy 33:29 / Ephesians 2:13 / Acts 2:39. The psalmist ends their psalm in the same manner they began, Psalm 148:1, with the great hallelujah, praise the LORD, Psalm 148:14.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist encouraged all of God's creation to praise the LORD because He and He alone is worthy of receiving our praise. In Revelation 5, we're introduced to the Lamb, 'who was slain before the foundation of the world', Revelation 5:12 / Revelation 13:8.

John has a scroll that no one can seem to open, but the Lamb then comes and opens the scroll in order to unleash the wrath of God. Christians, as a result, cry out, 'Worthy is the Lamb!' Revelation 5:12. Who is this Lamb? It's Jesus, the Lamb of God, John 1:29.

Christians were being persecuted; they wanted to know if God is in control, and who would help us overcome the great world power that is Rome? The Lamb takes the scroll and unleashes the vengeance of God. It's Jesus Christ, who is able to offer help during times of persecution.

The Lamb is pictured as the One Who is worthy to receive our honour, Revelation 5:12. We aren't to pay honour to Domitian. The Lamb is going to unleash God's vengeance, and He's the One Who is worthy of our honour or glory. Our lives must be about giving Jesus, the Son of God, the glory and honour He deserves. In fact, that's what our lives are all about, Isaiah 43:7 / 1 Corinthians 10:31. Revelation 5 tells us that the Lamb is worthy, He's able to unleash God's vengeance, and we must give Him the glory and honour that He deserves.

It's through Jesus that the devil, the beast, and Rome itself will be defeated because of Jesus' actions. Jesus, through death, overcame that 'he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil,' Hebrews 2:14.

CHAPTER 149

INTRODUCTION

In Psalms 146-150, the focus is purely on praising God. There are no requests, and there are no cries of distress; they are all simply psalms of praise, where the psalmists praise God for who He is and what He's done. In this psalm, the psalmist simply praises God because He will judge those who have mistreated His people.

'Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of his faithful people. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp. For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.' Psalm 149:1-4

The psalmist begins by declaring the great hallelujah, Psalm 149:1, that is, praise the LORD, Psalm 149:1. They encourage all of the assembly of His faithful people to sing a new song, Psalm 149:1 / Isaiah 42:10 / Revelation 5:9 / Revelation 14:3.

They encourage all of Israel to rejoice in their Maker, and the people of Zion, Psalm 149:2, that is, Jerusalem, to be glad in their King, Psalm 149:2. This is because God created the nation of Israel, and so, Israel should worship her Maker and King, Isaiah 54:5.
The praising of God also included dancing, Psalm 149:3 / Jeremiah 31:13 / Lamentations 5:15, and making music with the timbrel and harp, Psalm 149:3 / Amos 5:23 / Ephesians 5:19 / Colossians 3:16.
The reason for praising God is simply because the LORD takes delight in His people and crowns the humble with victory, Psalm 149:4 / James 4:6 / 1 Peter 5:5 / Isaiah 60:7.

'Let his faithful people rejoice in this honour and sing for joy on their beds. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them—this is the glory of all his faithful people. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 149:5-9

We can almost imagine the joy in the hearts of God's faithful people. They're so full of joy that they even sing songs of joy in their bed at night, Psalm 149:5 / Job 35:10 / Acts 16:25.
When the praises of God are in their mouths, Psalm 149:6, this would indicate that they were ready and totally reliant upon God for victory over their enemies, Psalm 149:6 / 2 Chronicles 20:20-21.
When the praises of God are in their mouths, this would indicate that they are equipped with God's word; that is, they totally rely upon God and His word, Psalm 149:6 / Ephesians 6:17 / Hebrews 4:12 / Revelation 19:15.
In other words, when they are spiritually equipped, they would have confidence that God would fight their enemies for them and grant them the victory over their enemies, Nehemiah 4:9 / Nehemiah 4:16-23.
When His people are spiritually prepared, they will be fully equipped to inflict vengeance, Psalm 149:7, that is, judgment upon the nations and punishment on the people, Psalm 149:7 / Deuteronomy 7:1-2 / Deuteronomy 32:41-43. Even kings and nobles won't be able to escape the judgment of God, Psalm 149:8-9 / Ephesians 6:12-18 / 2 Corinthians 10:5.
This judgment will be the glory of all of God's faithful people, Psalm 149:9 / Acts 17:31 / 1 Corinthians 6:2. The psalmist ends their psalm in the same manner they began, Psalm 149:1, with the great hallelujah, praise the LORD, Psalm 149:9.

CONCLUSION

The psalmist encourages God's faithful people to praise the LORD because He will judge their enemies. Judgement, especially Judgment Day, isn't a popular topic today for various reasons.

Some don't want to hear about the prospect of heaven or hell, and for others, it's a day to which they're not looking forward to. God's Day of Judgment is 'unique' because there has never been, nor will there ever be again, an event like it.

That Day will be convened, not to decide the eternal destinies of those who appear before Him, because that decision is made by every individual during earthly life.

There is a well-known saying which is very appropriate in dealing with Judgment Day, which states that, 'justice must not only be done; it must be seen to be done'.

When 'the books' are opened before God, Revelation 20:12-15, it will not be because He needs to be reminded of what we've done in our lives, or because He needs to weigh up the evidence, for or against us. It will be in order that every individual may know and understand clearly why God's verdict is just, and why the sentence is deserved.

No one who is banished eternally from God's presence will be left in any doubt as to the reason. No one will be able to say, 'I don't deserve this!', or 'I don't understand why I am being treated in this way!' Justice will truly be 'seen' to be done.

CHAPTER 150

INTRODUCTION

In Psalms 146-150, the focus is purely on praising God. There are no requests, and there are no cries of distress; they are all simply psalms of praise, where the psalmists praise God for who He is and what He's done. In this psalm, the psalmist simply praises God because He and He alone is worthy of our praise.

'Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.' Psalm 150:1-6

The psalmist begins by declaring the great hallelujah, Psalm 150:1, that is, praise the LORD, Psalm 150:1. They encourage everything which has breath to praise God in His sanctuary and in His mighty heavens, Psalm 150:1, that is, the sky, Genesis 1:6. Today as Christians we have Christ as our sanctuary, 1 Corinthians 3:16 / 2 Corinthians 6:16 / Hebrews 8:1-2 / Revelation 21:22.

Everything which has breath should praise God for His acts of power, Psalm 150:2. This was clearly demonstrated when Christ rose from the grave, Ephesians 1:19-20.

Everything which has breath should praise God for His surpassing greatness, Psalm 150:2, that is, they should praise God simply because of who He is and what He has done.

The psalmist now turns their attention to musical instruments. They were the instruments that were used to praise God in the Old Testament, because in the New Testament, we're commanded to use our voices to praise God, Ephesians 5:19 / Colossians 3:16.

God's people were to praise God with the sounding of the trumpet, Psalm 150:3, that is, the cornet. They were to praise God using the harp and lyre, Psalm 150:3 / Isaiah 5:12, the timbrel, Psalm 150:4 / Isaiah 5:12 / Exodus 15:20 / Judges 11:34 / 2 Samuel 6:5 / 1 Chronicles 13:8 / Job 21:12 / Psalm 81:2.

Notice also they were to praise God with dancing, Psalm 150:4 / Exodus 15:20 / Psalm 149:3, this was also practised in the Old Testament as part of their worship.

They were to praise God using the strings, Psalm 150:4 / 1 Samuel 18:16 / Isaiah 38:20 / Habakkuk 3:19, the pipe, Psalm 150:4 / Job 21:12 / Job 30:31, the clash of cymbals, resounding cymbals, Psalm 150:5.

Everyone and everything which has breath is encouraged to praise the LORD, Psalm 150:6 / Genesis 1:24-25 / Genesis 7:21-22 / Revelation 5:13. The psalmist ends their psalm in the same manner they began, Psalm 150:1, with the great hallelujah, praise the LORD, Psalm 150:6 / Isaiah 35:10.

CONCLUSION

The authors of Psalms 146-150 encouraged everything and everyone whom God created to praise God in worship of Him because of who He is and what He has done. The purpose of our worship is to glorify, honour, praise, exalt, and please God.
Our worship must show our adoration and loyalty to God for His grace in providing us with the way to escape the bondage of sin, so we can have the salvation He so much wants to give us.

The nature of the worship God demands is the prostration of our souls before Him in humble and contrite submission, James 4:5 / James 4:10. Our worship of God is a very humble and reverent action, John 4:23-24.
It doesn't say we can worship God any way we want, but we 'must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' The word 'must' makes it absolute. There is no other way we can worship God and be acceptable to Him.

God seeks true worshippers, and He identifies them as those who 'worship Him in spirit and in truth'. Worshipping God in spirit means that it must be done from the heart. Worshipping God in truth means that it must be done according to what God has specified in the Bible.

Worshipping God in spirit and in truth is a serious matter which must not be taken lightly. If we have any regard for our own souls, we will want to make sure we are worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

Since God is the object of our worship, He and He alone has the right to determine how we are to worship Him, Jeremiah 10:23. We are not granted the option of directing our own ways in religion.
God is the One who we look to for guidance and direction in our lives. Our very best in worship is due to God and is prescribed by Him in the Bible. The worship God has prescribed is the only way we can be pleasing to Him in this life and finally attain everlasting life with Him in eternity.

The Christian's worship is of the greatest importance. Worship is a time when we pay deep, sincere, awesome respect, love, and fear to the one who created us, Acts 17:24-25. God is the one who holds our eternal destiny in His hands.
Our salvation is a very serious matter and will not happen by accident. We must work it out 'with fear and trembling', Philippians 2:12. Our salvation depends on whether our worship is pleasing to God or not. On the Day of Judgment, it will be too late to make any corrections.
Worship should cause us to reflect on the majesty and graciousness of God and Christ, as contrasted to our own unworthiness. God does not have to have our worship, but we must worship Him to please Him.

Our singing, praying, studying His word, giving, and communion are designed by God to bring us closer to Him and to cause us to think more like He thinks, thus becoming more like Him. Our worship not only honours and magnifies God, but it is also for our own edification and strength, James 4:8.
Worship helps us develop a God-like and Christ-like character. We become like unto those we admire and worship. When we worship God, we tend to value what God values and gradually take on the characteristics and qualities of God, but never to His level, Philippians 2:5.
We renew our minds as we study and meditate on God's word and worship Him, Romans 12:2. When we worship God, we develop such traits as forgiveness, tenderness, justice, righteousness, purity, kindness, and love. All of this is preparing us for eternal life in heaven with God and Christ, Colossians 3:2.