

# PSALMS

# INTRODUCTION

"The Hebrew Psalms have furnished the bridal hymns, the battle songs, the pilgrim marches, the penitential prayers, and the public praises of every nation of Christendom since Christendom was born."

"At the time of the Reformation," says the great expositor Delitzsch, "the Psalter began to diffuse its odors as in the renewed freshness of a May morning." Von Miteller says that the Psalms can make a life of trial to be a life of joy; while LeFevre calls them "the marrow of lions."

The Psalter is found in the center of the Bible, and contains the heart of revelation. It is sometimes called "the Bible within the Bible," because it summarizes what precedes and anticipates what follows. It is the one book of Scripture for which every other book has a marked affinity.

Most of the Psalms are prayers—not merely forms of devotion but the heart utterances of men who could not live without God. All of their experiences—whether unheard-of sufferings or unutterable joy—are viewed in relation to the divine will.

A number of the Psalms are songs which celebrate the history of the Hebrew people. While the leading events are depicted in broad outline, there is also a wealth of detail. About one-third are anonymous; 73 bear the name of David; 24 are attributed to the minstrels of his reign and subsequent singers, some of whom lived in the glorious period of Ezra's restoration.

There are five books in the collection: first, Psalms 1-41; second, Psalms 42-72; third, Psalms 73-89; fourth, Psalms 90-106; fifth, Psalms 101-150.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

## Psalm 1:1-6

This Psalm reveals the contents of the entire Book of Psalms. It is the psalmist's purpose to teach the way to blessedness and to warn of the sure destruction of sinners. This Psalm, in some respects, is a text that makes the entire Book of Psalms an extraordinary sermon from the Lord. In the second part, from v. 4 to the end of the chapter, David contrasts the condition and character of the ungodly, reveals their future, and describes in telling language the ultimate doom of sinners.

The blessed man is described as negative (v. 1) and positive (v. 2): a man **(Ps. 1:1) who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly**. He receives wiser counsel. He walks in the Lord's commandments. The ways of obedience are pleasant paths of peace. His footsteps are ordered by the word of God, and not by the world's crafty and wicked devices. It is a rich sign of inner grace when the outer walk is changed, and ungodliness is far from our actions.

**Nor stands in the path of sinners.** His company is more select. Although a sinner, he is now a blood-washed sinner, made alive by the Holy Spirit and renewed in heart. Standing by the strength of God's rich grace, in the congregation of the righteous, he refuses to fellowship with evil.

**Nor sits in the seat of the scornful.** He finds no rest in the atheist's scoffing. Let others mock sin, eternity, hell, heaven, and the Eternal God, this man has learned a better philosophy. He has too great a sense of God's presence to hear His name blasphemed. The seat of the scornful may be lofty, but it is near the gate of hell. Flee from it. It will soon be empty, and destruction will swallow the one who sits on it.

**(Ps. 1:2) His delight is in the law of the LORD.** He is not under the law as a curse. He is **in the law**. He delights to be in it, he delights to **meditate** in it, to read it by day and meditate in it at night.

**The law of the Lord** is the true believer's daily bread. In David's day it was a small volume of inspiration, only the first five books of Moses. How much should we value the entire written word?

**(Ps. 1:3) He shall be like a tree planted.** Not a wild tree, but **a tree planted**, chosen, considered property, cultivated, and secured from the last terrible uprooting. "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted" (Matt. 15:13).

**By the rivers of water.** Even if one river should fail, God has another. The rivers of pardon, the rivers of grace, the rivers of promise, and the rivers of fellowship with Christ are never failing sources of supply. The saints' trials are divine farming that produces abundant fruit.

**(Ps. 1:4) The ungodly are not so.** We have now come to the second part of the Psalm. This verse uses the ill condition of the wicked to heighten the coloring of the righteous. We understand that whatever good is said about the righteous is not true of the ungodly.

This is their character, **like the chaff**, intrinsically worthless, dead, unserviceable, without substance, and easily carried away. This is their doom, **the wind drives away**. Death, with its terrible blast, will hurry them into the fire and they will be consumed.

**(Ps. 1:5) Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment.** They will stand there to be judged, but not to be acquitted. Fear will grip them, they will not stand their ground. They will flee and not stand in their defense. They will blush and be covered with eternal contempt. Well may the saints long for heaven where no evil dwells, **nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous**.

**(Ps. 1:6) For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.** Or as the Hebrew more fully expresses it, "The Lord is *knowing* the way of the righteous." He is constantly looking on their way. Though it is often in fog and darkness, still the Lord knows the way of the righteous. Even in clouds and storms of affliction, He understands the way of the righteous. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt. 10:30). "He will not allow your foot to be moved" (Ps. 121:3). "He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

**But the way of the ungodly shall perish.** Not only shall they perish, but their **way** shall perish. The righteous carve their names on the rock, but the wicked write their memories in the sand. The righteous plow the earth and sow a harvest that will never be fully reaped until we enter eternity's joys. The wicked plow the seas and there seems to be a shining trail behind their keel. Nevertheless, the waves will pass over it and the place that knew them will know them no more. **The way of the ungodly shall perish.**

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**How do you become one of those who are called "blessed" (Ps. 1:1)? What does Christ call those His life has reproduced in?**

Matt. 5:1-26, 48    Rom. 6:11    Gal. 2:20

**Explain how the blessed are like a "tree planted by the rivers of water."**

Matt. 15:13

**What does the portion of Psalm 1:3 mean to you "Whose leaf shall not wither"?**

## How are the godly and the wicked contrasted?

### Psalm 2:1-12

"Why do the nations conspire (rage, KJV)?" (Psalm 2:1). To the Psalmist's mind, humanity is like the heaving ocean, like a troubled sea which cannot rest. The stormy deep is frequently employed as a symbol of human passion, and of the troubled, restless masses of humanity. Along with this, the psalm expresses the idea of vanity, of unrest and strife. "Why do ... the peoples plot in vain?" (2:1). They are like the ocean, ever fretting but never accomplishing anything by its unrest, beating against the shore in futile rage, and rolling back again into its own restless tides, rising and falling, but never any fuller.

"Meaningless! Meaningless!" (Ecclesiastes 1:2) indeed. Oh, how little has come out of all the world's ambition and mighty endeavor! What is Pharaoh today but a withered mummy in a glass case? What is Caesar but a particle of dust that makes up old Rome? What has become of Nebuchadnezzar's grandeur or the very site of his splendid city? Well might the great Frenchman say as he gazed on the splendid pageant of the review of the Grand Army under the Pyramids, "Nothing is lacking here, nothing but permanence." Oh, how the smallest fragment of all that which came from God lives in immortal glory while the mightiest monument of human greatness passes away in oblivion!

Pharaoh is gone, but Moses remains. Nero is forgotten, but Paul is more illustrious today than when he died under Nero's hand. Nebuchadnezzar is but a dream, but Daniel's prophecies are only today reaching their grandest fulfillment. Pontius Pilate and Tiberias Caesar have disappeared, but Jesus Christ, their contemporary, is rising every day, every century, into still more prominence.

"The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. 'Let us break their chains,' they say, 'and throw off their fetters' " (2:2-3). This is the spirit of lawlessness which in every age has resisted the authority of God and is culminating today, as never before, in a thousand forms of license and lawlessness, and which is to reach its full development in the coming of the Lawless One. We see it in its most extreme forms in the anarchy and socialism of our age and the revolt of men against every form of government and religion.

The age is rapidly drifting into license and lawlessness, and we need not wonder at the bolder forms that the daring infidelity and wickedness assume, in defying the very authority of heaven and claiming that man is able to be a god unto himself. We shall yet see greater things than these. The world is hastening to its Armageddon, "for the battle on the great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:14).

How different is all on the heaven side!

How calm and tranquil is Jehovah amid the raging of His foes! He is "enthroned in heaven" (Psalm 2:4). He is not agitated; He is not oppressed. He is not even doing anything, but calmly waiting till they have spent their force in vain, like the fretting billows against the rockbound coast.

He despises all their petty and futile hostility. "The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them" (2:4). How foolish must seem to Him all the efforts of His enemies to defy Him! How ridiculous the attacks of infidelity upon the Bible, and how vain the fiercest assaults of human and hellish hatred against the cause of Christ! How God loves to confound His enemies by little things, and to laugh to scorn their vain attempt to resist Him.

Once in England, it is said, a bold and blatant infidel had amused and overawed a crowd by his defiance of God to strike him dead; and after again and again appealing to heaven to prove if there was anything in Christianity, without any apparent effect, he turned to his audience and ridiculed the God who was powerless to harm him. Some were influenced by his audacity, but God was waiting. On his way home, apparently in good health, he suddenly fell from his horse, and in a few moments expired. A medical examination was held; it was found that the cause of his death was a little insect no larger than a sand fly, which he had inhaled. This smallest of insects was sent against him to show how contemptible all his strength and opposition were, and how easily God could confound and destroy him by the feeblest of His creatures.

We see the divine King. "You are my Son; today I have become your Father" (2:7). Earth's true King is no less than God's eternal Son. That which should be recognized as the height of honor has been the one object of the world's fiercest opposition. The Lord's parable has been fulfilled. "Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. But . . . they said . . . 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance' " (Matthew 21:37-38). But He shall have His inheritance in this little world, the high and eternal honor of having as its King, the Creator of all worlds and the highest of all beings.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

The first Psalm was a contrast between the righteous man and the sinner; the second Psalm is a contrast between the tumultuous disobedience of the ungodly world and the sure exaltation of the righteous Son of God. In the first Psalm, we saw the wicked driven away like chaff; in the second Psalm, we see them broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. In the first Psalm, we beheld the righteous like a tree planted by the rivers of water; and here, we contemplate Christ, the Covenant Head of the righteous, made better than a tree planted by the rivers of water, for *he* is made king of all the

islands, and all the heathen bow before him and kiss the dust; while he himself gives a blessing to all those who put their trust in him. The two Psalms are worthy of the very deepest attention; they are, in fact, the preface in the entire Book of Psalms, and were by some of the ancients, joined into one. They are, however, two Psalms; for Paul speaks of this as the second Psalm. (Acts 13:33) The first shows us the character and lot of the righteous; and the next teaches us that the Psalms are Messianic, and speak of Christ the Messiah — the Prince who shall reign from the river even unto the ends of the earth. (Charles Haddon Spurgeon) **What are the prophecies concerning Christ in this second Psalm?**

**What are the bands (bonds) and cords in Psalm 2:3 that try to tie up His Anointed?**

**Why must kings and judges “serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling” (Psalm 2:11)? Is it possible to rejoice while at the same time be in fear?**

### **Psalms 3:1-8**

**A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.** You remember the sad story of David's flight from the palace to hide from his rebellious son's fury (2 Sam. 15:14). He forded the brook Kidron with a few faithful followers, and in this David was a type (foreshadow) of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus also fled across the brook Kidron with a feeble band of followers when His people rebelled against Him (John 18:1).

Many expositors call this Psalm, "The Morning Hymn." May we always wake with a holy confidence in our heart and a song on our lips!

**(Ps. 3:2)** In the bitterest drop of his distress, David complains to his loving God about the enemy's worst weapon. **Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God."** Some said this in sorrow, but his enemies boasted it. They wanted David's destruction. The worst cut was when they declared that God had forsaken him. David knew he had given them grounds for this statement, for in the light of day he had sinned against God. They flung Bathsheba at him. "Go up, you bloody man. God has forsaken and left you." Shimei cursed him to his face, "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul . . . You are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man" (2 Sam. 16:7, 8). Shimei was bold because many thought of David in this fashion. This infernal suggestion staggered his faith. If all the trials that come from heaven and all the temptations that ascend from hell could be mixed with all of earth's crosses, they would not make a trial so terrible as that which is contained in this verse. It is the most bitter of all afflictions to fear that there is no help in God.

Yet remember our blessed Savior endured this to the deepest degree when He cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). Jesus knew what it was to walk in darkness and not see light. This was the curse of the curse, wormwood mixed with gall. Deserted by His Father was worse than being despised by men. Surely we should love Him who suffered this most bitter trial for us. It is delightful and instructive to mark the Lord in His agonies. There is in this Psalm, and in many other Psalms, far more of David's Lord than David.

David declares confidence in God. **(Ps. 3:3) You, O LORD, are a shield for me.** The original word means more than a shield. It is a buckler that gives complete protection, a shield above, beneath, around, without, and within. What a shield God is for His people. He quenches the fiery darts of Satan from beneath (Eph. 6:16) and the storms of trials from above. And at the same moment, He speaks peace to the inner tempest.

You are **my glory**. David knew that though driven from his capital in contempt and scorn, he would return in triumph. By faith he believes that God will honor and glorify him. Oh, for grace to see our future glory in our present shame. There is a present glory in affliction, if only we could discern it. It is no small thing to have "fellowship with Christ in His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10).

**(Ps. 3:5) I lay down and slept.** David's faith enabled him to lie down. Anxiety would have kept him on tiptoe, watching for an enemy, but he could sleep, **sleep** in the midst of trouble, surrounded by foes. "He gives His beloved sleep" (Ps. 127:2). There is a sleep of presumption. God deliver us from it! There is a sleep of holy confidence. God help us to close our eyes!

David, though exposed to many enemies, reclined his head on God's bosom and slept securely under the wings of Providence. He awoke in safety, **for the LORD sustained me.**

**(Ps. 3:8) Salvation belongs to the LORD.** This verse contains the sum and substance of Calvinistic doctrine. Search the Scripture, read it with a candid mind, and you will be persuaded that the doctrine of salvation by grace alone is the great doctrine of the word of God: **Salvation belongs to the LORD.** This is a point for which we fight daily. Our opponents say, "Salvation belongs to the free will of man, if not to man's merit, at least to man's will." But we hold and teach that salvation from first to last, every iota of it, belongs to the Most High God. It is God that chooses His people. He calls them by His grace. He brings them life by His Spirit. He keeps them by His power. "So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Rom. 9:16). Learn this truth by your experience. Our proud flesh and blood will never permit us to learn it any other way.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

Show which verses:

1. David pleads for help.
2. Calmly trusts in God for an answer.
3. Gives glory to God.

Is the ability to lie down in confidence and not be afraid a work done by the Holy Spirit or is it a natural resolution of manly courage?

Enlarge on the idea that the Lord is to be stirred up (Ps.3:7).

### Psalm 4:1-8

**(Ps. 4:1) Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.** This is another example of David's common habit of pleading past mercies as a basis for present favor. He renews his memorial monuments and takes comfort from them. It is not to be imagined that He who has helped us in six troubles will leave us in the seventh (Job 5:19). God does nothing by halves. He will never stop helping until we cease to need. Manna will fall every morning until we cross the Jordan (Ex. 16:15).

In the second part of the Psalm we are led from the prayer closet to the conflict. Notice the courage of the man of God, David admits that his enemies are great (this is the meaning of the Hebrew word translated "sons of men"), but he still believes they are foolish. He chides them as though they were children. He tells them that they **(Ps. 4:2) love worthlessness and seek falsehood**; they love lying, empty fancies, vain conceits, and wicked fabrications. He asks **how long** will they make his honor a jest, and his fame a mockery? A little of this mirth is too much. Why do they continually indulge in it? Hadn't they been watching long enough for his failure? Had repeated disappointments convinced them that the Lord's anointed would not be overcome by their slander? Did they mean to jest their souls into hell, and laugh until swift vengeance would turn their merriment into howling?

**(Ps. 4:3) But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the LORD will hear when I call to Him.** "Shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him?" (Luke 18:7). Since He chose to love us, He cannot but choose to hear us.

**(Ps. 4:5) Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.** When the Jews offered sacrifice righteously, in a spiritual manner, they set forth the Redeemer, the great sin atoning Lamb. Thus, we have the full gospel in David's exhortation. Sinners, flee to the sacrifice of Calvary, put your full confidence and **trust** in Him who died for you, the Lord Jehovah.

**(Ps. 4:6) There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.** We have now entered the Psalm's third division. Here the faith of the afflicted finds words of sweet contentment and peace. There were many, even among David's followers, who wanted to see rather than to believe. Unfortunately, this is the tendency of all! Even the regenerate groan after prosperity and are sad when darkness covers good. As for sinners, this is their unceasing cry, **Who will show us any good?** Never satisfied, they turn their gaping mouths in every direction; their empty hearts are ready to drink any delusion that impostors invent. When these fail, they soon despair and declare that there are no good things in either heaven or earth.

**(Ps.4:7) You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the season that their grain and wine increased.** "It is better," said someone, "to feel God's favor for one hour in our repenting souls than to sit for ages under this world's warmest sunshine." Christ in the heart is better than corn in the barn or wine in the vat. Corn and wine are only fruits of the world, but the light of God's countenance is the ripe fruit of heaven. "You are with me," is a far more blessed *cry* than, "Harvest home." Let my barns be empty; I am full of blessings if Jesus Christ smiles on me. If I have all the world, I am poor without Him.

**(Ps. 4:8) I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.** How many sleepless hours can be traced to our untrusting and disordered minds. They slumber sweetly whom faith rocks to sleep. No pillow is so soft as a promise, no blanket is so warm as an assured interest in Christ.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

How does David approach God in Psalm 4:1?

Why are the men in Psalm 4:2 foolish?

What does it mean in Psalm 4:4 when it says; "to be angry and sin not"?

Eph. 4:25-27

What are the sacrifices God wants us to offer?

Ps. 4:5

### What is the outcome after sacrificial offerings?

Ps. 4:7-8

### Psalm 5:1-12

Throughout the first, second, third, and fourth Psalms, the subject is a contrast between the position, character, and prospects of the righteous and the wicked. This Psalm is the same. The psalmist carries out a contrast between himself, made righteous by God's grace, and the wicked who oppose him. This Psalm is a precious view of the Lord Jesus, who, in the days of His flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears (Heb. 5:7).

The psalmist, having expressed resolution to pray, now pleads against his cruel and wicked enemies. He uses a mighty argument: he begs God to put them away because they are displeasing to God. **(Ps. 5:4) For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with You.** "When I pray against my adversary, says David, "I pray against the things You abhor." **You** hate evil. Lord, I implore You, deliver me from it! Learn this solemn truth: a righteous God hates sin. He has no pleasure in wickedness, however witty, grand, and proud; its glitter has no charm for Him. People may bow before successful villainy and forget the wickedness of the battle in the gaudiness of the triumph, but the Lord of Holiness shall not forget.

**Nor shall evil dwell with you.** He will not give it any shelter. Neither on earth nor in heaven will evil share God's mansion. It is foolish to attempt to entertain two guests so hostile to one another as Christ Jesus and the devil! Rest assured, Christ will not live in the parlor of our hearts if we entertain the devil in the cellar of our thoughts.

**(Ps. 5:7) But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; in fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.** With this verse, the first part of the Psalm ends. The psalmist has prayed; he described before God an argument for deliverance. Now he contrasts this with the condition of the righteous; **but as for me, I will come into Your house.** I will not stand at a distance. I will come to Your sanctuary, as a child comes to its parents' home. I will not come by my merits. I have a multitude of sins. Therefore, I will come **in the multitude of Your mercy.** I will approach You with confidence because of Your immeasurable grace. God's judgments are all numbered, but His mercies are innumerable. He gives His wrath by weight but His mercy without weight.

**(Ps. 5:8)**

**Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness  
because of my enemies;  
Make Your way straight before my face.**

This is second part of the Psalm. David repeats his arguments and covers the same ground. **Lead me, O LORD**, as a little child is led by its parents, as a friend guides a blind person. Walking when God leads is safe and pleasant.

**In Your righteousness**, not in *my* righteousness, for that is imperfect, but in *Yours*, for You are righteousness.

**Make Your way**, not *my* way, **straight before my face.** When we have learned to give up our way, and when we long to walk in God's way, it is a happy sign of grace. It is no small mercy to see God's way with clear vision. Errors about duty can lead us into a sea of sins before we know where we are.

**(Ps. 5:9) For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is destruction. Their throat is an open tomb; they flatter with their tongue.** This description of depraved humanity, along with other quotations, was placed in the second chapter of Romans by the apostle Paul. It is an accurate description of the human race, not just of David's enemies. Note this remarkable figure of speech, **Their throat is an open tomb**, a loathsome **tomb** full of noxious fumes, pestilence, and death.

**(Ps. 5:10) Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against You. Against You**, not against *me*. If they were *my* enemies I would forgive them, but I cannot forgive Yours. We are to forgive *our* enemies, but we do not have the power to forgive God's enemies.

**(Ps. 5:12) For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield.** Jehovah has ordained His people to be the heirs of blessedness; nothing will rob their inheritance. With all the fullness of His power He will bless them. All His attributes will unite to fill them with divine contentment. This blessing is not merely for the present, it reaches into the long and unknown future. **You, O LORD, will bless the righteous.** This is a promise of infinite length, unbounded breadth, and unutterable preciousness.

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### What are the expressions used to portray the ungodly?

Ps. 5:5-6

## Give examples of the guilty who fell or will fall by their own counsels (Ps. 5:10)?

Esther 7:10

### Psalm 6:1-10

**(Ps. 6:3) O LORD—how long? Return, O LORD; deliver me!** God's absence was the main cause of David's misery. The Lord's return would be enough to deliver him from trouble.

**(Ps. 6:4) Oh save me for Your mercies' sake.** He knows where to look and what arm to grasp. He does not hold God's left hand of justice; he holds His right hand of mercy. David knew his iniquity too well to appeal to anything but the grace of God. **For Your mercies' sake!** What a plea! How prevailing it is with God! If we turn to justice, what plea can we use? But if we turn to mercy, we may cry, despite the greatness of our guilt, **Save me for Your mercies' sake!**

**(Ps. 6:6)** The psalmist gives a fearful description of his long agony, **I am weary with my groaning.** He groaned until he was hoarse. He cried for mercy until prayer became an effort. God's people may groan, but they may not complain. Yes, burdened they must groan, or they will never shout in the day of deliverance.

**All night** (when nature needs rest and when I am most alone) **I make my bed swim.** My grief is fearful. If God does not save me soon, my tears will be so many that my bed will swim. This is a description of what David feared, not what took place.

You must weep, but keep it short. Get up, get up, from your garbage heaps. Throw away your sackcloth and ashes! "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Ps. 30:5). David has found peace. Rising from his knees he sweeps the house. **(Ps. 6:8) Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.** The best remedy against evil is a long space. "Be gone; I can have no fellowship with you." Repentance is practical. It is not enough to regret the desecration of the heart's temple, we must scourge out the buyers and sellers and overturn the money changers' tables. A pardoned sinner *will hate the sins* that cost the Savior His blood. Grace and sin are quarrelsome neighbors. One or the other must go.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### What should our reaction be to the words of Psalm 6:1?

Ps. 6:2

David may be thinking that it is his own sin that has caused this trouble upon him. **How does he handle this suspicion?**

Ps. 6:2-3, 8-10

### Psalm 7:1-17

From the title, we learn the occasion of the composition. Cush, the Benjamite, had probably accused David of treason against Saul's royal authority. King Saul was willing to believe this because of his jealousy of David and the relationship that probably existed between himself, the son of Kish, and this Cush, or Kish, the Benjamite. They who are near the throne can do far more injury to a subject than an ordinary slanderer.

This Psalm may be called the "Song of the Slandered Saint." Even the worst of evils may furnish a reason for a Psalm. What a blessing to turn the most disastrous event into a theme for a song, and so turn the tables on our great enemy. Learn a lesson from Luther who said, "David made Psalms. We also will make Psalms, and sing them to the Lord's honor to spite and mock the devil."

**(Ps. 7:1)** David appears before God to plead against the accuser who had charged him with treason and treachery. The case is opened with a declaration of confidence in God. Whatever the emergency, it is never wrong to retain our reliance on God. **O LORD my God:** mine by a special covenant, sealed with Jesus' blood and ratified in my soul by a sense of union to You. **In You,** and in You only, **I put my trust.** I shake in my distress, but my rock does not move. Distrusting God is never right. Trusting Him is never wrong.

With both divine relationship and holy trust to strengthen him, David utters the burden of his desire, **Save me from all those who persecute me.**

**And deliver me.** Extricate me from their snares. Acquit me of their accusations. Give a true and just deliverance in this trial of my injured character. David clearly states his case. Make sure that we know what we would have when we come to the throne of mercy. Pause before you pray, so that you will not offer the sacrifice of fools. Get a distinct idea of your need, and then you can pray with the fluency of fervency.

**(Ps. 7:6) Arise, O LORD, in Your anger.** David's sorrow makes him view the Lord as a judge who left the judgment seat and retired. Faith would move the Lord to avenge His saints.

**Lift Yourself up because of the rage of my enemies.** A stronger figure of speech expresses David's anxiety that the Lord would assume His authority and mount the throne. Stand up, O God, rise above them all. Let Your justice tower above their villainies.

**(Ps. 7:11) And God is angry with the wicked every day.** He not only detests sin, He is angry with those who continue in it. We do not have an insensible and stoic God. He can be angry. He is angry today and every day, with the ungodly and impenitent sinners. The best day that ever dawns on a sinner brings a curse. Sinners may have many feast days but no safe days. From the beginning of the year to its end, there is not an hour that God's oven is not burning in readiness for the wicked.

**(Ps. 7:12) If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword.** Blows will be dealt by that long uplifted arm. God's sword has been sharpened on the revolving stone of our daily wickedness. If we will not repent, it will speedily cut us to pieces. "Turn or burn" is the sinner's only alternative.

**He bends His bow and makes it ready.** Even now the thirsty arrow longs to be wet with the persecutor's blood. The bow is bent, the aim is taken, and the arrow is fitted to the string. Sinner, if the arrow should fly at you, God's arrows never miss the mark. They are "instruments of death." Judgment may tarry, but it will not be late. The Greek proverb says, "The mill of God grinds late, but grinds to powder."

**(Ps. 7:15) He has fallen into the ditch which he made.** There he is. Laugh at his disappointment. He is the beast; he has hunted his own soul, and the chase has brought him a good victim. Come and make merry with this trapped hunter, this biter who has bitten himself. Show him no pity, for it will be wasted on such a wretch. Being paid in his own coin richly rewards him; he speaks evil, and it has fallen into his heart. He set his house on fire with the torch that he lit to burn a neighbor. He sent a foul bird, and it has come back to nest.

**(Ps. 7:16)** The rod he lifted has struck back. He shot an arrow, and it has returned **upon his own head.** He hurled a stone and it has **come down on his own crown.** Curses are like young chickens, they always come home to roost; ashes always fly back at those who throw them. "As he loved cursing, so let it come to him." (Ps. 109:17.) Often this has been the case in both ancient and modern history. People have burned their fingers hoping to brand their neighbor. If this does not happen now, it will later. The Lord caused dogs to lick the blood of Ahab in Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:19; 22:38). Sooner or later the persecutors' evil deeds will leap into their arms. So it will be in the last great day, Satan's fiery darts will strike his heart, and all his followers will reap the harvest they have sown.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Show how the deliverance of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked are the theme for this Psalm.**

### Psalm 8:1-9

**"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" (8:4).** Surely at first sight man seems to be a strange contradiction as heir of all this mighty universe. His body, how weak and frail, the prey of disease, the victim of even the animal creation, and at last the food of corruption and the worm; his mind so weak and enfeebled even to understand this mighty world; his spirit so oppressed by sin and sorrow, and led captive by evil influences and unhallowed beings! How touching Job's description of the littleness of man who dwells in a house of clay, whose habitation is in the dust, who is crushed before the north, whose days are as a handbreadth, and his life like the withering grass of the field!

And yet in the great purpose of God, man has an importance that we can scarcely comprehend. Man, little as he may be, sustains a relation to the Creator of this universe which is unspeakably intimate and glorious. Into our nature has come the very Son of God Himself. The eternal Creator has called Himself our Brother. Our human form is worn by Him who sits upon the throne. Our strange race, fallen though it is, has been chosen as the one eternal link between the Creator and the creation; and to latest ages, as angel after angel shall come, and inhabitant after inhabitant shall find his way to the great metropolis of the universe, he shall still find seated upon the throne, supreme above all those glorious worlds that we have just been viewing, a Man.

This it is that makes our race so important, that it is related to God Himself, and has been chosen to be the eternal embodiment of Deity. This is the mystery of godliness: "He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, . . . was taken up in glory" (1 Timothy 3:16).

And so man is linked with the greatest principle in the universe, the achievement of redemption, the settlement of the question of sin without inflicting punishment, the salvation of a lost race in harmony with the justice of God.

The question of sin, so far as justice was concerned, had been settled long before when Satan and his legions had been hurled from heaven because of their disobedience and rebellion.

But now another question has come up. How can sin be met in any other way—not by judgment, but by mercy—and yet the holiness and justice of God be vindicated? Nothing less than the infinite wisdom and love of God met the issue. His own Son undertook the amazing mission, and, clothed in human form, bore the penalty of a guilty race, and now is working out for them the wondrous transformation by which the effects of that atonement become applied. And they are brought back not only from all the effects of sin, but to a place infinitely higher than the race ever could have enjoyed

before—to be the sons of God, the partakers of the divine nature, the heirs of all the glory of which we have just now been speaking.

This gives to man an importance of which he in himself is altogether unworthy. This little planet has been chosen as the theater for working out the greatest problem of the ages, and it is yet to become the scene of the triumphant march of the King of kings and the Conqueror of Satan, over which all the stars shall wave their torches, and all the spheres shall sing in concert with cherubim and seraphim: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Revelation 5:12).

We see Jesus, the Head of humanity, crowned already as the pledge that we shall share His crown and inherit all His glory. The race is not yet victorious, but the Head of the race is; and where He is, we shall be; as He is, so shall we be like Him! Glorious hope! We have not the victory yet in all its fullness, but we have the Victor, and "both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are all of the same family" (2:11).

He is not there for Himself, but for us, "head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (Ephesians 1:22-23). Glorious vision! Glorious forerunner! Glorious guarantee! It is enough! Man is crowned! Man is crowned in the Son of man; and all His spiritual seed are following hard after Him and soon shall be by His side. Oh, as we see our failings and shortcomings, our limitations and disappointments, let us look up! One has reached yonder heights, and we are following Him. Invisible cords bind us to His heart. We can never be separated from Him. Not as a solitary and selfish Conqueror does He sit yonder, but as our Brother and Helper. From His heart there come to our hearts the cords of love and power that are drawing us to Him to share His dominion and to partake of His glory.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

This Psalm speaks of the recovery of man by the second Adam. **Using the verses below explain more in detail our recovery from our past state under the curse of the first Adam.**

Gen. 3:15 Job 19:25 Isa. 11:4-9 Rom. 5:12-21 1 Cor. 15:47-49 Heb. 2:6-9

### **Psalm 9:1-20**

However the Psalms may differ, in this they agree, that every one of them contains utterances of joy, for each anticipates victory and deliverance from the Lord. We may have to descend into the valley of humiliation, but we shall be brought forth with the voice of praise and thanksgiving; for ours is not the sorrow of the world, which works death. What a gracious covenant-God is ours! how merciful in all His dealings; how faithful in all His leadings! In all things and at all times we can implicitly trust Him. Hence, if one resolve is more settled than another in the renewed soul, it is to praise Him 'with the *whole* heart.' Let us remember that all is done and finished for us: nothing, therefore, is left but to '*praise* Thee, O Jehovah!' The salvation of our souls—alike the forgiveness of sins, the sanctification of the heart, and final continuance—are secured by what Christ has already done, and God has already accepted.

Nor can ours be merely the praise of the lips: it is that of the heart, and of the 'whole heart' (ver. 1). 'The love of Christ constraineth us;' 'we love Him because He first loved us.' Such love must engross the whole heart; it also leads to corresponding action: 'I will show forth all Thy marvelous works.' Henceforth this theme must wholly occupy us, and form the object of our lives (vers. 1, 2). A child of God is of necessity a missionary. If others speak well of what they love, how can we otherwise than 'show forth' all His 'marvelous works?' Besides, our deliverances are not all over and past; they are daily renewed. We breathe an atmosphere of miracles, and move in a path which shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. We believe, not merely because *He saw* us under the fig-tree—marvel of grace though this was—but because we still 'see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.' Our enemies, which are His also, 'are turned back.' It needs no visible weapons to destroy them. God sends not an army and horsemen to destroy Herod in the hour of his pride. The worms will suffice for it. And this is a marked characteristic of such dispensations, that when He begins, He makes a full end with His enemies. When they 'are turned back, they shall fall and perish at Thy presence.' Observe, in history and in Providence, this distinction—while the heathen are *rebuked* (whether so far as concerns their persons, or the heathen element), the wicked are *destroyed*, and their very name, remembrance, achievements, and undertakings, are brought to a perpetual end (vers. 4-7). How calmly and patiently may we look on! (ver. 7). It is as if we emerged from a stifled atmosphere into sweet, pure summer air; it is as if we escaped from storm and wreck to some quiet, landlocked haven of rest. 'But the Lord shall endure forever': There is here a very noteworthy inference. From the dealings of Jehovah we rise to a view of His character. History teaches doctrine, and Providence points to grace. These two, indeed, illustrate each other. From His Word I learn to know His working, and from His working I learn to understand His Word. In one sense all history is Christian; for the government is on His shoulder. History either prepares the way *for* Christ, or the way *of* Christ. And what a glorious assurance, that amidst all upheavings, 'nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure.' How fully, then, may I trust my cares, wants, and difficulties to Him! That which is awful to the sinner is the ground of my confidence. His faithfulness and truth, His righteousness and strength, are all arrayed on the side of His people (vers. 9, 10). The truths about God, which strike

terror into the heart of the world, bring sweetest comfort to the Church. 'And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.'

O my soul, what more than this could you require? It reaches to the highest height, and descends to the lowest depth; it extends to heaven, and cometh down to the dust. If we know Thy blessed name, O our Jesus, Thy love and Thy power, we will rest on Thee, both calmly and safely, till these calamities be overpast. And if I am not conscious of trust; if darkness gather around my mind, and sadness brood over my heart—Lord, *Thou* hast not (Thou *never* can, and never has) forsaken them that seek Thee, nor any one of them. If I cannot hold, I am holden; if I have not conscious faith, Thou hast faithfulness. The more steadily I look out of myself and to Him; the more entirely I forget myself and remember Him; the more simple my faith is—not studying its own actings so much as Him, and His grace and power—the more peace and cause for praise shall I have (ver. 11). Such experience will find a way outward. There is, so to speak, a propelling character in the experience of grace. 'We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' Excessive prudence is sometimes excessive coldness, fear of man, and want of realizing faith. 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.' Let us also remember that it is the special commission of the Lord, the special mission of the Church, to 'declare among the nations His doings,' and, as Calvin has it, 'even though this be like preaching to deaf ears.'

(The Golden Diary, Alfred Edersheim)

### **What part of our being should praise be coming from?**

Ps. 9:1

### **How are the wicked ensnared?**

Ps. 9:15-16

### **Psalm 10:1-18**

**(Ps. 10:1)**

**Why do You stand afar off, O LORD?**

**Why do You hide in times of trouble?**

To the tearful eye of the sufferer, the Lord seemed to **stand** still, calmly looking on, as if he did not sympathize with His afflicted. Even worse, the Lord appeared to **stand afar off**, no longer "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1) but an inaccessible mountain. God's presence is His people's joy. Any suspicion of His absence is distraction beyond measure. But remember, the Lord is always close; the refiner is never far from the mouth of the furnace when His gold is in the fire. The Son of God is always walking in the midst of the flames when His holy children are in them (Dan. 3:25); He knows when we are sharply tested. Yet when deliverance does not come, we think that the Lord has neglected us.

**(Ps. 10:2) Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.** This prayer is reasonable, just, and natural. Even our enemies should be treated as they treat others. We weigh you in your scales and measure your corn with your bushel. Terrible will be the day, persecuting Babylon, when you will be made to drink the wine cup that you filled with the blood of saints. None will dispute God's justice when He hangs every Haman on his own gallows (Esth. 7:10) and casts the enemy of His Daniels into their own lion's den (Dan. 6:24).

**(Ps. 10:15) Break the arm of the wicked and the evil man.** Let the sinner lose power to sin. Stop the tyrant, arrest the oppressor, weaken the mighty, and dash the wicked to pieces. They deny Your justice, so let them feel it to the full. They will feel it; God will hunt the sinner forever. Few great persecutors have ever died in their beds. The curse has manifestly pursued them; their terrible sufferings have made them acknowledge divine justice. God permits tyrants to rise as thorn hedges to protect His church from the hypocrites' intrusion. God also uses tyrants to teach His backsliding children, as Gideon did the men of Succoth with the briers of the wilderness (Judges 8:16).

**(Ps. 10:16-18)**

**The LORD is King forever and ever;**

**The nations have perished out of His land.**

**LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble;**

**You will prepare their heart;**

**You will cause Your ear to hear,**

**To do justice to the fatherless and to the oppressed,**

**That the man of the earth may oppress no more.**

The Psalm ends with a song of thanksgiving to the great and everlasting King. He has granted the desire of His humble and oppressed people; He has defended the fatherless and punished the nations who trampled His poor and afflicted children. Let us learn that we will run well if we carry our complaint to the King of kings. Rights will be vindicated

and wrongs redressed. His government does not neglect the interests of the needy or tolerate the oppression of the mighty.

Great God, we leave ourselves in Your hand; to You we commit Your church afresh. Arise, O God, let the man of the earth—the creature of a day—be broken before the majesty of Your power. Come, Lord Jesus, and glorify Your people. Amen and Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### Where does the confidence of the oppressor lie?

Ps. 10:2-6, 11, 13

### Has God prepared the heart of the believer to ask for things that are pleasing to Him?

2 Chr. 30:12      Ps. 10:17      Rom. 8:26      Phil. 2:13

### Psalm 11:1-7

To help us remember this short but sweet Psalm, we will call it, "The Song of the Steadfast".

**(Ps. 11:1-3)** David, on some unmentioned occasion, faced a temptation to distrust God; these verses (1-3) are about that experience. Perhaps in Saul's court he was advised to flee; flight would have been a breach of duty or a cowardly act. His case was like Nehemiah's enemies, who, under the garb of friendship, tried to trap him by advising escape. Had he done so they would have found grounds for accusation. Nehemiah bravely replied, "Should such a man as I flee?" (Neh. 6:11). David, in the same spirit, refuses to run. He exclaims, **In the LORD I put my trust; how can you say to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?** When Satan can overthrow us by presumption, how craftily will he attempt to ruin us by distrust! He will employ our dearest friends to argue away our confidence. He will use such plausible logic that, unless we assert our immovable trust in Jehovah, we will be like the timid bird that flies to the mountain when danger threatens.

Forcibly the case is put! **The wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow on the string.** Flee, flee, defenseless birds, your safety lies in flight. Go, for your enemies will send their arrows into your heart. Hurry; hurry, or you will be destroyed! David seems to have felt the force of the advice. It came home to his soul. Yet he would not yield to it. He would rather face danger than exhibit a distrust in God. Doubtless, the perils that surrounded David were great and imminent; it was quite true, his enemies were ready to shoot him.

It was equally correct that the foundations of law and justice were destroyed under Saul's government. Yet what were all these things to the man whose trust was in God alone? He could brave the dangers, escape the enemies, and defy the injustice. **What can the righteous do?** David's answer would be the counter question, "What can't they do?" When prayer engages God on our side, and when faith secures the promise's fulfillment, there is no reason to flee. With a sling and a stone, David killed a giant that frightened Israel (1 Sam. 17:50). If the Lord delivered him from the uncircumcised Philistine, He could surely deliver him from King Saul and his ruffians. There is no such word as *impossible* in the language of faith. Martial grace knows how to fight and conquer. It does not know how to flee.

**(Ps. 11:4) The LORD is in His holy temple.** The heavens are above our heads in all of earth's regions, and so the Lord is ever near in every state and condition. This is a strong reason not to adopt the vile suggestions of distrust. There is one in the temple above, who pleads His precious blood on our behalf. There is one on the throne, who is never deaf to the intercession of His Son. Why should we fear? What plots can men devise that Jesus will not discover? Satan has desired to have us that he may sift us as wheat, but Jesus is in the temple praying for us (Luke 22:31-32). How can our faith fail? What attempts can the wicked make that Jehovah will not see? He is in His holy temple, delighting in the sacrifice of His Son. He will defeat every device and send a sure deliverance.

**The LORD's throne is in heaven.** He reigns supreme. Nothing can be done in heaven, earth, or hell that He does not permit. He is the world's great Emperor. Why should we flee? If we trust this King of kings, is not this enough? Can He not deliver us without our cowardly retreat? Yes, blessed be the Lord our God, we salute Him as Jehovah-nissi. We set up our banners in His name, and instead of flight, we again raise the shout of war.

**His eyes behold.** The eternal Watcher never slumbers; His eyes never sleep. **His eyelids test the sons of men.** He scrutinizes their actions, words, and thoughts. As people, when intently inspecting some minute object, almost close their eyelids to exclude every other object, so the Lord looks all men through and through. God sees each perfectly, as if there were no other creature in the universe. He sees us always. He never removes His eye. He sees us from the recesses of the soul to the glance of the eye. Is not this a sufficient ground of confidence and an abundant answer to depression? My danger is not hidden from Him. He knows my extremity. I rest assured that He will not allow me to perish while I rely only on Him. Why should I fly like a frightened bird and flee from the dangers that surround me?

**(Ps. 11:5) The LORD tests the righteous.** He does not hate them; He only tests them. They are precious to Him, and so He refines them with afflictions. None of the Lord's children can escape from trials. We should not want to, for trials are the channels of many blessings.

**But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.** Why shall I flee from the wicked? If God hates them, I will not fear. Haman was great in the palace, but when he lost favor and the king abhorred him, the lowest servants suggested the gallows for the man they once feared (Esth. 7:9). We will not run away. If God is in the quarrel, questioning the result would be foolish. Sodom and Gomorrah perished by a fiery hail and a brimstone shower from heaven (Gen. 19:24); so will the ungodly. They may gather like Gog and Magog to battle, but the Lord will rain down "flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Ezek. 38:22).

**(Ps. 11:6)** Some expositors think that the **burning wind** is an allusion to the simoon, a burning, suffocating wind that blows across the Arabian deserts. "A burning storm," is what Lowth calls it, while another great commentator reads it "wrath wind." In either version, the language is full of terror. What a storm that will be, as it overwhelms the despisers of God! What a shower that will be, as it pours on impenitent sinners in hell! Repent, rebels, or this fiery deluge will soon surround you. The horrors of hell will be your inheritance. A drop of hell is terrible. What will a full cup of torment be? Think of it, a cup of misery but not a drop of mercy. Oh, people of God, how foolish to fear the faces of those who will soon be fuel in the fire of hell! Think of their end, their fearful end, and all fear of them turns into contempt and pity.

**(Ps. 11:7)** The delightful contrast of the last verse is worth our attention. It gives another overwhelming reason why we should "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58), not carried away with fear or led to adopt carnal expedients to avoid trial. **For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness.** It is not only His obligation to defend righteousness; it is His nature to love to do it. He would deny Himself if He did not defend the just. It is essential to the being of God that He should be just. Fear not, God approves, and if men oppose, what difference would it make?

Are we tempted to put our light under a basket or under a bed? (Mark 4:21). Is it suggested that there are ways to avoid the cross and shun the reproach of Christ? Do not listen to the charmer's voice. Seek an increase of faith, that you may wrestle against principalities and powers (Eph. 6:12). Follow the Lord outside the camp, bearing His reproach (Heb. 13:13). Mammon, the flesh, and the devil will all whisper, "Flee as a bird to your mountain" (v. 1). Defy them. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). There is no room or reason for retreat. Advance! Let the vanguard push on! On! On! In God's name, on! "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Ps. 46:7).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

Our danger, like that of Peter, lies in looking at the wind and the waves, instead of looking to the Lord. **Should we dare to burden our minds with the administration of His providence? What should we do with present dangers and entanglements?**

#### **What penalty awaits the wicked?**

Job 18:9      Job 22:10      Ps. 11:5-6      Prov. 22:5      Isa. 24:17, 18

#### **Psalm 12:1-8**

**(Ps. 12:1) Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!** The death, departure, or decline of the godly should be a trumpet call for more prayer. Fish smell first at the head, and when the godly decay the nation will soon rot. We must not, however, be rash in our judgment. Elijah erred in counting himself the only servant of God alive, but the Lord held thousands in reserve (1 Kings 19:18).

**The faithful disappear from among the sons of men.** When godliness goes, faithfulness disappears. Without the fear of God, people have no love of the truth. Common honesty is no longer common when common contempt of religion leads to universal godlessness.

**(Ps. 12:3)** They boastfully cry to God, **Who is lord over us?**, but they fail to hear the hollow voice of the evil one crying from the infernal lake, "I am your lord, and faithfully you serve me." Poor fools, their pride and glory will be cut off like a fading flower! May God grant that our souls are not gathered with them.

**(Ps. 12:5) "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now I will arise," says the LORD; "I will set him in the safety for which he yearns."** In due season the Lord will hear His elect who cry day and night. Although He is long-suffering with their oppressors, He will speedily avenge them. The mere oppression of saints, however silently they bear it, is a cry to God. Moses was heard at the Red Sea, though he said nothing (Ex. 14:1). Hagar's affliction was heard despite her silence (Gen. 16:7, 8). Jesus sympathizes with His people; their pains are mighty orators with Him.

**(Ps. 12:6) The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.** What a contrast between the worthless words of man and the pure words of Jehovah. Man's words are yes and no. The Lord's promises are yes and amen. His words are as pure as well-refined silver; they are truth, certainty, holiness, and faithfulness.

Would to God that the glory and triumph of our Lord Jesus would encourage us to walk and work on every side. Since an exalted sinner encourages sinners, our exalted Redeemer must surely cheer and stimulate His saints. Nerved by a sight of His reigning power, we meet the evils of the times in the spirit of holy resolution. We hopefully pray, "Help, LORD."

In Psalm 12:1 the Psalmist asks for help. “The wicked prowl on every side, When vileness is exalted among the sons of men” (Ps. 12:8). **What is needed to keep our mind on the Lord as the treachery of man rages against us?**

Ps. 12:6-7      1 John 5:19

**We think of wicked men as murders, robbers, mean, physically abusive people but could the wicked also include those wealthy and influential people that have unsanctified minds and walk proudly in what they have achieved?**

Ps. 12:2-4

### **Psalm 13:1-6**

The fourfold complaint with which the Psalm opens is not unknown to us. Whether, so far as the state of the soul in general, or some special burden, is concerned, it sometimes seems as if Jehovah had forgotten us, and were hiding His face from us, leaving us to the counsels of our own hearts and to the power of the enemy (vers. 1, 2). Truly our pleading then is like striving ‘to enter in at *the strait gate*.’ Luther most aptly characterizes this questioning as ‘hope which despairs, and despair which yet hopes.’ The fact that it is couched in the form of *questions*, and addressed to *Him* in the accents of prayer, is evidence of the godly character of this sorrow, and pledge of its speedy removal. To shut up sorrow or conviction in our hearts is to be consumed. But to come with it straight to God, to pour out our hearts, and to tell *all* our sorrows and doubts, even that of His forgetting us ‘*forever*,’ which is the doubt of doubts, is evangelical repentance, turning and returning to God, as He reveals Himself in the covenant of grace.

Confession having been made, and the burden rolled off, the entreaty follows, not unmingled with anxious sighing (verses 3, 4). A fourfold prayer this, as there had been a fourfold complaint. See how firmly prayer holds by Him, when, the moment his soul is unburdened—by leaving its burden before God,—he can say, ‘Look hither’ (attentively behold, consider), ‘hear me, Jehovah *my God*.’ Most significantly he adds, after entreating *grace* from the covenant God ‘lighten’ (literally, cause to be light) ‘mine eyes, lest I sleep death.’ ‘For with Thee is the fountain of *life*; in *Thy* light shall we see light.’ Light and life, sleep and death, are spiritually correlative terms. As every one in spiritual distress, he primarily solicits *inward light*, and only after that outward deliverance. It needs the opening of our eyes on His part, light from on high, if we are not to sleep death. But it only needs that. Christ and salvation are *there*; we do not see them, and hence we sleep in death. But to *behold* is to live. Oh, what a subject for prayer, what need of prayer, what encouragement to prayer! ‘What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?’ We may apply directly to our God, and from a state of sleep and death be immediately transported into one of light and of life. Oh, golden key of believing prayer, which Jesus gives us to unlock those pearly gates of the realm of light and of life! ‘In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.’ I *have* all, since Jesus is offered to me. There is only a ‘*lest*’ left of fear and danger, or rather a ‘*that not*’ as the Hebrew word means. These things are behind me. I urge them as pleas, knowing that ‘my God’ cannot ‘deliver me to the will of mine enemies,’ ‘that mine enemy shall not say’ (be not saying), ‘I have been able against him’ (I *could*, I have been powerful, or prevailed); ‘my oppressors’ (they that press upon me, my tremblers) ‘jubilee’ (or, be jubilant) ‘when’ (or, because) ‘I shall be moved’ (am being moved).

But, as already noted, all this is *past*. After prayer comes praise; after faith comes peace and confidence. Right over against their devices and jubilee he puts his own trust and jubilee, and there he remains, singing the praises of redeeming mercy. ‘And I, in Thy grace have I trusted’ (the idea being here that of *cleaving* to it); ‘my heart shall jubilee in Thy salvation; I will sing to Jehovah, for He hath dealt bountifully with me’ (He hath returned benefit unto me). Here there is firm ground on which to rest. Not looking behind, but *cleaving* to free and sovereign grace; laying hold upon, and holding by it, though in truth it is ‘Thy grace’ which holds us. If this is not gospel truth, or glad tidings, surely it is nowhere else to be found, in heaven or on earth. Arise, my soul, and make trial of it; learn to know Him, learn to trust His grace, and learn to jubilee in His salvation—body, soul, and spirit, world without end. Amen.

(The Golden Diary, Alfred Edersheim)

**Can you identify with David’s words “How long, O Lord”?**

**What was David asking God to do?**

**What is David’s tone toward the end of this Psalm?**

### **Psalm 14:1-7**

**(Ps. 14:1) The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt. They have done abominable works, there is none who does good.** Sin is always folly; it is the height of sin to attack the existence of the Most High. To say that there is no God, to ignore the plainest evidence, is obstinacy. To oppose the common consent of mankind is stupidity. To stifle consciousness is madness. If the sinner could by atheism destroy the God he hates, there would be some sense, although much wickedness, in his infidelity. Denying the existence of fire, however, does not prevent its burning the one who is in it. Doubting God's existence will not stop the Judge of all the earth from destroying the rebel who breaks His laws. Atheism is a crime that provokes heaven. Atheism will bring down terrible vengeance on the fool who indulges it. "A fool's tongue cuts his own throat." In this case it kills soul and body forever. Would to God the mischief stopped there. Yet one fool makes a hundred others, and a noisy blasphemer spreads this horrible doctrine as lepers spread the plague.

**(Ps. 14:3) They have together become corrupt,** spoiled, and soured like corrupt leaven. The reason we do not clearly see this foulness is that we are accustomed to it. Those who work among offensive odors cease to smell them; the miller does not hear the noise of the mill. We are slow to discover our ruin and depravity. Are there no exceptions? Are all sinful? "Yes," says the psalmist, in a manner not to be mistaken, "They are." He put it positively, he repeats it negatively, **There is none who does good, no, not one.** The Hebrew phrase is an utter denial that any mortal does good. What can be more sweeping? This is the verdict of the all-seeing Jehovah, who cannot exaggerate or make a mistake.

What do the opponents to the doctrine of natural depravity say to this? What do we *feel* concerning it? Do we not confess that we by nature are corrupt? Do we not bless the sovereign grace that has renewed us in the spirit of our minds, that sin may not have dominion, that grace may rule and reign?

**(Ps.14:5) These heady, high-minded sinners, they are in great fear.** A panic terror seized them. "They feared a fear," as the Hebrew puts it. An undefinable, horrible, mysterious dread crept over them. The most hardened have times when conscience casts them into a cold sweat of alarm. As cowards are cruel, so all the cruel are at heart cowards. The ghost of past sin is a terrible specter to haunt anyone. Though unbelievers may boast as loudly as they will, a sound is in their ears that makes them uneasy. **For God is with the generation of the righteous.** This makes the godly irksome to the wicked, because they know that God is with the righteous. They perceive God's image in His people's character. They see that He works for their deliverance. Like Haman, they instinctively tremble when they see God's Mordecai (Esther 5:9). Although the saint may be in a difficult position, mourning at the gate where the persecutor rejoices in state, still the sinners feel the influence of the believer's true nobility, and they are frightened, for God is there. Let scoffers beware, they persecute the Lord Jesus when they molest His people. The union is close between God and His people; it amounts to a mysterious indwelling, **for God is with the generation of the righteous.**

**(Ps. 14:7) Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.** Natural enough is this closing prayer. What would effectively convince atheists, overthrow persecutors, stop sin, and secure the godly? The manifest appearance of Israel's great Salvation! The coming of Messiah is the desire of the godly in all ages. Though He has already come with a sin offering to purge away iniquity, we look for Him to come a second time without a sin offering. Oh, that these weary years would end! Why does He tarry? He knows that sin abounds and that His people are downtrodden. Why doesn't He come? His glorious coming will restore His ancient people from literal captivity and His spiritual children from spiritual sorrow. Wrestling Jacob and prevailing Israel will rejoice when He is revealed as their salvation. Oh, that He would come! What happy, holy, halcyon, heavenly days we would see! Nevertheless, do not count Him slack, for behold He comes, He comes quickly (Rev. 3:11). Blessed are they that wait for Him.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **What is at the root of atheism?**

Rom. 1:21

**Show how these verses bring out the natural depravity of man? Also show here man's beginning and redemptive end.**

### **Psalms 15:1-5**

#### **Division**

- The first verse asks the question.
- The remaining verses answer it.

We will call this Psalm, "The Question and Answer."

**(Ps. 15:1) LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?**

The question. Jehovah, high and holy One, who will be permitted to have fellowship with You? The heavens are not pure in Your sight. You charge Your angels with error (Job 4:18). What mortal can dwell with You? You are a consuming fire, a jealous God (Deut. 4:24). A sense of the glory of the Lord, and the holiness of His house, His service, and His attendants, inspires the humble mind to ask this solemn question, "How can we worship at all?" Unthinking people imagine that it is easy to approach the Most High. When they professedly engage in His worship, *they* have no questions about their fitness. Humbled souls often shrink under a sense of utter unworthiness; they would not dare approach God's holy throne were it not for our Lord and our Advocate. He abides in the heavenly temple, because His righteousness endures forever (Ps. 111:3).

**LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?** Who will be admitted to God's household, to live under His roof and enjoy fellowship with Him?

**Who may dwell in Your holy hill?** Who will be a citizen of Zion and an inhabitant of the heavenly Jerusalem? Not everyone has this privilege. Even among believers there are aliens from the commonwealth who have no secret fellowship with God. On the grounds of law, mere mortals cannot dwell with God. No one on earth meets the requirements mentioned in the following verses. The questions in the text are asked of the LORD, because only the Infinite can answer them and satisfy the unquiet conscience. We must know from the Lord of the tabernacle the qualifications for His service. When He has taught us, we will clearly see that only our spotless Lord Jesus, and those who are conformed to His image, can stand with acceptance before the Majesty on high.

Impertinent curiosity frequently wants to *know who* and how many will be saved. If those who ask **who may dwell in Your holy hill?** would make a soul searching inquiry, they would act much wiser. Members of the visible church, which is God's tabernacle of worship and hill of eminence, should diligently prepare their hearts to be residents of God's house. Without the wedding dress of righteousness in Christ Jesus, we have no right to sit at the communion banquet. Without an upright walk, we are not fit for the imperfect church on earth, nor are we ready to enter the perfect church above.

**(Ps.15:3)**

**He who walks uprightly,  
And works righteousness,  
And speaks the truth in his heart;**

**(Ps. 15:4)**

**He who does not backbite with his tongue,  
Nor does evil to his neighbor,  
Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;**

**(Ps. 15:5)**

**In whose eyes a vile person is despised,  
But he honors those who fear the LORD;  
He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;  
He who does not put out his money at usury,  
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.  
He who does these things shall never be moved.**

The answer. The Lord, in answer to the question, informs us *by* His Holy Spirit about the character of the man who alone can dwell in His holy hill. In perfection, this holiness is found only in the Man of Sorrows, but in a measure, the Holy Spirit works it in all His people. Faith and the graces of the Spirit are not mentioned because this is a description of outward character. Where fruit is found, the root may not be seen, but it is there. Observe the accepted man's walk, work, and word.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What is the question and what is the answer in Psalm 15?**

### **Psalm 16:1-11**

It has been the usual plan of commentators to apply this Psalm to David, to the saints, and to the Lord Jesus. We believe that here "Christ is all," since in verses nine and ten, like the apostles on the mountain, we can see "no one but Jesus."

**(Ps. 16:1) Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.** Though pure, the Lord Jesus did not place His confidence in that purity of nature, but as an example to His followers, He looked to the Lord, His God, for preservation. One of the great names of God is "the watcher of men" (Job 7:20), and our gracious Mediator and Representative was watched over and preserved. It had been promised to the Lord Jesus that He would be preserved. "Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors, to the Servants of

rulers: kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen You" (Is. 49:7). This promise was fulfilled by providential deliverance and sustaining power; being preserved, He is able to restore the preserved of Israel (Is. 49:6). We are preserved in Christ Jesus, as one with Him; the elect were preserved in His preservation. We may view our Mediator's supplication as the petition of the Great High Priest for all who are in Him. "Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given me, that they may be one as we are" (John 17:11).

When He says, "keep," He means His members, His mystical body, and all in Him. Yet while we rejoice that the Lord Jesus used this prayer for His members, we must not forget that He employed it for Himself. Jesus had so emptied Himself and so truly taken the form of a servant that, as man, He needed divine keeping just as we do. Frequently on the mountaintop, He cried to Jehovah for strength. Once, in almost the same words, He publicly prayed, "Father, save me from this hour" (John 12:27). If Jesus looked out of Himself for protection, how much more must we, His erring followers!

**(Ps. 16:2) O my soul, you have said to the LORD, You are my Lord.** In His heart, the Lord Jesus bowed to serve His Heavenly Father. Before Jehovah's throne, His soul vowed allegiance for our sakes. We are like Him when our soul, in the presence of the heart-searching God, declares full consent to the rule and government of the infinite Jehovah by saying, **You are my LORD**. To confess this with the lip is little, but for the **soul** to say it, especially in times of trial, is gracious evidence of spiritual health. To profess it before men is a small matter, but to declare it before Jehovah is far more consequential. This sentence may also be viewed as words of appropriating faith, laying hold on the Lord by personal covenant and enjoyment. In this sense may it be our daily song.

**(Ps. 16:6)** Jesus discovered that obedience leads to **pleasant places**. Despite all the sorrows that marred His countenance, He exclaimed, "Behold I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8). It may seem strange that while no other was ever so thoroughly acquainted with grief (Is. 53:3), no other ever experienced so much joy and delight in service. Jesus served faithfully and with great results. "The joy that was set before Him" (Heb. 12:2) must have sent some of its beams of splendor *down* the rugged places where He endured the cross, despising the shame (Heb. 12:2). This, in some respects, was **pleasant places** to the Redeemer's generous heart. At any rate, Jesus was content with the blood-bought portion that electing love marked as His share with the strong and His portion with the great. Thus, He comforted Himself on earth and now delights Himself in heaven.

For a **good inheritance**, He asks that His beloved will be with Him and see His glory (John 17:24). All the saints can use the language of this verse; the more they enter its contented, grateful, joyful spirit, the better, and the more glory that goes to their God. Our Lord was poor; He had nowhere to lay His head (Luke 9:58), but when He mentioned His poverty, He never complained. Discontented spirits are as unlike Jesus as the croaking raven is unlike the cooing dove.

**(Ps. 16:7) My heart instructs me in the night seasons.** Great generals fight battles in their mind long before the trumpet sounds, and Jesus won our battle on His knees before He gained victory on the Cross. It is a gracious habit, after taking counsel from above, to take counsel within. The wise see more with their eyes shut at night than fools see by day with their eyes open. Those who learn from God and receive the seed will soon find wisdom growing in the garden of their souls. "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left" (Isa. 30:21). The night that sinners choose for sinning is the hallowed hour of quiet when believers hear the soft still voices of heaven and the heavenly life within.

**(Ps. 16:10)** Our Lord Jesus was not disappointed in His hope. He declared His Father's faithfulness, **You will not leave my soul in Sheol**, and that faithfulness was proven on the resurrection morning. Among the departed and disembodied, Jesus was not left; He believed in the resurrection, and He received it on the third day when His body rose in glorious life. He had said in joyous confidence, **Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption**. His body might go into the outer prison of the grave, but He could not enter the inner prison of corruption. He who, in soul and body, was preeminently God's **Holy One** was loosed from death. Death could not hold Him. This is great encouragement to all the saints; die we must, but rise we also will. Though we will see corruption, yet we will rise to everlasting life. Christ's resurrection is the cause, the earnest, the guarantee, and the emblem of the rising of all His people.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

"For You will not leave my soul in Sheol," (Ps. 16:10). **Why did Jesus have to descend into Sheol (hell) (Eph. 4:8-10)?**

**What terms are used in the sixteenth Psalm to predict the resurrection of Christ?**

### Psalm 17:1-15

David would not have been a man after God's own heart had he not been a man of prayer. He was a master in the sacred art of supplication. The smell of the furnace is on this Psalm, but there is evidence in the last verse that the author came out of the flame unharmed. It is a plaintive song, an appeal to heaven from earth's persecutions. The spiritual eye will see Jesus.

**(Ps. 17:11) They have now surrounded us in our steps.** Evil has a hatred and a power that is continuous and energetic. They watch our every step, hoping to catch us by surprise. If spiritual adversaries surround every step, how anxiously should we guard our movements, lest we are betrayed into evil!

**(Ps. 17:13) Arise, O LORD.** The more furious the attack, the more fervent the psalmist's prayer. His eyes rest on the Almighty. He feels that God has only to rise from the seat of His patience and the work will immediately be performed. Let the lion spring, if Jehovah steps between, we need no better defense. When God meets our foe face to face in battle, the conflict will soon be over.

**Confront him.** Face, outwit, and outrun him, change his plans, disappoint him. **Cast him down,** prostrate him. Make him sink to his knees; make him bow as the conquered bow before the conqueror. What a glorious sight it will be to see Satan prostrate beneath the foot of our glorious Lord! Haste, glorious day!

**(Ps. 17:14) From men of the world.** They are mere earthworms, mere dwellers in this narrow sphere of mortality. They are men having no hope or wish beyond the ground they walk on. **Who have their portion in this life.** Like the prodigal they have their portion and are not content to wait their Father's time.

**(Ps. 17:15) As for me, . . . I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.** I shall be satisfied in that glorious day when all the angels of God will come to see the triumphs of Jesus, when His people will be victorious with Him.

The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **What is the satisfaction of men of the world? of the righteous?**

Ps. 17:9-15

### **Psalm 18:1-50**

The title deserves attention. David, although king, calls himself, **the servant of the LORD.** He does not mention his royalty. We gather that he counted it a higher honor to be the Lord's servant than Judah's king; right wisely he judged. Possessed of poetic genius, he served the Lord by composing this Psalm. It is no small task to improve that delightful part of divine worship, the singing of the Lord's praises. Would that more music and poetic ability were consecrated and that our chief musicians could be trusted with devout and spiritual songs.

David did not compose the words of this song to gratify human taste, but he spoke to Jehovah. It would be well if we had a single eye to the Lord's honor in our singing. Praise is of little value when it is not directed solely and heartily to the Lord. David is direct in his gratitude, for he owed all to God. The day he was delivered he had no one to thank but the Lord, whose right hand had preserved him. We too should feel that to God, and God alone, we owe the greatest debt of honor and thanksgiving.

The second and forty-ninth verses are quoted in the New Testament as the words of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 2:13; Rom. 15:9). A greater than David is clearly seen here. If you know Jesus, you will readily find Him in His sorrows, deliverance, and triumphs throughout this wonderful psalm.

#### **Division**

The first three verses are the preface in which the resolve to bless God is declared.

- David poetically extols mercy, verses 4-19.
- The happy songster proclaims that God had acted righteously in favoring him, verses 20-28.
- Filled with grateful joy, he again pictures his deliverance and anticipates future victories, verses 29-45.

In closing, he speaks prophetically of the glorious triumphs of the Messiah, David's heir and the Lord's anointed.

**(Ps. 18:2) The LORD is my rock and my fortress.** Dwelling among the craggy mountain security of Judea, David escaped Saul's malice. He compares God to a secure hiding place. Believers are often hidden in God from the strife of tongues and the fury of trouble's storm. The clefts of the Rock of Ages are safe.

**My deliverer.** You interpose in my hour of peril. When almost captured by the mighty, He who is mightier than the mighty rescues His people. This title, **deliverer**, has many sermons in it and is well worth studying.

**My God.** This is all good things in one. What a boundless wealth in this expression; it means, "my perpetual, unchanging, infinite, eternal good." Those who can truly say **my God** may well add "my heaven, my all."

**(Ps. 18:4) The pangs of death surrounded me.** Death, like a cruel conqueror, seemed to twist the cords of pain around him. David was hemmed in and threatened with the most appalling death. He was like a mariner broken by the storm and driven on the rocks by dreadful breakers, white as death's teeth. A sad plight for the man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). Yet this is how Jehovah deals with His children.

**(Ps. 18:5) The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me.** From all sides, the hounds of hell barked furiously. A cordon of devils hemmed in the hunted man of God. Every way of escape was closed. Satan knows how to blockade our coasts with the iron warship of sorrow. Blessed be God, the port of prayer is still open. Grace can run the blockade, carrying messages from earth to heaven and blessings from heaven to earth.

**The snares of death confronted me.** The old enemy hunts his prey, not only with the dogs of the infernal kennel, but also with the snares of deadly skill. The nets were drawn closer and closer until the contracted circle completely prevented the captive's escape.

About me the cords of hell were  
wound,  
And snares of death my footsteps  
bound.

The case was hopeless, as hopeless as a case could be, so utterly desperate that none but an almighty arm could save. David employs four metaphors: he was bound like a criminal for execution; overwhelmed like a shipwrecked mariner; surrounded like a hunted deer; captured in a net like a trembling bird. What additional terror and distress could fell on one poor defenseless head?

**(Ps. 18:6) In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears.**

**(Ps. 18:7)** There was no great space between the cry and the answer. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise (2 Pet. 3:9), but He is swift to rescue His afflicted. David has in mind the glorious manifestations of God in Egypt, at Sinai, and on different occasions to Joshua and the judges. The psalmist believes that his case exhibits the same glory of power and goodness; he fits the descriptions of former displays of divine majesty in this hymn of praise. **Then the earth shook and trembled.** The most solid and immovable things feel the force of supplication. Prayer has shaken houses, opened prison doors, and made stout hearts sink. Prayer rings the alarm bell, and the Master of the house comes to the rescue, shaking all things under His step.

**The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken, because He was angry.** He who fixed the world's pillars can make them rock in their sockets; He can heave creation's cornerstone. The huge roots of the towering mountains are torn loose when the Lord moves in anger to slay His people's enemies. How can puny humanity face it without God? Let not the boasters dream that their false confidence will support them in the dread day of wrath.

**(Ps. 18:8) Smoke went up from His nostrils.** This is an Oriental expression of fierce, violent wrath, since strong emotion heats the breath that comes from the nostrils. The figure portrays the Almighty Deliverer as pouring out smoke in the heat of His wrath and the impetuosity of His zeal. Nothing makes God so angry as an injury to His children. He that touches you touches the apple of His eye (Deut. 32:10). God is not subject to the passions that govern His creatures. He does, however, act with all the energy and speed of one who is angry. Here God is aptly set in poetic imagery suitable to human understanding.

**And devouring fire from His mouth.** The opening of His lips is sufficient to destroy His enemies. This fire was not temporary but steady and lasting.

**Coals were kindled by it.** David intended this entire passage to depict God's descent to help His child. At the majesty of His appearing, attended by earthquake and tempest, the earth rocks, the clouds gather like smoke, and the lightning as flaming fire sets the world ablaze.

**(Ps. 18:9)** Without speculating on the mysterious and disputed cherubim, it is enough to remark that angels are our guards and ministering friends. All their powers are enlisted to expedite the rescue of the afflicted. **He rode upon a cherub, and flew.** Nature is also our helper; even the powers of the air are subservient to God. **He flew upon the wings of the wind;** the Lord comes flying when mercy is His errand, but He lingers when sinners are being wooed to repent. This flight is pictured as majestic and swift. "Flying all abroad" is Sternhold's word, and he is not far from correct. As the eagle soars in easy grandeur, wings spread without flapping and exertion, so the Lord comes with majestic omnipotence to aid His own.

The storm thickened and the clouds, pouring torrents of rain, combined to form the secret chamber of the invisible but wonder working God. "Pavilioned in impervious shade" faith saw Him, but no other eye could gaze through the **thick clouds of the skies.** Blessed is the darkness that covers my God. If I do not see Him, it is sweet just knowing that He is working in secret for my eternal good. Even fools can believe that God is abroad in the sunshine and the calm, but faith is wise and discerns Him in the terrible darkness and threatening storm.

**(Ps. 18:14)** The lightning darted, as forked arrows readily **scattered the foe.** Boastful sinners are great cowards when Jehovah strikes. They despise His words and are tongue-valiant only; when it comes to blows, they flee. The glittering flames and the fierce fire bolts **vanquished them.** God is never at a loss for weapons. Woe to those who contend with their Maker! God's arrows never miss their mark. They are feathered with lightning and barbed with everlasting death. Sinner, fly to the rock of refuge before these arrows stick fast in your soul.

**(Ps. 18:15)** So tremendous was the shock of God's assault that the order of nature was changed. River and sea beds were laid bare, **then the channels of the sea were seen.** Earth's deep cavernous foundations were heaved, until **the foundations of the world were uncovered.** What will Jehovah's **rebuke** do? **If the blast of the breath of Your nostrils** is so terrible, what must Your arm be? Vain are the attempts to conceal anything from Him whose word unbars the deep and lifts the doors of the earth from their hinges! Vain are all hopes of resistance, for a whisper of His voice makes the whole earth shake in abject terror.

**(Ps. 18:16)** Now comes the rescue. The Author of the rescue is divine, **He sent**. The work is heavenly, **from above**. The deliverance is marvelous, **He drew me out of many waters**. Here David was like Moses, drawn from the water (Ex. 2:10). Believers are like their Lord, whose baptism in many waters of agony and in His own blood has redeemed us from the wrath to come. Torrents of evil will not drown the one whose God sits on the floods to restrain the fury.

**(Ps. 18:17)** When we have been rescued, we must ascribe all the glory to God, by confessing our weakness and remembering the power of the conquered enemy. God's power derives honor from all the incidents of the conflict. Our great spiritual adversary is a **strong enemy**, much too strong for poor, weak creatures like us. Nevertheless, we have been delivered, and will be, even to the end. Our weakness is a reason for divine help; mark the force of the **for** in the text.

**(Ps. 18:19)** **He also brought me out into a broad place**. After languishing in prison, Joseph reached the palace, and from the cave of Adullam, David rose to the throne. Sweet is pleasure after pain. Enlargement is more delightful after a season of pinching poverty and sorrowful confinement. Besieged souls delight in the broad places of promise when God drives off the enemy and opens the gates of the surrounded city. The Lord does not leave His work half done; having routed the foe, He leads the captive to liberty. Broad, indeed, is the possession and place of the believer in Jesus. There is no limit to His peace, for there is no boundary to His privilege.

**He delivered me because He delighted in me**. Free grace lies at the foundation. Rest assured, if we go deep enough, sovereign grace is the truth at the bottom of every well of mercy. Deep sea fisheries in the ocean of divine bounty always bring the pearls of electing, discriminating love to light. Why Jehovah should delight in us is a question without an answer, a mystery that angels cannot solve. The fact that He does delight in His beloved is certain, and it is the fruitful root of favors as numerous as they are precious. Believer, digest this instructive sentence. Learn to view the uncaused love of God as the cause of all the lovingkindness we receive.

**(Ps. 18:20)** **The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness**. Viewing this psalm as prophetic of the Messiah, these strongly expressed claims to righteousness are readily understood. His garments were as white as snow (Mark 9:3). These words are perplexing if applied to David, but the case is clear if the words are not strained beyond their original intent. The dispensations of divine grace are to the fullest degree sovereign and do not depend on human merit. Yet in the dealings of Providence, there is often a discernible rule of justice where the injured are avenged and the righteous are delivered.

David's early troubles rose from envious Saul's wicked malice. Saul persecuted David under the cover of charges brought against the character of the man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). David declares these charges utterly false; he possesses a grace-given righteousness that the Lord graciously rewarded in defiance of his slanderers. Before God, the man after God's own heart was a humble sinner. Before his slanderers, he could with an unblushing face speak of the **cleanness of [his] hands** and the righteousness of his life. *You* know little of the sanctifying power of divine grace if you cannot plead innocent at the bar of human equity. There is no self-righteousness in an honest person knowing he is honest, nor even in believing that God rewards because of his honesty. It is often a most evident matter of fact, but it would be self-righteousness if we transferred such thoughts from the providential government to the spiritual kingdom where grace reigns alone in the distribution of divine favors.

It is not opposition to the doctrine of salvation by grace, nor a Pharisee's spirit, when a slandered, gracious person maintains his integrity and vigorously defends his character. Godly people have a clear conscience and know they are upright. They will not deny their conscience and despise the Holy Spirit's work by hypocritically making themselves to be worse than they are. Godly people prize integrity, or else they would not be godly. Are they called proud because they will not readily lose the jewel of a reputable character? A godly person can see that, in divine providence, uprightness and truth bring their own reward. When they see that reward given, may they not praise the Lord? Yes, and must they not show the faithfulness and goodness of God?

Read the cluster of expressions in this and the following verses as the song of a good conscience. Because he has safely ridden out a storm of contempt, persecution, and abuse, we will not upbraid the writer as one who sets too high a price on moral character.

**(Ps. 18:29)** **For by You I can run against a troop, by my God I can leap over a wall**. Whether we meet the enemy in the open field or leap on them while they lurk behind the battlements, we will by God's grace defeat them. If they hem us in with living legions or surround us with stone walls, we will with equal certainty obtain our liberty. We have already performed such feats, hewing our way through a host of difficulties and scaling impossibilities at a leap. God's warriors can expect to have a taste of every form of fighting, and by the power of faith, act as soldiers of the cross. It behooves them to lay all their laurels at Jehovah's feet and say that **by my God** I have accomplished this valiant deed. Our *spolia optima*, the trophies of our conflicts, we dedicate to the God of Battles and ascribe to Him all glory and strength.

**(Ps. 18:30)** **As for God, His way is perfect**. Far beyond faults and errors are God's dealings with His people. All His actions are resplendent with justice, truth, tenderness, mercy, and holiness. God's every way is complete, and all His ways put together are matchless in harmony and goodness. It is consolatory to believe that He who has begun to bless will perfect His work, for all His ways are perfect.

**The word of the LORD is proven**, like silver refined in the furnace. The doctrines are glorious, the precepts are pure, the promises are faithful, and the whole revelation is superlatively full of grace and truth. David had tried it, thousands

have tried it, we have tried it, and it has never failed. It was fitting that, when way and word had been extolled, the Lord would be magnified.

**He is a shield to all who trust in Him.** No armor protects the warrior so well as the covenant God of Israel. He is the shield of trustful ones. What a thought! What peace may every trusting soul enjoy!

**(Ps. 18:31)** Having mentioned God, the psalmist's heart burns, and his words sparkle. David challenges heaven and earth to find another who is worthy of adoration or trust in comparison with Jehovah. "His God," as Matthew Henry says, "is a None such." He scorns the idols of the heathen, considering them mere nothings. **Who is God, except the LORD?** Who else creates, sustains, foresees, overrules? Who but He is perfect in every attribute, glorious in every act? To whom but Jehovah should creatures bow? Who else can claim their service and their love?

**Who is a rock, except our God?** Where can lasting hopes be fixed? Where can the soul find rest? Where is stability found? Where is strength discovered? Surely in the Lord Jehovah alone can we find rest and refuge.

**(Ps. 18:32)** Surveying all the armor in which he fought and conquered, the joyful victor praises the Lord for every part of the protection. Strength earns the first stanza. **It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect.** Strengthened with power from heaven, the warrior was filled with vigor far above all created might. If God had not armed him with strength, he would have been feeble. Yet when braced with strength, David is compact in purpose, courageous in daring, concentrated in power. His action was a complete success, so undisturbed by disastrous defeat as to be called **perfect**. Have we been made more than conquerors over sin? Does our life become the gospel? Then ascribe all the glory to Him who arms us with inexhaustible strength so that we might be undefeated in battle and unwearied in the pilgrimage.

**(Ps. 18:33)** A divine hand had shod the conqueror's feet. **He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on my high places.** Pursuing his foes, the warrior had been as swift as a young deer. He credits this swiftness to the Lord alone. When our thoughts are nimble and our spirits as rapid as the chariots of Amminadib (Song 6:12), let us not forget that our Beloved's hand has given us choice favor. While climbing into impregnable fortresses, David had been preserved from slipping by God. He stood where wild goats had difficulty in finding footing. This was preserving mercy manifested. We, too, have had **high places** of honor, service, temptation, and danger, and we have been kept from falling. Bring the harp, emulate the psalmist's joyful thanksgiving. Had we fallen, our wailing would have been terrible, but since we have stood, let our gratitude be fervent.

**(Ps. 18:50)** In this final verse, the writer throws a fullness of expression that indicates the rapturous delight of gratitude, **great deliverance**. The word **deliverance** is plural, showing the variety and completeness of salvation. The adjective **great** is well-placed, if we consider from what, to what, and how we are saved. All this mercy is given in our King, the Lord's Anointed. We are blessed, for, as His heirs, we may expect mercy to be built up for evermore. The Lord was faithful to the literal David. He will not break His covenant with the spiritual David, for that would involve the honor of His crown and character.

The Psalm concludes with the same loving spirit that shone at the beginning. Happy are they who can sing from love to love, just as the pilgrims marched from strength to strength.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

The word "rock" is used in Psalm 18:2 to bring out God's protective care of us. **Show other instances in the Bible where the word "rock" is used as our identity with Him.**

Gen. 49:24 Deut. 32:3-4 Ps. 92:15 Isa. 26:4

**Would you say the love God experienced so richly by David generated in him an intense reciprocal love toward God? Do you also think the world problems facing him lost their power over him?**

Psalm 18:35 says: "You have also given me the shield of Your salvation." **What is the meaning of the shield?**

Isa. 66:1-2 Eph. 6:16

### **Psalm 19:1-14**

**(Ps. 19:1)** **The heavens declare**, or, are declaring. The continuance of their testimony is intended by the participles used. At every moment, God's existence, power, wisdom, and goodness are being sounded by the heavenly heralds that shine on us. Those who would guess at divine sublimity should gaze into the starry vault. Those who would imagine infinity must peer into the boundless expanse. Those who want to see divine wisdom should consider the balancing of the orbs. Those who would know divine fidelity must mark the regularity of the planets' motions. Those who would attain some conception of divine power, greatness, and majesty must estimate the forces of attraction, the magnitude of the fixed stars, and the brightness of the celestial train.

It is not merely glory that the heavens declare, but, **the glory of God**. They deliver such unanswerable arguments for a conscious intelligent, planning, controlling, and presiding Creator that no unbiased person can remain unconvinced. The testimony given by the heavens is no mere hint; it is a plain, unmistakable declaration of the most constant and

abiding kind. Yet for all this, to what avail is the loudest declaration to the deaf or the clearest showing to the spiritually blind? God the Holy Spirit must illuminate us, or all the suns in the Milky Way never will.

**(Ps. 19:13) Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.** This earnest and humble prayer teaches that saints may fall into the worst of sins unless restrained by grace. They must watch and pray lest they enter temptation; there is a natural proneness to sin in the best of us. We must be held back like a horse is held back by the bit. Presumptuous sins are especially dangerous. All sins are great sins, but some sins are greater than others. Every sin has the venom of rebellion and a marrow full of traitorous rejection of God. Yet some sins have the mischief of rebellion greatly developed and wear a brazen pride that defies the Most High.

**(Ps. 19:14) Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.** Here is a sweet prayer, so spiritual that it is almost as common in Christian worship as the apostolic benediction. **Words** are mockery if the heart does not *meditate*. The shell is nothing without the kernel, but both together are useless unless accepted. Even if accepted by man, it is worthless if not acceptable in the sight of God. In prayer, we must view Jehovah as our **strength** enabling and our **Redeemer** saving, or we do not pray right. It is well to feel our personal interest and use the word **my**, or our prayers will be hindered. **My Redeemer** makes a blessed ending to this Psalm. It began with the heavens, but it ends with Him whose glory fills heaven and earth.

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**Show how the sun in nature and His “Son” are both centers.**

**How does our thinking change when we acknowledge God as being the Supreme Architect?**

Rom. 8:28 Col. 1:16

**What are presumptuous sins (Ps. 19:13) and how are they to be dealt with?**

### Psalm 20:1-9

**(Ps. 20:1) May the name of the God of Jacob defend you,** or, “Set you in a high place.” The glorious power of God defended and preserved the Lord Jesus through the battle of His life and death. It exalted Him above all His enemies. Only the eternal arm of our covenant God can defend the soldiers of the cross and set them on high out of the reach of their foes. The day of trouble is not over; the pleading Savior is not silent; the name of the God of Israel is still the defense of the faithful.

The name **God of Jacob** is suggestive. Jacob had his day of trouble; he wrestled, was heard, was defended, and in due time was set on high. His God is our God; He is the same God to all His wrestling Jacobs. The entire verse is a blessing to be pronounced *by* a gracious heart over a child, a friend, or a minister who is facing a trial. It includes both temporal and spiritual protection and directs the mind to the great Source of all good. How delightful to believe that our heavenly Father has pronounced this blessing on us.

**(Ps. 20:7) Some trust in chariots, and some in horses.** Chariots and horses make an imposing show; they rattle, raise dust, and have such fine saddles and covers that vain people are taken with them. The discerning eye of faith, however, sees more in an invisible God. The most dreaded military engine of David's day was the war chariot. Armed with scythes that mowed people down like grass, it was the boast and glory of the neighboring nations. Yet the saints considered Jehovah's name a far better defense. Since the Israelites did not keep horses, to regard the enemy's Calvary with dread was natural. It is all the greater evidence of faith that the bold songster disdains even the horses of Egypt in comparison with the Lord of hosts.

**(Ps. 20:8) They have bowed down and fallen; but we have risen and stand upright.** How different the end of those whose trusts are different! God's enemies are uppermost at first, but before long they are brought down by force or fall of their own accord. Their foundation is rotten, and when the time comes it gives way. Their chariots are burned, and their horses die of pestilence. Where is their boasted strength? As for those who rest on Jehovah, they are often cast down, but an Almighty arm lifts them. Jesus' victory is His people's inheritance. The world, death, Satan, and sin will all be trampled under the feet of the champions of faith; those who rely on an arm of flesh will be ashamed and confounded forever.

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Those who trust in chariots have their banners to fly. **What are our “banners” (Ps. 20:5)?**

### Psalm 21:1-13

This Psalm has been called David's triumphant song; we may remember it as "The Royal Triumphant Ode." "The King" is prominent throughout, and if our meditation of Him is sweet while reading it, we will profit. We must crown Him with the glory of our salvation, singing His love and praising His power.

Psalm 22 will take us to the foot of the Cross. This Psalm introduces us to the steps of the throne.

**(Ps. 21:1) The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD.** Let every subject of King Jesus imitate the King. Lean on Jehovah's strength, take joy in it with sturdy faith, and exult in it with thankful songs. Jesus has not only rejoiced in this, but He will also rejoice as He sees the power of divine grace bringing the purchase of His soul's labor from their sinful hiding places. We will rejoice more as we learn by experience the strength of our covenant God. Our weakness unstrings our harps; His strength tunes them. If we cannot sing a note in honor of our strength, we can rejoice in our omnipotent God.

**And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!** David ascribes everything to God. The source is **Your strength**, and the stream is **Your salvation**. Jehovah planned, ordained, worked, and crowned it; it is His salvation. An exclamation and a word describe the joy, **how greatly!** The rejoicing of our risen Lord must, like His agony, be unutterable. If the mountains of His joy rise in proportion to the depth of the valleys of His grief, then His sacred bliss is as high as the seventh heaven. "For the joy that was set before Him [He] endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). That joy grows daily. He rests in His love and rejoices over His redeemed with singing, as they find salvation in His blood. Let us with our Lord rejoice in salvation, as coming from God, as coming to us, as extending to others, as soon encompassing all lands.

**(Ps. 21:2) You have given him his heart's desire.** He ardently pursued that desire when He was on earth. Through His prayers, His actions, and His sufferings, Jesus showed that His heart longed to redeem His people. Now in heaven, His desire has been granted. He sees His beloved coming to be with Him where He is. The desires of the Lord Jesus were from His heart, and the Lord heard them. If our hearts are right, "He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him" (Ps. 145:19).

**(Ps. 21:3) You set a crown of pure gold upon His head.** Jesus wore the thorn crown, but now He wears the glory crown. It is a **crown** indicating royal nature, imperial power, deserved honor, glorious conquest, and divine government. To show the excellence of His dominion, the crown is of the richest, rarest, resplendent, refined, valuable, and lasting **pure gold**. Because Jehovah firmly set the crown on **His head**, it is so firmly fixed that no power can move it; whereas, the diadems of other monarchs fit loosely. Napoleon crowned himself, but Jehovah crowned the Lord Jesus. The empire of the one melted in an hour, but the other has an abiding dominion. Some versions read, "A crown of precious stones," which reminds us of the beloved who will be as jewels in His crown. " 'They shall be Mine,' says the Lord of hosts, 'On the day that I make them My jewels' " (Mal. 3:17). May we be set in the golden circle of the Redeemer's glory and adorn His head forever!

**(Ps. 21:9) You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger.** They will be their own ovens, and thus their own tormentors. Those who burned with anger against You will be burned by Your anger. The fire of sin will be followed by the fire of wrath. As the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah went up to heaven (Gen. 19:28), so will the enemies of the Lord Jesus be utterly and terribly consumed. Some read it, "You will put them as it were into a furnace of fire." Like kindling thrown in an oven, they will burn furiously beneath the Lord's anger. They will be cast into a furnace of fire, "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30). These are terrible words. Reader, never tolerate slight thoughts of hell, or you will soon have low thoughts of sin. The hell of sinners must be tearful beyond all conception, or this language would not be used. Who would have the Son of God as an enemy, when such an overthrow awaits His foes? **The time of Your anger** reminds us that, as now is the time of His grace, there will be a set time for His wrath. The judge arrives at the appointed time. There is a day of vengeance of our God. Let those who despise the day of grace remember this day of wrath.

**The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them.** Jehovah will visit with anger the enemies of His Son. The Lord Jesus will judge by commission from God, and Jehovah's solemn assent and cooperation will be with Him as He sentences impenitent sinners. What is intended here is an utter destruction of soul and body, so that both will be swallowed with misery and devoured with anguish. Oh, the wrath to come! The wrath to come! Who can endure it? Lord, save us from it, for Jesus' sake.

**(Ps. 21:13) Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength!** This is a sweet concluding verse. Our hearts join in praising the Lord when we remember His goodness is always right. The exaltation of God's name should be the business of every Christian, but we are such poor things that we fail to honor Him as He deserves. Still, we may invoke His power to help. **Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength**, for no other power can do it.

**We will sing and praise Your power.** For a time, the saints may mourn, but the glorious appearance of their divine Helper awakens their joy. Joy should always flow in the channel of praise. All God's attributes are worthy subjects to be celebrated by the music of our hearts and voices. When we observe a display of His **power**, we must extol it. He alone worked our deliverance, and He alone

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**Show how the promises of Psalm 21:1-7 apply not only to Christ and David but can be extended to us also.**

**Psalm 22:1-31**

**(Ps. 22:1) My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?** Gaze with holy wonder. Mark the flashes of light in the awful darkness of that midday midnight. Our Lord's faith shines. It deserves our reverent imitation. He keeps hold on His God with both hands and cries twice, **My God, My God!** The spirit of adoption was strong in the suffering Son of Man, and He did not feel any doubt about His interest in His God. Oh, if we could imitate this clinging to an afflicting God! The sufferer trusts God's power to sustain Him. The title used, *Ei*, signifies strength, and it is the name of the Mighty God. He knows the Lord is the all-sufficient support and comfort of His spirit. He appeals to Him in the agony of grief but not in misery of doubt. Jesus raises that question and repeats it. Yet He does not mistrust God's power and faithfulness.

What a question, **Why have You forsaken Me?** We must lay the emphasis on every word of this saddest of all utterances.

**Why:** What is the great cause of this strange fact? Why would God leave His own Son at such a time and in such a plight? Since there was no cause in Jesus, why, then, was He deserted?

**Have:** It is done. The Savior feels its dread effect as He asks the question. It is surely true, but how mysterious! It was no threat of forsaking that made the great Surety cry aloud. He endured that forsaking in an actual deed.

**You:** I can understand why traitorous Judas and timid Peter should be gone, but **You**, My God, My faithful friend, how can *You* leave me? This is worst of all, worse than all put together. The fiercest flame of hell is for the separation of the soul from God.

**Forsaken:** If You had chastened I might bear it, for Your face would shine, but to utterly forsake me!

**Why Me?:** Your innocent, obedient, suffering Son, why do You leave *Me* to perish? The sight of self as seen by penitence, and the sight of Jesus on the cross as seen by faith, will best expound this question. Jesus is forsaken because our sins had separated us and our God.

**(Ps. 22:6) But I am a worm, and no man.** This verse is a miracle in language. How could the Lord of glory be brought to such abasement as to be not only lower than the angels, but also lower than men? What a contrast between "I AM" and **I am a worm!** Yet this double nature was found in the person of our Lord Jesus when He bled on the tree. He felt comparable to a helpless, powerless, downtrodden worm, passive while crushed and unnoticed and despised by those who stepped on him. Jesus selects the weakest of creatures, which is all flesh, and becomes, when stepped on, writhing, quivering flesh, utterly devoid of any might except the strength to suffer. This was a true likeness of Jesus. His body and soul became a mass of misery, the essence of agony in the dying pangs of crucifixion. We, by nature, are worms. Yet our Lord puts Himself even beneath us, because of the scorn heaped on Him and the weakness that He felt. Thus, He adds, **and no man.** The privileges and blessings that belonged to the fathers could not be obtained while He was deserted *by* God. Common acts of humanity were not allowed Him. He was rejected. He was outlawed from earth's society and shut out from heaven's smile. How utterly the Savior emptied Himself of all glory and became of no reputation for our sakes (Phil. 2:7).

**A reproach of men,** their common butt and jest, their byword and proverb, a sport of the rabble, the scorn of the rulers. Oh the caustic power of reproach to those who endure it with patience yet painfully hurt under it!

**And despised by the people.** The population was against Him. The people who would once have crowned Him now despised Him. Those who had received His cures sneered at His woes. Sin is worthy of all reproach and contempt, and Jesus, the Sin-bearer, was given up to be unworthily and shamefully treated.

**(Ps. 22:11) Be not far from Me.** This is the petition He has been using for such varied and powerful pleas. His great woe was that God had forsaken Him. His great prayer was that He would be near Him. A lively sense of the divine presence is a mighty support to the heart in times of distress.

**For trouble is near; for there is none to help.** There are *two fors*, as though faith gave a double knock at the gate of mercy. It is a powerful prayer, full of holy reasons and thoughtful arguments. The nearness of trouble is a weighty motive for divine help; it moves our heavenly Father's heart and brings His helping hand. It is His glory to be our "very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). Our Substitute had trouble in His inmost heart, for He said, "The waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire" (Ps. 69:1-2). Well might He cry, **Be not far from Me.**

The absence of all other helpers is another telling plea. In our Lord's case, none could or would help Him. It was necessary that He trod the winepress alone (Is. 63:3). Yet it was a sore aggravation to find that all His disciples had forsaken Him. There is an awfulness about absolute friendlessness that crushes the human mind. We were not made to be alone and are like a severed limb when we have to endure loneliness of heart.

**(Ps. 22:12) Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.** The victim's tearful eye marked the mighty in the crowd. The priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, rulers, and captains bellowed around the Cross like wild cattle, fed in the fat and solitary pastures of Bashan (Deut. 32:14). Full of strength and fury, they stamped and foamed around the innocent One, longing to gore Him to death with their cruelties. Think of the Lord Jesus as a helpless, unarmed, naked man, thrown in the midst of a herd of infuriated wild bulls. They were brutal as bulls, many and strong,

and the Rejected One was alone, naked, and bound to the tree. His position throws great force into the earnest plea, "Be not far from me" (v. 11).

**(Ps. 22:14)** Turning from His enemies, our Lord describes His personal condition in language that brings tears to every loving eye. **I am poured out like water.** He was utterly spent, like water poured on the earth. His heart failed Him; it had no more firmness than running water. His being was a sacrifice, poured out before the Lord. He had long been a fountain of tears. In Gethsemane His heart welled over in sweat, and on the Cross blood gushed from Him. He poured out His strength and spirit and was reduced to the most feeble and exhausted state. **All My bones are out of joint,** as if distended on a rack. Is it not highly possible that when they were nailing His hands and feet, and when He felt the jolt of putting the Cross in the earth, that the bones of the Crucified One were dislocated?

**My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me.** Excessive debility and intense pain made His inner life feel like melted wax. The Greek liturgy uses the expression, "Your unknown sufferings," and well it may. The fire of Almighty wrath would have consumed our souls forever in hell; it was no light work to bear as a substitute the heat of an anger so justly terrible. Dr. Gill wisely observes, "If the heart of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, melted, what heart can endure, what hands can be strong, when God deals in His wrath?"

**(Ps. 22:19) But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me.** Invincible faith returns to the charge and uses the same means: continual, urgent prayer. He repeats the previous petition that was so piteously offered. He wants nothing but His God. Even in His lowest state, Jesus does not ask for the most comfortable or nearest presence of God. He will be content if He is not far from God. Humble requests prosper at the throne.

**O My Strength, hasten to help Me!** Hard cases need timely aid. We may be urgent with God as to time; **Hasten to help me,** but we must not do this out of willfulness. In the last degree of personal weakness Jesus calls the Lord, **My strength.** After this fashion the believer can sing, "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

**(Ps. 22:20) Deliver Me from the sword.** The sword probably represents entire destruction, and as a man, He dreaded this. Or perhaps He sought deliverance from the enemies around Him, who were like a sharp and deadly sword. The Lord has said, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd" (Zech. 13:7). And from that sword's terror, the Shepherd wanted deliverance when justice should see fit.

**My precious life from the power of the dog.** His soul, His life, which is precious to everyone. The original is, "my only one." Our soul is precious, because it is our only soul. Would that all made their souls their darlings, but many treat them as if they were not worth so much as the dirt of the streets. **The dog** may mean Satan, that cursed and cursing cur, or the entire company of Christ's foes. They were as unanimous as if they were one. They sought with one consent to tear Him in pieces. If Jesus cried for help against the dog of hell, much more may we. Beware of the dog. His power is great, and only God can deliver us. When he flatters, we must not put ourselves in his power. When he howls, remember that God holds him with a chain.

**(Ps. 22:31) They will come.** Sovereign grace will bring the blood-bought ones. Nothing can stop the divine purpose. The chosen will come to life, faith, pardon, and heaven. The dying Savior finds sacred satisfaction in this. Toiling servant of God, be glad that God's eternal purposes will not be hurt or hindered.

**And declare His righteousness to a people who will be born.** None whom the irresistible attractions of the Cross bring to God will be silent. They will tell the Lord's righteousness, so that future generations will know the truth. Parents will teach their children, who will hand it down to their children. The story always being that **He has done this,** or "It is finished" (John 19:30). The glorious work of salvation is done. There is peace on earth and glory in the highest. "It is finished," were the words of the expiring Lord Jesus, and, **He has done this** are the last words of this Psalm. May we, by living faith, see our salvation finished by the death of Jesus!

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### **Why is what happened to Jesus in Psalm 22:1 (Mark 15:34) so necessary?**

Isa. 53:10    Micah 6:13

### **What is necessary for us before we can give God the proper respect?**

Ps. 22:23, 26

### **Psalm 23:1-6**

The position of this Psalm is worthy of notice. It follows Psalm 22, which is a "Psalm of the Cross." There are no green pastures, no still waters, on the other side of the twenty-second Psalm. It is only after we have read, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46) that we come to, "The LORD is my Shepherd." We must, by experience, know the value of blood-shedding, and see the sword awakened against the Shepherd, before we truly know the sweetness of the good Shepherd's care.

What the nightingale is among birds, this divine ode is among the Psalms. It has sung sweetly to many mourners in their night of weeping. It has offered hope for a morning of joy. I compare it to the lark that sings as it flies and flies as it sings, until it is out of sight but not out of hearing. Note the last words of the Psalm, "I will dwell in the house of the LORD

forever." These are celestial notes, more fitted for the eternal mansions than for these dwelling places below the clouds. Enter the spirit of the Psalm as you read it, and you will experience the days of heaven on earth!

**The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.  
He makes me to lie down in green  
pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.  
He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death, 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 runs over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow  
me  
All the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
Forever.**

**(Ps. 23:1) The LORD is my shepherd.** What condescension! The infinite Lord assumes the duties and character of a shepherd toward His people. This should be the subject of grateful admiration. God permits Himself to be compared to anything that sets forth His great love and care for His people. David had been a keeper of sheep; he understood both the needs of the sheep and the many cares of a shepherd. David compares himself to a creature who is weak, defenseless, and foolish. God is his Provider, Preserver, and Director. God is his everything. People have no right to be considered the Lord's sheep unless they have renewed their nature. The scriptural description of the unconverted does not picture them as sheep but as wolves or goats. A sheep is property. It is not a wild animal. Its owner sets great value by it, and frequently it is bought with a great price.

It is well to know, as David did, that we belong to the Lord. There is a noble tone of confidence about this sentence. There is no "if," "but," or "I hope." He states, **The LORD is my shepherd.** We must cultivate the spirit of assured dependence on our heavenly Father. The sweetest word is that monosyllable, my. He does not say, "The Lord is the shepherd of the world at large, and leads the multitude as His flock," but, **The LORD is my shepherd.** If He is a Shepherd to no one else, He is a Shepherd to *me*; He cares for *me*, watches over *me*, and preserves *me*. The words are in the present tense. Whatever our position as believers, we are even now under the pastoral care of Jehovah.

The next words are an inference from the first statement. They are abounding and positive, **I shall not want.** I might want, but when the Lord is my Shepherd, He is able to supply my needs. He is willing to do so, for His heart is full of love, and so **I shall not want.** I will not lack for *temporal things*. Does he feed the birds (Matt. 6:26) and cause the lilies to grow (Matt. 6:28)? Then how can He leave His children to starve? I know that His grace is sufficient for me (2 Cor. 12:9). To those resting in Him, He will say, "As your days, so shall your strength be" (Deut. 33:25). I may not possess all that I wish, but **I shall not want.** Others, far wealthier and wiser, may want, but **I shall not want.** "The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing" (Ps. 34:10). It is not only that "I do not want," but **I shall not want.** Come what may, if famine devastates the land, or a calamity destroys the city, **I shall not want.** Old age, with its feebleness, will not bring me any lack, and even death, with its gloom, shall not find me destitute. I have all things and abound. Not because I have a good store of money in the bank, not because I have skill and wit to win my bread, but because **The LORD is my shepherd.** The wicked always want, but the righteous never. A sinner's heart is far from satisfaction, but a gracious spirit dwells in the palace of content.

**(Ps. 23:2) He makes me to lie down in green pastures.** The Christian life has two elements, contemplative and active, and both are richly provided. First, the contemplative, **He makes me to lie down in green pastures.** **Green pastures** are the Scriptures of truth, always fresh, always rich, and never exhausted. There is no fear of biting the ground where the grass is long. Sweet and full is the gospel's doctrine; it is fit food for souls, as tender grass is natural nutriment for sheep. When by faith we find rest in the promises, we are like sheep that lie down in the pasture. We find food, peace, rest, refreshment, calmness, and satisfaction.

**He makes me to lie down.** It is the Lord who graciously enables us to perceive the preciousness of His truth and to feed on it. How grateful we ought to be for the power to appropriate the promises! Some distracted souls would give worlds if they could do this. They know the blessedness, but it is not theirs. They know the **green pastures**, but they are not made to **lie down.** Believers who enjoy a "full assurance of faith" should greatly bless their gracious God.

The second part of a vigorous Christian's life consists of gracious activity. We not only think, but also act. We are not always lying down to feed, but also journeying toward perfection. **He leads me beside the still waters.** What are these **still waters**? The influences and graces of His blessed Spirit, as He attends us in various operations, are waters (in the

plural) to cleanse, refresh, enrich, and cherish. They are **still waters** because the Holy Spirit loves peace and sounds no trumpet of ostentation in His operations. He may flow into our soul, but not into our neighbor's. Our neighbor may not perceive the divine presence. The blessed Spirit may pour His floods into one heart, while those sitting next to the favored may know nothing of it:

In sacred silence of the mind  
My heaven, and there my God I find.

Still waters run deep. Nothing is more noisy than an empty drum. The silence is golden when the Holy Spirit meets the saints. It is not raging waves but peaceful streams of holy love, when the Spirit of God leads the chosen sheep. The Spirit is a dove not an eagle; He is the dew not the hurricane. Our Lord leads us beside **still waters**. We could not go there by ourselves; we need His guidance. Thus, **He leads me**. He does not drive. Moses drove by the Law, but Jesus leads by example and by the gentle drawing of His love.

**(Ps. 23:3) He restores my soul.** When the soul grows sorrowful, He revives it. When it is sinful, He sanctifies it. When it is weak, He strengthens it. **He** does it. His ministers could not do it unless He does it. His word would not avail by itself. **He restores my soul.** Are any of us low in grace? Is our spirituality at its lowest ebb? He who turns the ebb to the flood tide can soon restore our soul. Pray for the blessing, "Restore me, Shepherd of my soul!"

**He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.** The Christian delights to be obedient, but it is the obedience of love. **He leads me.** Christians are not obedient to some commandments and neglectful of others. They do not choose, but obey all. Observe the plural, **the paths of righteousness**. Whatever God may give us to do we will do it, led by His love. Some Christians overlook the blessing of sanctification, and yet to a thoroughly renewed heart, this is one of the sweetest gifts of the covenant. If we could be saved from wrath and yet remain unregenerate, impenitent sinners, we could not be saved as we desire, for we chiefly desire to be saved *from* sin and to be led in holiness. All this is done out of pure free grace **for His name's sake**. It is to the honor of our great Shepherd that we should be a holy people, walking in the narrow way of righteousness. If we are so led and guided, we must not fail to adore our heavenly Shepherd's care.

**(Ps. 23:4) Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.** This unspeakably delightful verse has been sung on many a death bed; it has helped to make the dark valley bright. Every word has a wealth of meaning. **Yea though I walk**, as if believers did not quicken their pace when they came to die, but still calmly *walked* with God. Walking indicates the steady advance of a soul who knows the road, knows its end, resolves to follow the path, feels quite safe, and is perfectly calm and composed. Dying saints are not in a flurry. They do not run around as though alarmed or stand still as though they would go no farther. They are not confused or ashamed, and therefore they keep their pace.

It is not walking *in* the valley, but **through the valley**. We go through the dark tunnel of death and emerge in the light of immortality. We do not die. We sleep to wake in glory. Death is not the house but the porch, not the goal but the passage. Dying is called a **valley**. The storm breaks on the mountain, but the valley is quiet. Often, a Christian's last days are the most peaceful. The mountain is bleak and bare, but the valley is rich with golden sheaves. Many saints have reaped more joy and knowledge when they came to die than they ever knew while they lived.

This is not "the valley of death," but **the valley of the shadow of death**. Death in its substance has been removed and only the shadow remains. Someone said that where there is a shadow there must be light, and so there is. Death stands by the side of the highway in which we have to travel, and the light of heaven shining on him throws a shadow across our path. Rejoice that there is a light beyond. Nobody is afraid of a shadow, for a shadow cannot stop you even for a moment. The shadow of a dog cannot bite; the shadow of a sword cannot kill; the shadow of death cannot destroy. Do not be afraid.

**I will fear no evil.** David does not say that there will be no evil. He was beyond even that high assurance and knew that Jesus had put all evil away. Rather, **I will fear no evil**, as if even his fears, those shadows of evil, were gone forever. The worst evils of life are those that only exist in our imagination. If we had no troubles but real troubles, we would not have a tenth of our present sorrows. We feel a thousand deaths in fearing one. The psalmist, however, was cured of fearing. **I will fear no evil**, not even the evil one. I will not dread the last enemy. I will look on him as a conquered foe, an enemy to be destroyed, **for You are with me**. This is the joy of the Christian! **You are with me**. The little child at sea in the storm is not frightened; it sleeps on its mother's bosom, content that its mother is there. It should be enough for believers to know that Christ is with them. **You are with me**. I have in You all that I can crave. I have perfect comfort and absolute security, for **You are with me**.

**Your rod and Your staff**, the ensigns of Your sovereignty and Your gracious care, Your tools for governing and ruling Your flock, **they comfort me**. I will believe that You reign. The rod of Jesse will still be over me as the sovereign comfort of my soul.

**(Ps. 23:5) Thou prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.** David had enemies. He would not be like his Lord if he did not. If we were without enemies, we might fear that we were not friends of God, for "friendship with the world is enmity with God" (James 4:4). Yet see the tranquility of the godly man in spite of, and in the sight of, his enemies. How refreshing is his calm bravery! **You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies**. When

a soldier is in the enemy's presence, if he eats, he grabs a hasty meal and then hurries to the fight. Yet, **You prepare a table**, just as a servant unfolds the damask cloth and displays the china, crystal, and silver as on an ordinary peaceful occasion. Nothing is hurried. There is no confusion, no disturbance. The enemy is at the door, yet God prepares a table, and the Christian sits and eats as if everything were in perfect peace. Oh the peace that Jehovah gives His people, even in the midst of the most trying circumstances!

**You anoint my head with oil.** Live in the daily enjoyment of this blessing, receiving a fresh anointing for every day's duties. Every Christian is a priest, but we cannot execute the priestly office without unction (anointing with oil). We must go day by day to God the Holy Spirit to have our heads anointed with oil. A priest without oil misses the chief qualification for office, and Christian priests lack fitness for service when they are without new grace from on high.

**My cup runs over.** He not only had enough, but also more than enough; he had a cup that overflowed. The poor may say this as well as those in higher circumstances. "All this, and Jesus Christ too," said a poor cottager as she broke a piece of bread and filled a glass with cold water. People may be wealthy, but if discontent, their cup cannot run over; it is cracked and leaks. Contentment is the philosopher's stone that turns all it touches to gold. Happy is the one who has found it. Contentment is more than a kingdom; it is happiness.

**(Ps. 23:6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.** This is a fact as indisputable as it is encouraging. A heavenly **surely** is the seal. This sentence may be read, "*only* goodness and mercy," for there will be unmingled mercy in our history. These twin guardian angels will always be at my beck and call. When great princes travel, they go attended; so it is with the believer. Goodness and mercy always follows me, **all the days of my life**. It follows me in black days as well as bright days, in days of fasting as well as days of feasting, in the dreary days of winter as well as the bright days of summer. Goodness supplies our needs, and mercy blots out our sins.

**And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.** "A slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever" (John 8:35). While I am here, I will be a child at home with my God. The whole world will be His house to me. When I ascend to the upper chamber, I will not change my company, not even change the house. I will only go to dwell in the upper story of the house of the Lord forever.

May God grant us grace to dwell in the serene atmosphere of this most blessed Psalm!

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### **Comment on the meaning of the words "green pastures" and "still waters" in Psalm 23:2.**

2 Sam.7:1 Ps. 3:3-6 Ps. 116:7 Matt. 11:28-29

#### **How does He restore our soul and lead us in paths of righteousness (Ps. 23:3)?**

Ps. 3:7-8 Eph. 1:6

#### **What personal meaning does Psalm 23 have for you?**

#### **Psalm 24:1-10**

We learn nothing from the title but the authorship. Still this is interesting and leads us to observe the Spirit's wonderful operations on the mind of Israel's sweet singer. The Spirit's power enables David to touch the mournful string in Psalm 22, to pour gentle notes of peace in Psalm 23, and to utter majestic and triumphant strains in Psalm 24. We can do or sing all things when the Lord strengthens us.

David probably wrote this sacred hymn when the ark of the covenant was taken from the house of Obed-edom (1 Chr. 15:25), to remain within curtains on the hill of Zion. The words are suitable for David's sacred dance of joy that led the way (1 Chr. 15:29). The psalmist's eye, however, looks beyond the ark to the sublime ascension of the King of glory. We will call this Psalm, "The Song of the Ascension."

This Psalm and Psalm 15 are a pair. It consists of three parts.

- The first part glorifies the true God and sings of His universal dominion, verses 1-2.
- The second part describes the true Israel, who fellowships with Him, verses 3-6.
- The third part pictures the ascent of the true Redeemer, who has opened heaven's gates for the entrance of His elect, verses 7-10.

**The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness.**

**The world and those who dwell therein.**

**For He has founded it upon the seas,**

**And established it upon the waters.**

**(Ps. 24:1-2)**

How different this is from the ignorant Jewish notion of God that prevailed in our Savior's day. The Jews said, "The holy land is God's. Abraham's heirs are His only people." Yet their great Monarch had long before instructed them that **the earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness**. The whole round world is claimed for Jehovah. **The world and those who dwell therein** are declared to be His subjects.

Man lives on the earth and parcels out its soil between his mimic kings and autocrats. Yet the earth is not man's; he is only a tenant at will, a leaseholder on the most precarious tenure, liable to instant eviction. The great Landowner and true Proprietor holds His court above the clouds and laughs at the title deeds of worms of the dust. The deed is not with the lord of the manor or the freeholder, but it is with the Creator.

**The fullness** of the earth may mean its harvests, wealth, life, or worship. In all these senses, the Most High God is Possessor of all.

**Lift up your heads, O you gates!  
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!  
And the King of glory shall come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The LORD strong and mighty,  
The LORD mighty in battle.  
Lift up your heads. O you gates!  
Lift up, you everlasting doors!  
And the King of glory shall come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The LORD of hosts,  
He is the King of glory. Selah.**

**(Ps. 24:7-10)**

These last verses reveal the great representative man, who answered to the full character laid down, and who by his own right ascended the holy hill of Zion. Our Lord Jesus Christ could ascend the hill of the Lord because His hands were clean and His heart was pure. If we by faith in Him are conformed to His image, we too will ascend. This verse (24:7) pictures our Lord's glorious ascent. We see him rising from the little group on Olivet, and as the cloud receives Him, angels reverently escort Him to heaven's gates (Acts 1:9-11).

Hearing the song, the watchers at the gate look over the battlements and ask, **Who is this King of glory?** This is a question full of meaning and worthy of the meditations of eternity. Who is He in person, nature, character, office, and work? What is His pedigree? What is His rank? What is His race? The answers are given in a mighty wave of music: **the LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle**. We know Jesus' might by the battles He has fought and the victories He has won over sin, death, and hell. We clap our hands as we see Him leading captivity captive in the majesty of His strength (Eph. 4:8). Oh for a heart to sing His praises! Mighty hero, be crowned forever King of kings and Lord of lords.

Dear reader, it is possible that you are saying, "I will never enter the heaven of God, for I have neither clean hands nor a pure heart." Look then to Christ, who has already climbed the holy hill. He has entered as the forerunner of those who trust Him. Follow His footsteps and rest on His merit. He rides triumphantly into heaven, and you will ride there too if you trust Him.

"How can you get the kind of character that is described?" The Spirit of God will give you that. He will create in you a new heart and a right spirit. Faith in Jesus is the work of the Holy Spirit. Faith stands by the fountain filled with blood, and as she washes, clean hands, a pure heart, a holy soul, and a truthful tongue are given.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD or who may stand in His holy place (Ps. 24:3)?**

Ps. 15:1-2      Heb. 9:24

**What is being lifted in Psalm 24:7 and 24:9?**

### **Psalm 25:1-22**

**(Ps. 25:14) The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him.** Some read this verse, "the friendship of the Lord." It signifies a familiar relationship, confidential intimacy, and select fellowship. This is a great secret. Worldly minds cannot guess what is intended, and even believers cannot express it in words, for it must be felt to be known. The higher spiritual life is a path that the eagle's eye has not known and the lion's whelp has not traveled. Neither natural wisdom nor strength can force a door into this inner chamber. Saints have the key of heaven's hieroglyphics; they can unriddle celestial enigmas. They are initiated into the fellowship of the skies. They have heard words not possible to repeat.

**And He will show them His covenant.** Its antiquity, security, righteousness, fullness, graciousness, and excellence will be revealed to their hearts and understanding. Above all, the witness of the Holy Spirit will seal their part in it to their souls. The designs of love that the Lord has for His people in the covenant of grace are revealed in the Book of Inspiration. His Spirit leads us into the mystery, even the hidden mystery of redemption. Those who do not know the meaning of this verse will never learn it from a commentary. Let them look to the Cross, for the secret lies there.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Show how David in this Psalm is raised above self, the world, being in close communion with God.**

**What is the “secret of the LORD” spoken of in Psalm 25:14?**

Gen. 18:17-19 Job 29:1-4 Prov. 3:32 Isa. 54:13 John 6:45 John 7:17 John 15:15 Rev. 2:17

### **Psalm 26:1-12**

**(Ps. 26:1) Vindicate me, O LORD,** is a solemn appeal to the just tribunal of the heart-searching God. The writer's circumstances warrant this, in that he was wrongly charged. Worried and worn by injustice, the innocent flies from false accusers to the throne of Eternal Right.

**I have also trusted in the LORD.** Faith is the root and sap of integrity. Those who lean on the Lord are sure to walk in righteousness. David knew that God's covenant had given him the crown. Therefore, he took no indirect or illegal means to secure it. He would not slay his enemy in the cave (1 Sam. 24:4); he would not permit his troops to kill Saul as Saul slept unguarded on the plain (1 Sam. 26:8). Faith will work hard for the Lord and in the Lord's way. Yet faith will not so much as lift a finger to fulfill the devices of unrighteous cunning. Rebecca acted out a great falsehood to fulfill the Lord's decree in favor of Jacob (Gen. 27:5-17). This was unbelief. Abraham left it to the Lord to fulfill His purposes and took the knife to slay his son (Gen. 22:6). This was faith. Faith trusts God to accomplish His decrees. Why should I steal? God has promised to supply my need. Why should I avenge my enemies? The Lord has taken up my cause. Confidence in God is a most effective security against sin.

**I shall not slip.** The way is slippery, like walking on ice. Faith keeps me from slipping. Doubtful ways will eventually cause us to fall. Yet the ways of honesty, though often rough, are always safe. We cannot trust in God if we walk crookedly. Straight paths and simple faith bring the pilgrims happily to the journey's end.

**(Ps.26:2) The psalmist was so innocent that he unconditionally submitted to any form of examination. Examine me, O LORD.** Look me through and through, make a minute survey, put the question to me, and cross-examine my evidence.

**Prove me.** Put me on trial again. See if I would follow such wicked designs as my enemies impute to me. **Try my mind and my heart.** Try me, as metals are assayed in the furnace. See whether I love murder, treason, and deceit. This is a bold appeal. It shows a solemn and complete conviction of innocence. These expressions teach the thoroughness of divine judgment and the necessity of being profoundly sincere, lest we are found wanting at the end. Our enemies are severe with the severity of spite. David endures without fear. God's severity is that of unswerving right. Who will stand against such a trial? The sweet singer asks, "Who can stand before His cold?" (Ps. 147:17). We may well enquire, "Who can stand before the heat of His justice?"

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Was it bold on David's part to ask the Lord to examine, prove and try the reins of his heart (Ps. 26:2)? Why is this also necessary for us to do?**

Ps. 17:3 Ps. 18:36 Ps. 37:31

### **Psalm 27:1-14**

**(Ps. 27:1) The LORD is my light and my salvation.** Personal interest, **my light and my salvation.** The soul is assured and boldly declares, **My light.** Divine light is poured into the soul as the precursor of salvation. Where there is not enough light to see our darkness there is no evidence of salvation. Salvation finds us in the dark, but it does not leave us there. It gives light to those who sit in the valley of the shadow of death. After conversion, God is our joy, comfort, guide, teacher, and in every sense our light. He is light within, light around, light reflected, and light to be revealed. It is not said that the Lord gives light, but that He *is* light; not that He gives salvation, but that He *is* salvation. Those who by faith have laid hold on God have all the covenant blessings.

**Whom shall I fear?** This is a question that is its own answer. The powers of darkness are not to be feared for the Lord, our light, destroys them. The damnation of hell is not to be dreaded for the Lord is our salvation. This is a far different challenge from that of boastful Goliath (1 Sam. 17:8-10). It is based on a different foundation. It rests not on the conceited vigor of an arm of flesh but on the real power of the omnipotent I AM.

**The LORD is the strength of my life.** Here is a third glowing quality. It shows that the writer's hope was fastened with a threefold cord that is not quickly broken (Eccl. 4:12). We may well accumulate praise where the Lord lavishes deeds of grace. Our life derives all strength from Him who is its author. If He makes us strong, all the machinations of the adversary cannot weaken us.

**Of whom shall I be afraid?** This bold question looks into the present and the future. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)—either now or in time to come!

**(Ps. 27:5) He shall set me high upon a rock.** Immutability, eternity, and infinite power comes to the aid of sovereignty and sacrifice. Blessed are those whom God sets on an impregnable rock that can never be stormed! Well may we desire to dwell with the Lord, who so effectively protects His people.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

Although an army will go against David, he is confident (Ps. 27:3) the Lord will hide him in his pavilion (Ps. 27:5). **Where is David's hiding place?**

1 Kings 2:28-29

### **Psalms 28:1-9**

The title, **A Psalm of David**, is too general to give any clue about the occasion for which he wrote it. Its position, following the twenty-seventh, seems designed, for it is a most suitable jewel and sequel to it. It is another of those "songs in the night" of which David's pen was so prolific. The old naturalists said the thorn at the breast of the nightingale made it sing. David's griefs made him eloquent in holy music. This Psalm's main pleading is that the workers of iniquity, whom he abhorred, may not confound the suppliant. It suits any slandered saint who is misunderstood, treated as unworthy, and anxious to stand before the bar of God. The Lord Jesus may be seen here, pleading as the representative of His people.

#### **Division**

The first and second verses earnestly petition an audience with the Lord in this time of dire emergency.

- The portion of the wicked is described and deprecated, verses 3-5.
- Praise is given for the Lord's mercy in hearing prayer, verses 6-8.
- The Psalm concludes with a general petition for all militant believers, verse 9.

**(Ps. 28:1) To You I will cry, O LORD my Rock.** A cry is the natural expression of sorrow. It is a suitable utterance when all other methods fail. Yet the cry must be directed to the Lord alone, for to cry to man is to waste our pleas on the air. When we consider the Lord's readiness to hear, and His ability to aid, we see good reason for directing all appeals to the God of our salvation. We will use language of firm resolve, like that in the text, **I will cry**. The immutable Jehovah is our **Rock**, the immovable foundation of all hope, "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). We are determined to flee to Him in every hour of danger. Calling to the rocks in the day of judgment will be useless (Rev. 6:16), but our Rock attends to our cries.

**Do not be silent to me.** Mere formalism may be content without answers to prayer, but not genuine suppliants. They are not satisfied with prayer that only calms the mind and subdues the will. Genuine suppliants must obtain actual replies from heaven, or they cannot rest. If possible, they want those replies immediately, because even a little of God's silence is dreaded.

**(Ps. 28:8) The LORD is my strength.** The Lord employs His power and infuses strength into our weakness. The psalmist, by an act of appropriating faith, takes the omnipotence of Jehovah as his own. Dependence on the invisible God gives great independence of spirit; it inspires confidence that is more than human. **And my shield.** David found both sword and shield in God. The Lord preserves His people from unnumbered ills. The Christian, sheltered behind God, is far safer than the hero who is covered with a shield of brass or triple steel.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Show in scripture how the "Rock" (Ps. 28:1) implies God's immovable faithfulness.**

Ps. 18:2 Ps. 19:14

"Do not take me away with the wicked" (Ps. 28:3) **Show how it is impossible that our righteous God could destroy us with the wicked?**

Gen. 18:23 1 Chron. 16:20-22 Esther 7:1-10 Ps. 26:6-12 Ezek. 32:1-5 Matt. 7:1-6

### **Psalms 29:1-11**

This Psalm expresses the glory of God as heard in the pealing thunder and seen in the tornado. Psalm 8 is to be read by moonlight when the stars are bright. Psalm 19 needs the rays of the rising sun to bring out its beauty. Psalm 29 is best repeated under the black wing of the tempest by the glare of lightning, or in the dubious dusk that heralds the war of elements. The verses march to the tune of thunderbolts. God is everywhere conspicuous, and the majesty of His presence hushes all the earth.

**(Ps. 29:3) The voice of the LORD is over the waters.** The thunder is not only poetically but also instructively called "the voice of God," for it peals from on high. Thunder surpasses all other sounds. It inspires awe and is entirely independent of man. Often it has been the grand accompaniment of God's speech to Adam's children. There is a special terror in a storm at sea; deep calls to deep, and the raging sea echoes to the angry sky. No sight is more alarming than the flash of lightning around the mast of the ship. No sound is more calculated to inspire reverent awe than the storm's roar.

**(Ps. 29:8-9) The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth and strips the forest bare.** Our first parents sought refuge among the trees, but the voice of the Lord soon found them and made their hearts tremble (Gen. 3:8-13). There is no hiding from the fire-gance of the Almighty. One flash of His angry eye turns midnight into noon. The gospel has a similar revealing power in dark hearts; in a moment it lights every recess of the heart and invites the soul to tremble before the Lord.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### **Is it a command to worship and give glory to God?**

Deut. 32:3-4    1 Chr. 16:23-30    2 Chr. 20:21    Ps. 29:1-2    Ps. 96:7-9    Ps. 111:1-4

#### **Psalm 30:1-12**

Throughout this Psalm, we have indications that David had been greatly afflicted after thinking he was secure. When God's children prosper one way, they are generally tried another. Few can handle prosperity. The joys of hope need to be mixed with the pains of experience, for comfort breeds carnal security and self-confidence. Yet pardon followed repentance, and God's mercy was glorified.

This Psalm is a song and not a complaint. Read it in the light of David's last days, when he had numbered the people (2 Sam. 24:10). God chastened him and then in mercy commanded the angel to put away his sword (2 Sam. 24:16). On the floor of Oman the poet received the inspiration that glows in this delightful ode. It is the Psalm of the numbering of the people and of the dedication temple that commemorated the end of the plague.

**(Ps. 30:1) For You have lifted me up.** This is an antithesis, "I will exalt You, for You have exalted me." I will give according to the benefits received. The psalmist had a reason for the praise in his heart. He had been lifted like a prisoner from a dungeon, like Joseph out of the pit (Gen. 37:28), and therefore he loved his deliverer. Grace has lifted us from the pit of hell, from the ditch of sin, from the Slough of Despond, from the bed of sickness, from the bondage of doubts and fears. Have we no song to offer for all this? How high has our Lord lifted us? He has lifted us into the children's place, to be adopted into the family. He has lifted us into union with Christ, to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). Let us lift high the name of our God, for He has lifted us above the stars.

**(Ps. 30:8) I cried out to You, O LORD.** Prayer is the unfailing resource of God's people. If driven to their wit's end, they may still go to the mercy seat. When an earthquake makes our mountain tremble, the throne of grace stands firm, and we may come to it. Never forget to pray, and never doubt the success of prayer. The hand that wounds can heal; turn to Him who strikes. Prayer is better solace than Kain's building a city (Josh. 15:57), or Saul's seeking music (1 Sam. 16:17). Mirth and carnal amusements are a sorry prescription for a mind distracted and despairing. Prayer will succeed where all else fails.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### **When God takes away the mourning what does He give in its place?**

Ps. 30:11

#### **Psalms 31:1-24**

**(Ps. 31:5) Into Your hand I commit my spirit.** David's living words were our Lord's dying words. Saints have frequently used them in their hour of departure. Be assured they are good, choice, wise, and solemn words. We may use them now and in the last tremendous hour. The object of anxiety in life and death is not our body or estate but our spirit. This is the jewel, the secret treasure. If this is safe, all is well. See what David does with his pearl! He commits it to the

hand of God. It came from Him; it is His own. He has sustained it; He is able to keep it, and it is most fitting that He should receive it.

**(Ps.31:24) Be of good courage.** Keep up your spirit! Let no thoughts of surrender blanch your cheek. Fear weakens. Courage strengthens. Victory waits on the banners of the brave.

**And He shall strengthen your heart.** Power from on high will be given by administering force to the fountain of vitality. Far from leaving, the Lord will draw near in our adversity and put His power in us.

**All you who hope in the LORD.** Every one of you, lift up your heads and sing for joy. God is faithful. If He does not fail His little children, who but hope, why should we be afraid?

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **On what basis was David's plea for deliverance?**

Ps. 23:3

Ps. 31:3-5

### **Psalm 32:1-11**

**(Psalm 32:1) Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.** He is now and will ever be blessed. Is he poor, or sick, or sorrowful? He is still blessed indeed. Pardoning mercy is of all things in the world most to be prized, for it is the only and sure way to happiness. To hear from God's Spirit the words, *absolvo te* is joy unspeakable. In this Psalm, blessedness is not ascribed to one who has been a diligent law keeper, for then it would never come to us. It is to a lawbreaker, who by grace most rich and free has been forgiven. Self-righteous Pharisees have no portion in this blessedness. It is over the returning prodigal that the word of welcome is pronounced and the music and dancing begin. A full, instantaneous, irreversible pardon of transgression turns the poor sinner's hell into heaven and makes the heir of wrath a partaker in blessing. The word **forgiven** in the original is *taken off or taken away*, as a burden is lifted or a barrier removed. What a lift! It cost our Savior a sweat of blood to bear our load (Luke 22:44); it cost Him His life to bear it away. Samson carried the gates of Gaza (Judges 16:3), but what was that to the weight Jesus bore on our behalf?

**Whose sin is covered,** covered by God, as the mercy seat covered the ark, as Noah was covered from the flood, as the depths of the sea covered the Egyptians. What a cover! It forever hides the filthiness of the flesh and the spirit from the sight of the all-seeing God! He who has once seen sin in its horrible deformity will appreciate the happiness of seeing it no more. Christ's atonement is the propitiation, the covering, the making of the end of sin. Where this is seen and trusted, the soul knows that it is then accepted in the Beloved. It therefore enjoys a conscious blessing that is the foretaste of heaven. It is clear from the text that people may *know* they are pardoned, for who could know the blessedness of unknown forgiveness? Clearly it is a matter of knowledge, for it is the ground of comfort.

**(Ps. 32:2) Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity.** The word "blessed" is plural, *Oh, the blessednesses*, the double joys, the bundles of happiness, the mountains of delight! Three words denote our disobedience: transgression, sin, and iniquity. This is the three-headed dog at the gates of hell. Our glorious Lord, however, has silenced the barking against His believing ones. The Trinity of heaven overcomes the trinity of sin. Non-imputation is the essence of pardon; the believer sins, but the sin is not reckoned, not accounted.

**(Ps. 32:3) When I kept silent.** When through neglect I failed to confess, or through despair dared not, **my bones**, those solid pillars of my frame, **grew old**. They began to decay with weakness. *My* grief was so intense as to sap my health and destroyed my vital energy. What a killing thing is sin! It is a pestilent disease, a fire in the bones! When we smother our sin, it rages like a festering wound, swelling horribly and tormenting terribly.

**Through my groaning all the day long.** David was silent as to confession but not to sorrow. Horror at his great guilt drove him to incessant laments, until his voice was no longer articulate. It was so full of sighing and groaning that it resembled the hoarse roaring of a wounded animal. None know the pangs of conviction except those who have endured them. The rack, the wheel, the fires are easy when compared to the hell that a guilty conscience kindles. Better to suffer all the diseases of the flesh than to lie under the crushing wrath of almighty God. The Spanish Inquisition with all its tortures was nothing to the inquest that conscience can hold in the heart.

**(Ps. 32:4) For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me.** If God's finger can crush us, what must His hand be like as it presses heavily and continuously? Under terrors of conscience, many people have little rest at night. The grim thoughts of the day dog them to their bedrooms and haunt their dreams, or else they lie awake in the cold sweat of dread. God's hand is helpful when it lifts but awful when it presses. Better a world on the shoulder, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David.

**My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.** The sap of his soul was dried, and through sympathy the body appeared to be deprived of fluids. The oil was almost gone from the lamp of life; the flame flickered as though it would soon expire. Unconfessed transgression, like fierce poison, dries the fountain of strength. It makes us like a tree blasted by lightning, like a plant withered by the scorching heat of a tropical sun. Pity the poor soul when it learns of its sin but forgets its Savior, for it goes hard for that person.

**(Ps. 32:5) When the soul determines to plead guilty, absolution is nearby.** We read, **And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.** Not only was the sin pardoned, but also the iniquity. When the acknowledgment was made, the virus of guilt

was immediately put away. God's pardons are deep and thorough. The knife of mercy cuts the roots of the ill weed of sin.

**(Ps. 32:7) You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.** What a golden sentence! David is surrounded with song and with dancing mercies, all proclaiming the triumphs of grace. There is no breach in the circle; it surrounds him. On all sides, he hears music; in front, hope sounds the cymbals, and behind, gratitude beats the timbrel. Right and left, above and beneath, the air resounds with joy. And all this for the man whom a few weeks earlier had been roaring all day long. What a great change! What wonders grace has done and still can do!

**Selah.** There was a need to pause. Love so amazing needs to be pondered. Joy so great demands quiet contemplation, for language fails to express it.

**(Ps. 32:11) Be glad in the LORD.** Here is the directory by which gladness is preserved from levity. We are not to be glad in sin, or to find comfort in corn, wine, and oil, but **in the LORD.** He is to be the garden of our soul's delight. That there is such a God, and that He is ours forever, our Father and our reconciled Lord, is reason enough for a never-ending Psalm of rapturous joy.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### Describe the person spoken of in this Psalm.

2 Sam. 12:13

### What is God trying to tell us in Psalm 32:9?

### Psalm 33:1-22

In its fullness, this glorious Psalm of praise will be sung by redeemed Israel by and by, when, in the light of Christ, they shall enter into the full knowledge of God's character and ways; and shall be, as never before, "the nation," whose blessedness is celebrated in the middle line of this Psalm—the nation, namely, "whose God is Jehovah, and the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance."

But inasmuch as in and through Christ it is already our blessedness to know Israel's God in all the various aspects of His character which are unfolded in this Psalm, and inasmuch as we anticipate Israel in all the spiritual blessings of the new covenant of grace, we too are called upon to join in this glorious song of joy and praise.

Psalms 32 and 33 form a pair. Indeed, in a few ancient manuscripts they are written as one, by reason, probably, of the apparent continuity of subjects which was observed. Anyhow, it is no mere chance that the thirty-third Psalm begins with the same words with which the thirty-second closes.

The thirty-second Psalm may be regarded as the prelude and basis of the thirty-third. There the blessedness is described of the man whose trans-gression is borne away, whose sin is covered, whose iniquity is not imputed, and it leads on to fellowship with, and joy in the Lord.

Now the climax of the thirty-second Psalm forms the basis of the thirty-third. In structure this is one of the most symmetrical and beautiful in the whole collection.

The word translated "rejoice" expresses *exuberance*, or audible *demonstrative* joy. It is the same word which, in the last line of the thirty-second Psalm, is rendered by the expression "*shout for joy.*" In that same sense, as expressive of a holy joy which cannot contain itself, but must utter itself in a song of gladness, it is used in many other places in Scripture. Thus we find it in that beautiful little millennial song to be used by converted Israel by and by: "Cry out *and shout for joy*, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of Thee."

"*In Jehovah*"—all emphasis in this verse is thrown on the Holy Name as the great object of our joy.

God wants His people to be a *joyous people*, and the great cause and unfailing source of our joy is *Himself*—His eternal and unchangeable being; His glory and majesty; His holiness, wisdom, and power; His faithfulness and love—and all the wonderful attributes of His character summed up in the Holy Name "*Jehovah.*"

The exhortation in another Psalm is "*Delight thyself in Jehovah,*" so that He Himself, the blessed God, and not merely His gifts and benefits, may be thine "exceeding joy." Indeed, the power to joy in God alone may be taken as the mark of a true Christian. Even worldly men can rejoice in God's outward gifts and benefits, but it takes a true believer to rejoice in *Himself.*

These, then, are the first words of this Psalm, "*Rejoice in Jehovah.*" If it said, "Rejoice in yourself," some of us might well be sad; if it said, "Rejoice in your circumstances," many of us might well be gloomy; but to this call to "Rejoice in Jehovah" there is not one of His children, whatever their outward circumstances may be, who cannot respond.

Have all earthly sources of joy failed, you?—yea, do your very flesh and heart fail you? Then remember *God Himself* still remains the rock of your heart, and your portion for ever; and there is a river the streams whereof continue to make glad the city of God, and which can never fail, because it proceeds not from any earthly source, but "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

Therefore, fellow-Christian, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice."

"*Ye righteous*"—this describes those who are invited to this holy task. But who are the righteous?

Not those innately so, for there are none such among the sons of men, and the spiritual in Israel, more particularly, knew well that their own righteousness was but as "filthy rags," and that if they were to enter into the presence of God it must be in a righteousness provided by Himself.

The "righteous" in our Psalm, dear reader, are those who have learned the secret, and passed through the experience of the thirty-second Psalm, which describes "the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord *imputed* righteousness apart from works," and know the truth of the promise in Isaiah that "*their righteousness shall be of Me, says Jehovah.*"

But, linked with it, as one of the first-fruits of our justification by faith through the blood and righteousness of our Savior, is that *subjective* righteousness, showing itself in holiness of life, and this is brought out more particularly in the second line of our Psalm, where we read that "*praise is comely to the upright.*"

The word translated "upright" describes those who walk in a straight course, and to such—that is, to all who avoid all moral crookedness, all that is of the darkness—in their mouths praise is "comely," or "meet," or "beautiful." There is harmony and appropriateness in the righteous singing the praises of the thrice holy Jehovah. "But to the wicked God says, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes [or 'to sing My praise'], or that you should take My covenant in thy mouth? seeing you hate instruction, and cast My words behind thee."

But when a man's heart is full of the joy of the Lord, he not only wants a thousand tongues, but he tries to bring everything into requisition to help him to utter God's praise. "Praise Jehovah with the harp, with the ten-stringed psaltery sing unto Him."

(Types, Psalms, and Prophecies, David Baron)

"Sing to Him a new song" (Ps. 33:3) **What is the new song and who sings it?**

Ps. 40:1-10

### **Psalm 34:1-22**

A Psalm of David when he pretended insanity before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed (1 Sam. 21:10-15). The psalmist's gratitude prompted him to record the Lord's goodness in granting undeserved deliverance. Yet he weaves none of the incident into the narrative, but dwells on the grand fact that he was heard in the hour of peril. We learn from his example not to parade our sins before others, as certain vainglorious professors of Christianity do.

**(Ps. 34:1) I will bless the LORD at all times.** David is resolved, **I will.** He is determined; let others do as they wish. He is intelligent in head and inflamed in heart. The psalmist knows to whom the praise is due, and what is due, and for what and when. Our gratitude is to be given to Jehovah. The Lord has by right a monopoly in His creatures' praise. Even when mercy reminds us of our sin, as in David's case, we are not to rob God of His honor because conscience justly censures our part in the transaction. Though the hook was rusty, God sent the fish, and we thank Him.

**At all times**, in every situation, under every circumstance, before, during, and after trials, in bright days of glee, and dark nights of fear, David would never stop praising. He was never satisfied that he had done enough. He always felt that he fell short of what the Lord deserved. Happy are those whose fingers are wedded to their harps. Those who praise God for mercies will never lack a mercy for which to praise.

**(Ps. 34:19) Many are the afflictions of the righteous.** They are made like Jesus their covenant Head. Scripture does not give the idea that goodness will keep us from trouble. On the contrary, we are repeatedly warned to expect tribulation (John 16:33). Our afflictions come from all points of the compass and are as many and as tormenting as the mosquitoes of the tropics. It is the earthly portion of the elect to find thorns and briars growing in their pathway. Yes, it is their portion even to lie down among them, to find their rest broken and disturbed by sorrow.

**But**, blessed but. How it takes the sting out of the previous sentence! **But the LORD delivers him out of them all.** Jehovah will lead His redeemed, uninjured and triumphant. There is an end to the believer's affliction, and a joyful end it is too. None of the trials can hurt so much as a hair of your head, nor can the furnace hold you a moment after the Lord orders you to come out. Hard would be the lot of the righteous if this promise were not there to sweeten. The same Lord who sends afflictions will recall them when His plan is accomplished, but He will never allow the fiercest affliction to tear and devour His beloved.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Is David praising God for the method he used to secure his safety or just for the goodness of God in his deliverance?**

**What is meant by the radiance of Ps. 34:5?**

**Who is the poor man of Ps. 34:6?**

Matt. 5:3

**How do you "taste" the Lord to see that He is good (Ps. 34:8)?**

## Why do the “young lions lack and suffer hunger” (Ps. 34:10)?

### How do you learn to fear the Lord?

Ps. 34:11

### Show how a verse like Psalm 34:20 can have double meanings.

Ex. 12:46 Num. 9:12 John 19:36

## Psalm 35:1-28

**A Psalm of David.** This is all we know concerning this Psalm. Internal evidence, however, seems to fix the date of its composition as the troubled times when Saul hunted David, while those who fawned on the cruel king slandered the innocent object of his wrath. Or it may be the days of frequent insurrections in David's old age. The Psalm is the appeal to heaven of a bold heart and a clear conscience that is irritated beyond measure by oppression and malice. Beyond a doubt, David's Lord may be seen with the spiritual eye.

**(Ps. 35:1) Plead my cause, O LORD, with those who strive with me.** Plead against those who plead against me. Strive with my strivers; contend with my contenders. If they urge their suit in the law court, Lord, meet them there and beat them at their own weapons. Every saint of God will have this privilege; the Advocate of the saints will meet the believer's accuser (1 John 2:1).

**Fight against those who fight against me.** If my adversaries try force and fraud, be a match for them, oppose Your strength to their strength. Jesus does this for all His beloved; He is both intercessor and champion! Whatever aid they need, they will receive from Him. Whatever way they are assaulted, they will be effectively defended. Let us leave our case in the Lord's hand. Vain is man's help, but ever effectual is heaven's interposition. What we ask for as a favor may be regarded as a promise. In judgment we will have a divine advocate, in warfare a divine protection.

**(Ps. 35:2) Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help.** In vivid metaphor, the Lord is pictured armed for battle and interposing Himself between His servant and the enemy. The two defensive weapons show the greater and lesser protections of Providence, and by the Lord's standing up is meant His active and zealous preservation of His servant in peril. This poetic imagery shows how the psalmist realized God's existence and power, and that he thought of Him as a real and actual person working for His afflicted.

**(Ps. 35:3) Also draw out the spear, and stop those who pursue me.** Before the enemy comes close, the Lord can push them off, as with a long spear. To stave off trouble is no small act of lovingkindness; it is like a valiant warrior who, with his lance, blocks the passage and keeps the enemy back until the weaker soldiers escape. The Lord often holds the believer's foes at bay until we get our breath or flee. He often gives the foes of Zion some other work to do, and so gives rest to His church. What a glorious idea! Jehovah blocks the way of persecutors, holds them at the spear's end, and gives the hunted saint time to elude the pursuit.

**Say to my soul, "I am your salvation."** Besides holding off the enemy, the Lord calms His servant with the assurance that he is, and will be, safe under the Almighty wing. An inner persuasion of security in God is precious in the furnace of persecution. One word from the Lord quiets our fears.

**(Ps. 35:4) Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor who seek after my life.** He wants nothing malicious; the slandered psalmist simply craves justice. The petition is natural and justified. Guided by God's good spirit, the psalmist foretells the everlasting confusion of the haters of the righteous. Shameful disappointment will be the portion of those who are enemies of the gospel. The most tenderhearted Christian would not have it otherwise. Viewing sinners as people, we love them and seek their good, but regarding them as God's enemies, we only think of them with detestation and a loyal desire for their confusion. No loyal subject can wish rebels well. Squeamish sentimentality may object to the strong language, but in their hearts, all the saints wish confusion to mischief makers.

**(Ps. 35:5) Let them be like chaff before the wind.** They were swift enough to attack, let them be as swift to flee. Let their fears so disturb them that the least breeze of trouble will carry them hither and thither. The ungodly are worthless in character, light in behavior, and destitute of firmness and stability. They act like chaff and should be treated as such. When this curse is fulfilled, the graceless will find it an awful thing to be forever without rest, without peace of mind, hurried from fear to fear, and from misery to misery.

**And let the angel of the LORD chase them.** Fallen angels will haunt them, good angels will afflict them. To be pursued by avenging spirits will be the lot of those who delight in persecution. Observe the scene as the psalmist sketches it. The furious foe is first held at bay, then turned back, then driven to flight and chased by fiery messengers from whom there is no escape. Their pathway becomes dark and dangerous, and their destruction overwhelming.

**(Ps. 35:6) Let their way be dark and slippery.** What terrors! They have no light and no foothold, and a fierce avenger is at their heels! What doom! They may rage and rave today, but their plight will soon be altered.

**And let the angel of the LORD pursue them.** He will follow them, hotfoot, as we say, never turning aside, like a trusty sheriff serving the writ of vengeance and arresting them in the name of unflinching justice. Woe, woe, woe to those who touch the people of God; their destruction is both swift and sure.

**(Ps. 35:22) This You have seen, O LORD.** This is comfort. Our heavenly Father knows all our sorrow. Omniscience is the candle of the saint that never goes out. Parents will not endure to see their children abused. Will not God avenge His elect?

**Do not keep silence.** Rebuke Your enemies and mine, Oh Lord. A word will do it. Clear my character, and so comfort my heart.

**O LORD, do not be far from me.** Walk the furnace with me. Stand in the pillory at my side. God's sweet presence is the divine cordial of the persecuted. His painful absence would be their deepest misery.

**(Ps. 35:23) Stir up Yourself.** Prove that You are not an indifferent witness to all this infamy. **Awake to my vindication.** Take the scepter and summon the great assize (inquest). Vindicate justice. Avenge oppression. Do not tarry as those who sleep.

**To my cause, my God and my Lord.** David claims a nearness to God and holds Him with both hands. He leaves his case with the righteous Judge, begging for the trial to be heard, the verdict given. Well is it when our conscience is so clear that we dare make such an appeal.

**(Ps. 35:24)** The appeal is repeated. The plaintiff feels that the joy of his accusers will be short-lived when impartial justice rules. The oppressor's wrong, the proud's rudeness, the fool's grimace—all; all will cease when the righteous Lord sits on the judgment seat.

**(Ps. 35:25) Let them not say in their hearts, "Ah, so we would have it!" Let them not say, "We have swallowed him up."** Disappoint them when their mouths are ready to swallow their prey. Saints are too precious a morsel for the powers of evil. God will not give His sheep to the wolfish jaws of the persecutor. Just when they are tuning their pipes to celebrate victory, they will be made to laugh on the other side of their mouths. They are too sure, too boastful. Little do they dream of the end. Their bird will have flown, and they will be in the trap. The prayer of this text is a promise. Before the lips of the wicked can frame a speech of exultation, they will be disappointed. The heart-speech of the evil will be forestalled, their wishes frustrated, their knavish tricks exposed.

**(Ps. 35:26)** This is the eternal result of all the labor and craft of the Lord's enemies. God will make little of them, though they **exalt themselves**. He will shame them for shaming His people. God will bring them confusion for making confusion. He will pull off their fine apparel and give them a suit of dishonor. He will turn all their rejoicing into weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12). Truly, the saints can afford to wait.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What was David's reaction to those who rewarded him evil for good (Ps. 38:12)?**

### Psalm 36:1-12

**(Ps. 36:1) The transgression of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes.** Eyes that have no fear of God will have the terrors of hell before them forever.

**(Ps. 36:2) For.** Here is the argument to prove the proposition of the previous verse. David reviews the reasoning process which convinced him that the wicked have no proper idea of God or respect for Him. God-fearing people see their sins and repent. Where the reverse is the case, there is no fear of God. **He flatters himself in his own eyes.** He considers himself a fine fellow, worthy of great respect. He quiets his conscience. He deceives his judgment and considers himself a model of excellence, if not for morality, for having sense enough not to be enslaved by rules that bind others. He is the freethinker, the strong mind, the philosopher, and God's servants are, in his esteem, mean-spirited and narrow-minded. This is the most absurd and dangerous of all flatteries. Even the silliest bird will not set traps for itself; the most petty and quibbling attorney will not cheat himself. To smooth one's conduct to one's conscience (which is the meaning of the Hebrew) is to smooth one's own path to hell.

**When he finds out his iniquity and when he hates.** At length, he is found out and detested. Rottenness eventually smells too strong to conceal. There is a time when leprosy cannot be hidden. At last, the old house can no longer be propped up and falls about the tenant's ears. There is a limit to self-joy. He is found out amid general scorn; he can no longer keep up the farce. If not in this life, the hand of death will let shed light on the covered character and expose the sinner to shame and contempt. The self-flattering process plainly proves the atheism of sinners, and the bare reflection, which God sees, makes self-flatteries impossible in the long run. Belief in God, like light, reveals, and then our sin and evil are perceived. Yet the wicked are in the dark. They cannot see what is so clearly within and around them.

**(Ps. 36:4) He devises wickedness on his bed.** His place of rest becomes the place for plotting. His bed is a hot bed for poisonous weeds. The God-fearing meditate on God and serve Him, but those who turn their thoughts and their inventive faculties toward evil prove their godlessness. He has the devil for a bedfellow who lies in bed and schemes how to sin. God is far from that person.

**He sets himself in a way that is not good.** When he gets up, he resolutely and persistently pursues the mischief he planned. The worst of ways he prefers, for he has taught his heart to love filthiness, having accustomed himself to revel in it.

**He does not abhor evil.** Far from having a contempt and abhorrence for evil, he rejoices in it. He never hates a wrong because it is wrong, but he meditates on it, defends it, and practices it. What a portrait of a graceless man these few verses afford! His jauntiness of conscience, licentiousness of speech, intentness on wrongdoing, and deliberate and continued preference of iniquity are in his atheistic heart. Lord, save us from being such.

**(Ps. 36:5)** The psalmist turns his contemplation from the baseness of the wicked to the glory of God. The contrasts are impressive. **Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens.** Like the ethereal blue, **Your mercy** encompasses the entire earth, smiling on universal nature, and acting as a canopy for all earth's creatures. It surmounts the loftiest peaks of human provocations and rises high above the mists of mortal transgression. Clear sky is evermore above, and mercy calmly smiles above the din and smoke of this poor world. Darkness and clouds are only in earth's lower atmosphere; the heavens above it are always serene and bright with innumerable stars. Divine mercy and matchless patience abide in its vastness, unaltered by man's rebellion. When we can measure the heavens, then will we limit the Lord's mercy. Especially to His servants, in the salvation of the Lord Jesus, He has displayed grace higher than the heaven of heavens and wider than the universe. If the atheists could see this, they would long to become servants of Jehovah!

**Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.** Far, far above all comprehension is God's truth and faithfulness. He never fails, forgets, falters, or forfeits His word. Afflictions are like clouds, but divine truthfulness is all around them. Under the cloud, we are in the region of God's faithfulness; when we fly above it, we will not need such an assurance. To every word of threat, promise, prophecy, or covenant, the Lord has exactly adhered. "God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should repent" (Num. 23:19).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Explain the words of Psalm 36:9 "In Your light we see light".**

Job 29:3 Ps. 27:1 Ps. 35:3

### **Psalm 37:1-40**

The great riddle—the prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the righteous—has perplexed many. Here it is considered in a future light. Fretfulness and discontent are impressively forbidden. It is a Psalm where the Lord sweetly hushes the all too common discontent of His people. He calms the mind about His dealings with His chosen flock and the wolves that surrounded them.

**(Ps. 37:12) The wicked plots against the just.** Why can't he let the good man alone? Because there is enmity between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15). Why not attack him fairly? Why plot and scheme? Because it is the serpent's nature to be subtle. Plain sailing does not suit those who are on board *The Apollyon* (Rev. 9:11).

**And gnashes at him with his teeth.** The wicked show by gestures what they would do if they could. If they cannot gnaw, they will gnash; if they cannot bite, they will bark. This is precisely what the graceless world did with that just One, the Prince of Peace. Yet He took no vengeance, but like a silent lamb received injuries in patience.

**(Ps. 37:13) The LORD laughs at him.** The godly need not be troubled; they need to leave well-deserved vengeance to be dealt by the Lord. God will utterly deride evil malice. Let the proud scorner gnash his teeth and foam at the mouth. He has one to deal with who will look down on his ravings with serene contempt.

**For He sees that his day is coming.** The evil man does not see how close his destruction is. He boasts of crushing others when the foot of justice is lifted to trample him as the mire of the streets. Sinners, even in the hand of an angry God, are still plotting against God's children! Poor souls. They are about to run into the point of Jehovah's spear.

**(Ps. 37:15) Their swords shall enter their own heart.** Like Haman, they will be hanged on their own gallows (Esther 7:9). Hundreds of times this has been the case. Saul, who sought to kill David, fell on his own sword (1 Sam. 31:4). Saul's favorite weapon, the bow that he taught the Israel army to use, was not able to deliver him on Gilboa (2 Sam. 1:6).

**And their bows shall be broken.** The inventions of evil will be rendered useless. Malice outwits itself. It drinks the poisoned cup that it mixed for another, and it burns itself in the fire kindled for its neighbor. Why fret at the prosperity of the wicked? They are industriously ruining themselves while thinking that they are injuring the saints.

**(Ps. 37:18) The LORD knows the days of the upright.** His foreknowledge made Him laugh at the proud. He sees a brighter future, however, for the upright, and treats them as heirs of salvation. This is our comfort! All events are known to God, and nothing in our future can take Him unaware. No arrow can pierce by accident, no dangers strike by stealth. Neither in time nor eternity can any unforeseen ill occur. The future is just a continuous development of the good things the Lord has prepared for us.

**And their inheritance shall be forever.** Our inheritance does not fade away. It is settled; none can deprive us of it. It is preserved; none can destroy it. Eternity is the unique attribute of the believers' portion. What they have on earth is safe enough, but what they will have in heaven is theirs without end.

**(Ps. 37:24) The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD.** The course of all his life is graciously ordained, and in lovingkindness, all is fixed, settled, and maintained. No reckless fate, no fickle chance; our every step is the subject of a divine decree.

**He delights in his way,** as parents are pleased with the tottering footsteps of their babies. Everything that concerns a saint is of interest to our heavenly Father. God loves to view the holy striving of a soul who is pressing forward to the skies. In the trials and the joys of the faithful, Jesus has fellowship with them and delights to be their sympathizing companion.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Use what is said in Psalm 37:12-15, 21, 32-33 and compare that which Jesus said in Matthew 13:36-52 to explain why the wicked and good must live together here on this earth.**

### Psalm 38:1-22

**(Ps. 38:1) O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your wrath.** Rebuked I must be, for I am an erring child, and You are a careful Father. Still, do not throw too much anger into the tone of Your voice. Deal gently, although I have sinned grievously. The anger of others I can bear, but not Yours. As Your love is most sweet to my heart, so Your displeasure is most cutting to my conscience.

**Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure!** Chasten me if You will, it is a Father's prerogative, and to endure it obediently is a child's duty. Yet do not turn the rod into a sword; strike not so as to kill. True, my sins might inflame You, but let Your mercy and longsuffering quench the glowing coals of Your wrath. Let me not be treated as an enemy or dealt with as a rebel. Remember Your covenant, Your fatherhood, and my feebleness. Spare Your servant.

**(Ps. 38:2) For Your arrows pierce me deeply.** David means both body and spiritual grief, but especially spiritual grief, for this is the most piercing. God's law, when applied by the Spirit to convict the soul of sin, wounds deeply and rankles long. It is an arrow not lightly brushed out by careless mirth or extracted by the flattering hand of self-righteousness. The Lord knows how to shoot so that His bolts not only strike, but also stick. He can make convictions sink to the innermost spirit, like arrows driven to the head. It seems strange that the Lord would shoot His beloved, but in truth He shoots at their sins rather than them. Those who feel His sin-killing shafts in their life will not be slain with His hot thunderbolts in the next world.

**(Ps. 38:4) For my iniquities have gone over my head.** Like waves of the deep sea, like black mire in which one utterly sinks, above my hopes, my strength, my life itself, my sin rises in its terror. Unawakened sinners think that their sins are mere shallows, but when conscience is aroused, they find themselves in the depth of iniquity.

**Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.** It is well when sin is an intolerable load, when the memory of our sins burden us beyond endurance. This verse is the genuine *cry* of one who feels undone by transgressions and does not see the great sacrifice.

**(Ps. 38:5) My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness.** Apply this to the body, and it pictures a sad condition of disease. Read it to the soul, and it is about life. Conscience lays on blow after blow until the swelling becomes a wound and festers. What a horrible creature man appears to be to his consciousness when his depravity and vileness are fully opened by the law of God and applied by the Holy Spirit! There are diseases correctly described in this verse, but we prefer to receive the expressions as figurative, since the words **because of my foolishness** point at a moral rather than at a physical sickness. Some of us know what it is to smell in our own nostrils, what it is to loathe ourselves. Even the most filthy diseases cannot be so foul as sin. Ulcers, cancers, or infected wounds cannot match the unutterable vileness and pollution of iniquity. Our own perceptions have made us feel this. We write what we know and testify what we have seen. Even now, we shudder to think that so much evil should lie festering deep in our nature.

**(Ps. 38:16) For I said, "Hear me, lest they rejoice over me."** The good man was not insensible; he dreaded the sharp stings of taunting malice. David feared that his conduct or condition would permit the wicked to triumph. This fear he earnestly used as an argument in prayer and an incentive to prayer.

**Lest, when my foot slips, they exalt themselves against me.** The smallest flaw in a saint is sure to be noticed. *Long* before it comes to a fall, the enemy begins to rail. The merest trip of the foot sets all the dogs of hell barking. How careful ought we to be, and how pressing in prayer for upholding grace! We do not wish, like blind Samson, to be sport for our enemies (Judges 16:25). Let us then beware of the treacherous Delilah of sin, by whose means our eyes may soon be put out (Judges 16:19, 21).

**(Ps. 38:17) For I am ready to fall,** like one who limps is in danger of falling. How well this describes us. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). How small a thing can lame a Christian! How insignificant a stumbling block may cause a fall! This passage refers to a weakness caused by pain and sorrow. The sufferer was ready

to give up in despair. He was so depressed that he stumbled at a straw. Some of us painfully know what it is to be like dry tinder for the sparks of sorrow, ready to halt, ready to mourn, and ready to cry for any reason.

**And my sorrow is continually before me.** He did not need to look out the window to find sorrow, for he felt it within. David groaned under a body of sin that was an increasing plague. Deep conviction continues to irritate the conscience. It will not endure a patched-up peace; deep conviction cries war to the knife until the enmity is slain. Until the Holy Spirit applies the precious blood of Jesus, a truly awakened sinner is covered with raw wounds that cannot be healed, bandaged, or soothed with ointment.

**(Ps. 38:18) For I will declare my iniquity.** The slander of the enemy he rejects, but the accusations of his conscience he admits. Open confession is good for the soul. When sorrow leads to hearty and penitent acknowledgment of sin, it is a blessed sorrow, a thing to devoutly thank God for.

**I will be in anguish over my sin.** My confession will be salted with tears. It is good not so much to bewail our sorrows as to denounce the sins that lie at the root of them. To be sorry for sin is no atonement, but it is the right spirit in which to go to Jesus, the reconciliation and the Savior. People are near the end of trouble when they come to an end of their sins.

**(Ps. 38:19) But my enemies are vigorous, and they are strong.** However weak and dying the righteous man may be, the evils that oppose him are sure to be lively. Neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil are afflicted with debility or inactivity. This trinity of evil labors with mighty, unremitting energy. If the devil were sick, or our lusts feeble, we might slacken prayer, but with such lively and vigorous enemies, we must not cease to cry mightily to God.

**(Ps. 38:21) Do not forsake me, O LORD.** Now is the time I need You most. When sickness, slander, and sin all beset the saints, they require heaven's special aid, and they will have it. We are afraid of nothing while God is with us, and God is always with us.

**Be not far from me.** Do not withhold the light of Your near and dear love. Reveal Yourself. Stand at my side. Let me feel that, though I am friendless, I have a most gracious and all-sufficient friend in You.

**(Ps. 38:22) Make haste to help me.** Delay would prove destructive. The poor pleader was far gone and ready to die, only immediate help could save him. See how sorrow quickens the urgency of prayer! This is one of the sweet results of affliction; it gives new life to our pleading and eagerly drives us to God.

**O LORD, my salvation.** Not just my Savior but my salvation. Those who have the Lord on their side have salvation in present possession. Faith foresees the blessed issue of all her pleas, and in this verse, faith begins to ascribe to God the glory of the expected mercy. We will not be abandoned by the Lord. His grace will comfort, and in heaven we will see that we had not one trial too many or one pang too severe. A sense of sin will melt into the joy of salvation. Grief will lead to gratitude, and gratitude to joy unspeakable and full of glory.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

Sin is a heavy burden on the soul. The sense of sin creates in the conscience a horrible unrest and burdens beyond endurance. **What happens to those who see not the great sacrifice for their sin?**

Prov. 8:36 Isa. 54:4, 6, 11 Matt. 11:28

Again in this Psalm we see the wicked making a vigorous campaign against the righteous. **What are David's pleas to God?**

### **Psalm 39:1-13**

**(Ps. 39:4) LORD.** It is well that his soul vented itself Godward and not toward man. If my swelling heart must speak, Lord let it speak with You. Even if there is too much natural heat in what I say, You will be more patient with me than man. On Your purity it can cast no stain, but if I speak to friends, they may harshly rebuke me or learn evil from my irritability. **Make me to know my end.** Did he mean the same as Elijah meant in his agony? "Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" (1 Kings 19:4). Perhaps. At any rate, he rashly and cantankerously wanted to know the end of his wretched life. He wanted to count the days until death would put an end to his woe. Impatience would pry between the folded leaves. As if there were no other comfort available, unbelief would readily hide itself in the grave and sleep itself into oblivion. David was neither the first nor the last to speak unadvisedly in prayer. Yet there is a better meaning. The psalmist would know more of the shortness of life in order to better bear its transient ills. Here we may safely kneel with him, making the same petition. That there is no end to life's misery is the hell of hell. That there is an end to life's sorrow is the hope of all who have a hope beyond the grave. God is the best teacher of the divine philosophy that looks for an expected end. They who see death through the Lord's glass see a fair sight. In foreseeing the end of life, it makes them forget the evil of life.

**And what is the measure of my days.** David wants glad assurance that his days will soon be over and his trials with them. He would be taught anew that life is measured by wisdom and is not a matter of chance. As the trader measures cloth by inches, so with scrupulous accuracy our life is measured.

**That I may know how frail I am,** or when I will cease to be. Poor human nature! As precious as life is, man quarrels with God, wanting sooner to cease than to bear the Lord's appointment. Such pettishness in a saint! Just wait until we are in a similar position, and we will do no better. The ship that is still being built wonders why the bark springs a leak, but when it has tried the high seas, it marvels that its timbers hold strong in such storms. David's case is not recorded for our imitation but for our learning.

**(Ps. 39:5) Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths.** On consideration, the psalmist finds little room to bewail the length of life, but rather to bemoan its shortness. What changeful creatures we are! One moment, we cry to be rid of existence, and the next instant, we beg to have it prolonged! A handbreadth, the width of four fingers, is one of the shortest natural measures. This is the brevity of life, and by divine appointment God has made it so, fixing the period in wisdom. **Indeed** calls to attention the hastiness of life and the acute pain that it brings. How well should those live who are to live so little? Is my earthly pilgrimage so brief? Then let me watch every step, so that in the little of time there may be much grace.

**And my age is as nothing before You.** It is so short as not to amount to an entity. Think of eternity, and an angel is as a newborn baby, the world is as a fresh blown bubble, the sun a spark just fallen from the fire, and man insignificant. Before the Eternal, all the age of frail man is less than one tick of a clock.

**Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor.** This is the surest truth. Nothing about man is either sure or true. At his best, he is but a mere breath, unsubstantial as the wind. He is constant only in inconstancy. His vanity is his only verity. His best, of which he is vain, is but vain. This is true of everyone, for everything about us is fleeting. This is sad news for those whose treasures are beneath the moon. Those whose glorying is in themselves may hang the flag at half-mast. But those whose best estate is settled in Christ Jesus, in the land of unfading flowers, may rejoice that it is no vain thing in which they trust.

**(Ps. 39:6) Surely every man walks about like a shadow.** Life is but a passing pageant. This alone is sure: nothing is sure. Shadows mock us. We walk among shadows, and too many live as if the mocking images were substantial; acting their borrowed parts with zeal fit only to be spent on realities, and lost on the phantoms of this passing scene. Worldly people walk like travelers in a mirage, deluded, duped, deceived, and soon to be filled with disappointment and despair.

**Surely they busy themselves in vain.** They fret, fume, and worry for that which is nothing. They are shadows pursuing shadows, while death pursues them. Those who toil, contrive, and weary themselves for gold, fame, and rank, even if they win their desires, find that at the end of their labor they are lost. Like the treasure of the miser's dream, it all vanishes when they wake in the world of reality. Read well this text. Then listen to the clamor of the market, the hum of the exchange, the noise of the city streets, and remember that all this *noise* (for so the word busy means), this breach of quiet, is made surrounding unsubstantial, fleeting vanities. Broken rest, anxious fear, overworked brain, failing mind, and insanity are all steps in the process of attempting to gain riches, or, in other words, to load one's self with thick clay, clay that all must soon leave.

**(Ps. 39:7) And now, Lord, what do I wait for?** What is there in these phantoms to enchant me? Why do I linger where the prospect is uninviting and the present trying? It is worse than vanity to linger in the abodes of sorrow to gain a heritage of emptiness. Thus, the psalmist turns to God in disgust of all other things. He has thought on the world and all things in it, and he is relieved by knowing that such vain things are all passing away. He has cut the cords that bound him to earth, and he is ready to sound "Up and away."

**My hope is in You.** The Lord is self-existent, true, and worthy of confidence. He will live when all the creatures die. His fullness will abide when all second causes are exhausted. Let us direct our expectation, and rest our confidence, on Him; away from the sand, let us build on the rock. If not today, surely it will not be long until a storm arises before which nothing will stand except that which has the lasting element of faith in God to cement it. David had one hope, and that hope entered within the veil. Thus, he brought his vessel to safe anchorage, and after a little drifting, all was peace.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Compare David's response with Job's response to God regarding their trial in the following verses: Ps. 39:1-Job 2:10 Ps. 39:10-Job 9:34, 13:21 Ps. 39:11-Job 13:28 Ps. 39:13-Job 7:19, 10:20-21**

### Psalm 40:1-17

**(Ps. 40:1) I waited patiently for the LORD.** Patient waiting on God was a special characteristic of our Lord Jesus. Impatience never lingered in His heart, much less escaped His lips. Throughout His agony in the garden, His trial of cruel mocking before Herod and Pilate, and His passion on the tree, He waited in omnipotence of patience. No glance of wrath, no word of murmur, no deed of vengeance came from God's patient Lamb. He waited and waited, was patient, and patient to perfection, far excelling all others who have glorified God in the fires. Job on the garbage heap does not equal Jesus on the Cross. The Christ of God wears the imperial crown among the patient. Did the Only Begotten wait? Shall we then be cantankerous and rebellious?

**And He inclined to me, and heard my cry.** Neither Jesus, the head, nor any members of His body, will ever wait on the Lord in vain. **He inclined**, as though the suppliant cried out of the depths of depression. And condescending love stooped to hear the feeble moans. What a marvel that our Lord Jesus should have to cry as we do, wait as we do, and receive the Father's help after the same process of faith and pleading that we must go through! The Savior's prayers in the midnight mountains and in Gethsemane expound this verse (John 17). The Son of David was brought low, but He rose to victory. Here, He teaches us how to conduct our conflicts to succeed in the same glorious pattern of triumph. Let us arm ourselves with the same mind. Fortified in patience, armed with prayer, surrounded with faith, let us maintain the Holy War.

**Ps. 40:2) He also brought me up out of a horrible pit.** When our Lord bore the terrible curse that was caused by our sin, He was cast down like a prisoner in a deep, dark, fearful dungeon. In the horrible gloom, the captive heard a noise as of rushing torrents, while overhead the tramp of furious foes resounded. Our Lord in His anguish was like that of a captive in perpetual imprisonment in a castle dungeon, forgotten by man and immured in horror, darkness, and desolation. Yet the Lord Jehovah made Him ascend from all His abasement, and He retraced His steps out of that deep hell of anguish into which He had been cast as our substitute. He who became our surety (Heb. 7:22) in death will not fail to liberate us from far lighter griefs.

**(Ps. 40:6) Sacrifice and offering You did not desire.** Here we enter one of the most wonderful passages in the Old Testament, a passage in which the incarnate Son of God is seen not in a mirror dimly but face to face (1 Cor. 13:12). The Lord saw nothing satisfactory in the various offerings of the ceremonial law. Neither the victim pouring its blood, nor the fine flour rising in smoke from the altar, could yield contentment to Jehovah's mind. He does not care for the flesh of bulls or goats (Ps. 50:13), neither does He take pleasure in corn, wine, and oil. Typically, these offerings had their worth, but when Jesus, the Antitype, came into the world, they ceased to be of value, as candles are useless once the sun has risen.

**(Ps. 40:12) For innumerable evils have surrounded me.** On every side, He was beset with evils. Countless woes surrounded the great Substitute for our sins. As our sins were innumerable, so were His griefs. There was no escape for us from our iniquities, and there was no escape for Him from the woes that we deserved. From every quarter, evil accumulated about the blessed One, although evil found no place in His heart.

**My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up.** He had no sin, but sins were laid on Him, and He took them as if they were His. Jesus, who knew no sin, was made "sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). The transfer of sin to the Savior was real. It produced in Him, as man, the horror that prohibited Him from looking into the face of God, and it bowed Him down with crushing anguish and intolerable woe. My soul, what would your sins have done for you eternally, if the Friend of sinners had not condescended to take them all on Him? Blessed Scripture! "The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:6). Marvelous depth of love that could lead the perfectly immaculate to stand in the sinner's place and bear the horror of great trembling that sin brings on those who are conscious of it.

**Ps. 40:14) Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who seek to destroy my life.** Whether we read this as a prayer or a prophecy it does not matter, for the powers of sin, death, and hell may well be ashamed when they see the result of their malice forever turned against them. It is to the infinite confusion of Satan that his attempt to destroy the Savior destroyed him. The diabolical conclaves that plotted in council against Him are now put to shame, for the Lord Jesus has met them at all points and turned their wisdom into foolishness. **Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor who wish me evil.** It is so, the hosts of darkness are utterly routed. They are made a theme for holy derision forever and ever. How they gloated over the thought of crushing the seed of the woman! But the Crucified has conquered, the Nazarene has laughed them to scorn. The dying Son of Man has become the death of death and the destruction of hell. Forever blessed be His name!

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire" (Ps. 40:6) **What does God value above sacrifice?**

**Why does our sense of sin grow with an increasing knowledge of God?**

### **Psalms 41:1-13**

**(Ps. 41:1) Blessed is he who considers the poor.** Those who have been made partakers of divine grace receive a tender nature and are not hardened against flesh and blood. They undertake the cause of the downtrodden and seriously promote their welfare. They do not toss them a penny and go on their way; they enquire into their sorrows, sift out their causes, study the best ways for their relief, and come to their rescue in a practical way. These have the mark of divine favor, and they are as surely the sheep of the Lord's pasture as if they wore a brand on their foreheads. They are not said to have considered the poor only years ago, but they still do. Boasted stale benevolence argues present churlishness. First and foremost, far above all others put together, is our Lord Jesus in tender compassion for the needy. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). All His attributes were energized with the task of our uplifting. He weighed our

case and came in the fullness of wisdom to execute the wonderful work of mercy by which we are redeemed from destruction. Wretchedness excited His pity, misery moved His mercy, and thrice blessed is He both by His God and His saints for His attentive care and wise action toward us. He still considers us. His mercy is always in the present tense, and so let our praises be.

**The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.** The compassionate lover of the poor thought of others, and therefore God will think of him. God measures to us from out of our own bushel. Days of trouble come even to the most generous. People who have sheltered others when times were better with them have made the wisest provision for their own rainy days. The promise is not that generous saints will have no trouble, but that they will be preserved and in due time brought out of it. How true this was of our Lord! Never was trouble deeper nor triumph brighter than His. Glory to His name, He secures the ultimate victory of all His blood-bought ones. Would that all were like Him in giving compassion to the poor. Much blessedness they miss who are stingy in their giving. The joy of doing good, the sweet reaction of another's happiness, the approving smile of heaven on the heart if not on the estate, all these the stingy soul knows nothing about. Selfishness is a curse, a cancer in the heart. Liberality is happiness, making fat the bones. In dark days, we cannot rest on the supposed merit of almsgiving. Yet the music of memory brings great comfort with it when it tells of widows and orphans whom we have comforted, and prisoners and sick folk to whom we have ministered.

**(Ps. 41:2) The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive.** His noblest life will be immortal, and even his mortal life will be sacredly guarded by Jehovah's power. Jesus lived until His hour came. Not even the devices of crafty Herod could take His life until the destined hour had struck. And even then no man took His life from Him, because He laid it down that He may take it again (John 10:17, 18). This is the portion of all who are made like their Lord: they bless and will be blessed, they preserve and will be preserved, they watch the lives of others and will be precious in the sight of the Lord. The miser, like the hog, is of no use until dead. Then let him die. The righteous, like the ox, is of service during life. Then let him live.

**And he will be blessed on the earth.** Prosperity will attend him. His jar of oil will not be dried up because he fed the poor prophet. He will cut from his roll of cloth and find it longer at both ends:

There was a man, and some did count him mad,  
The more he gave away the more he had.

If temporal gains are not given, spiritual gains will be doubled. His little will be blessed, even bread and water will be a feast. The generous are and must be blessed even here. They have a present as well as a future portion. Our Lord's real blessedness of heart, in the joy that was set before Him, is a subject worthy of earnest thought, especially as it is the picture of the blessing that all generous saints may expect.

**(Ps. 41:3) The LORD will strengthen him on his bed of illness.** We must not imagine that the blessing pronounced in these three verses belongs to all who casually give money to the poor, or leave it in their wills, or contribute to charitable organizations. The blessing is for those whose habit is to love their neighbor as themselves (Lev. 19:18); it is for those who, for Christ's sake, feed the hungry and clothe the naked (Matt. 25:36). To imagine a saint who does not consider the poor is to imagine the fruitless fig tree to be acceptable (Matt. 21:19). There will be sharp dealings with many professors of Christianity on this point, in the day when the King comes in His glory.

**(Ps. 41:4) I said, said it in earnest prayer, LORD, be merciful to me.** Prove Your gracious dealings with my soul in adversity, for you gave me grace to act liberally in my prosperity. No appeal is made to justice. The petitioner hints at the promised reward but directly lays his plea at the feet of mercy. How low was our Redeemer, when such petitions could come from His reverend mouth, when His lips like lilies dropped such sweet smelling but bitter myrrh!

**Heal my soul.** My time of languishing has come, so now do as You have said, strengthen me, especially in my soul. We ought to be far more earnest for the healing of the soul than for the ease of the body. We hear much of the cure of souls, but we often forget to care about it. **For I have sinned against You.** This is the root of sorrow; sin and suffering are inevitable companions. Observe that, by the psalmist, sin was felt to be mainly evil because it was directed against God. This is the essence of true repentance. The immaculate Savior could never have used such language as this unless it refers to the sin He took on Himself by imputation. For our part, we believers fear to apply words so manifestly indicating personal rather than imputed sin. Applying the petition to David and to other sinful believers, how strangely evangelical is the argument: heal me, not because I am innocent but because **I have sinned.** How contrary this is to all self-righteous pleading! How agreeable it is with grace! How inconsistent it is with merit! Even the fact that the confessing penitent had remembered the poor is only obliquely urged. Yet a direct appeal is made to mercy on the ground of great sin. Trembling reader, here is a divinely revealed precedent for you. Do not be slow to follow it.

**(Ps. 41:5) My enemies speak evil of me.** It was their nature to do and to speak evil. It was not possible for the child of God to escape them. The viper fastened on Paul's hand (Acts 28:3).

The better the person the more likely and the more venomous the slander. Evil tongues are busy tongues, and they never deal in truth. Jesus was slandered to the utmost, although no offense was in Him.

**(Ps. 41:7) Against me they devise my hurt.** They lay their heads together and scheme and plot. So did Ahithophel and the rest of Absalom's counselors (2 Sam. 17:6), so did the chief priests and Pharisees (Mark 14:1). The evil are good

at devising. They are given to meditation, they are deep thinkers, but the mark they aim at is always to hurt the faithful. Snakes in the grass are never there to do good.

**(Ps. 41:9) Even.** This is the climax of the sufferer's woe. He uses an emphatic affirmation, as if he thought that such villainy would scarcely be believed. **My own familiar friend.** "The man of my peace," says the original, the man with whom I had no differences, with whom I was in league, who had at one time ministered to my peace and comfort. This was Ahithophel to David (2 Sam. 15:34) and Iscariot with our Lord (John 18:2). Judas was an apostle, admitted to the privacy of the Great Teacher; he heard His secret thoughts and was allowed to read His heart. *Et tu Brute?* said the expiring Caesar. The traitor's kiss wounded our Lord's heart as much as the nail wounded His hand. **In whom I trusted.** Judas was the treasurer of the apostolic college (John 12:6). An unkind act is more severely felt where we place great confidence.

**(Ps. 41:10) But You, O LORD, be merciful to me.** How the hunted and frightened soul turns to God! The soul seems to take breath with **but You!** It clings to the hope of mercy from God, when every chance of pity from man is gone. **And raise me up.** Recover me from sickness. Let me regain my position. Jesus was raised from the grave. His descent was ended by an ascent.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **Show how Psalm 41:9 is applicable not only to David but to our Lord.**

2 Sam. 15:12    Luke 22:21    John 13:18

### **Psalm 42:1-11**

There is such intense tenderness and pathos in this Psalm as to render it peculiarly suitable to souls under deep and sore trials. It almost seems as if, having experienced the anguish of God's desertion, the soul had sounded the lowest depth of earthly affliction. Hence the prayers and the consolations of this Psalm specially apply to seasons of affliction. And here let us remember that the direct object, and the tendency of *all* sanctified affliction, whether loss of earthly goods, desertion of friends, bitterness of foes, or any other burden, is to cut us off from all resources, to cast us for help upon God, and to lead us to find our joy in Him alone. Let us distrust the effect of any sorrow that does not bring us to our knees. But, if sanctified, our hearts will pant for God, not so much from the loss of other objects, nor even from a fuller insight into their real character, as from a view of the beauty of the Lord in the face of His Anointed. Nothing less than converse with the 'living God,' the manifestation of Jehovah as our prayer-answering Father in Christ, will satisfy the craving of the heart. If we had attempted to shut up the fire in our hearts, it would have consumed us (verse 3).

The real element of bitterness in all such trials is, if in any way they shake our confidence in Him as a *present* God. 'Where is thy God?' So long as our minds are tortured with this harassing doubt, we are paralyzed. We cannot arise to call upon our God, if we know not *where* He is. To this question, most assuredly, there is no answer by *sight*—at least in such signs as are sought by an evil and adulterous generation. The only possible answer is that of *faith* (given Ps. 65:3), which sets at rest all such questions, whether in reference to the word or the work of God: '*But our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.*' Let me then remember these four facts: 'He hath done' it; 'He hath done *whatsoever He hath pleased*;' 'Our God . . . hath done whatsoever He hath pleased'—the covenant-God; 'But our God is in the heaven,' almightily overruling and restraining for His glory and our good. Under such circumstances, it is also well to enter into spiritual reasoning with our soul (verse 5). *Why* am I cast down, and *why* am I disquieted? Is there good reason for it? Were my joy and strength derived from the creature? Rise, then, my soul; rise directly to God! What matters it *when* I call upon God—Jerusalem or the land of Jordan? Heaven and help are equally near. Yet there is unspeakable relief in making known the greatness of our distress, and, above all, in recognizing His hand as overruling all (ver. 7). Affliction would be overwhelming indeed, if these were not 'all *Thy* waves and *Thy* billows,' both in the sense of allowing them to rise, of graciously overruling, and of mightily restraining them. This may not always appear with the same clearness, but is our ultimate comfort in every affliction, even in that occasioned by our own folly and sin. Moreover, it is of the utmost importance to have a *definite object* in view in our prayers and expectation (ver. 8). God is glorified in the joyous expectancy of our faith, which anticipates not only preservation and support, but special deliverance and decisive victory, and that from Him alone (ver. 9). Therefore and at all times, let us come back, as to a place of safe anchorage, to the question, the direction, the confidence, and the rest of God's people, as expressed in verse 11.

(The Golden Diary, Alfred Edersheim)

### **What does it mean to "pant" and "thirst" after God (Ps. 42:1-2)?**

Ps. 63:1-2    Ps. 84:2    Ps. 143:6    Joel 1:19-20

### **Psalm 43:1-5**

**(Ps. 43:1) Vindicate me, O God.** Others are unable to understand my motives and unwilling to give me a just verdict. My heart is clear as to intent, and so I bring my case to You, content that You will impartially weigh my character and right my wrongs. If You will judge, Your acceptance of my conduct will be enough. I can laugh at human misrepresentation if my conscience knows that You are on my side. You are the only one I care for. Your verdict will not sleep, and You will see practical justice done to Your slandered servant.

**(Ps. 43:2) For.** Here is an argument that is the sinew of prayer. If we reasoned more with the Lord, we would have more victories in supplication. **You are the God of my strength.** All my strength belongs to You. I will not, therefore, use it against my personal foes. All my strength comes from You, and so I seek help from You, for You are able to give it. All my strength is in You; I leave this task of combating my foes entirely in Your hands. Faith that leaves such things alone is wise faith. Note the assurance of David, **You are**, not I hope and trust, but I know. Confidence is our consolation.

**Why do You cast me off?** Why am I treated as if You loathe me? Am I an offense to You? There are many reasons why the Lord might cast us off, but no reason will prevail to make Him do so. He has not cast off His people, though for a while He treats them as castoffs. Learn from this question that it is well to inquire into dark providence, but we must ask of God, not of our own fears. He who is the author of a mysterious trial can best expound it:

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.

**(Ps. 43:4) To God my exceeding joy.** It was not the altar the psalmist cared about; he was no believer in the heathenism of ritualism. David's soul needed spiritual fellowship, fellowship with God himself. What are the rites of worship unless the Lord is in them? Just empty shells and dry husks! Note the holy rapture with which David regards his Lord! God is not his **joy** alone but his **exceeding joy**, not the fountain of joy, the giver of joy, or the maintainer of joy, but joy itself. The margin states, "The gladness of my joy,"—the soul, the essence, the heart of my joy. To draw near to God, who is such a joy, may well be the object of our hungering and thirsting.

**And on the harp I will praise You.** David's best music for his best love. When God fills us with joy, we ought to pour it out at His feet in praise. All the skill and talent we have should contribute to increase the divine revenue of glory.

**O God, my God.** How he dwells on the name he loves. He already harps on it as though his harp music had begun. What sweeter sounds can music know than these four words? To possess God, and to know it by faith, is the heart's heaven, and a fullness of bliss lies there.

**(Ps. 43:5) Why are you cast down, O my soul?** If God is mine, why this dejection? If He uplifts me, why am I so near the ground? The dew of love is falling; withering heart, revive.

**And why are you disquieted within me?** What cause is there to break the repose of your heart? Why indulge unreasonable sorrows? They benefit no one; they worry you, and they dishonor God! Why overburden yourself with worry?

**Hope in God,** or "wait for God." There is need for patience, but there is ground for hope. The Lord will avenge His elect. The heavenly Father will not stand by and see His children trampled forever. As surely as the sun is in the heavens, light must arise for the people of God, though for a while they may walk in darkness. Why should we not be encouraged and lift our head with comfortable hope?

**For I shall yet praise Him.** Times of complaint will soon end and seasons of praise will begin. Come, my heart, look out the window, borrow the telescope, forecast a little, and sweeten your room with sprigs of the sweet herb of hope.

**The help of my countenance and my God.** My God will clear the furrows from my brow, the tear marks from my cheek, and I will lift up my head and smile in the face of the storm. This Psalm has a blessed ending, such as we would gladly imitate when death puts an end to our mortal existence.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **Why is David's soul cast down and how does he rouse it?**

Ex. 15:13 Num. 6:25-26 Ps. 18:2, 6 Ps. 27:1 Ps. 31: 4, 6, 16 Ps. 36:9 Ps. 37:39 Ps. 40:3 Ps.  
43:2-3 Ps. 44:3 Ps. 57:3 Acts 16:25

### **Psalm 44:1-26**

**(Ps. 44:3) For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword.** The Lord alone was exalted in bringing His people to a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:8). God, in His distinguishing grace, had put a difference between Canaan and Israel, and by His power He worked *for* His chosen *against* their adversaries. The tribes fought for their allotments, but their success was entirely due to the Lord. The warriors of Israel were active, but their valor was secondary to that mysterious, divine working by which walls of Jericho fell down (Heb. 11:30) and the hearts of the

heathen failed for fear. The efforts of all the warriors were employed, but as these would have been futile without divine help, all the honor is ascribed to the Lord. This passage may be viewed as a beautiful parable of the work of salvation. We are not saved without prayer and repentance, but none of these save us. Salvation is altogether of the Lord. Canaan was not conquered without the armies of Israel, but it is equally true that it was not conquered by them. The Lord was the conqueror, and the people were instruments in His hands. **Nor did their own arm save them.**

**(Ps. 44:10) You make us turn back from the enemy.** The humiliating consciousness that the Lord has left soon makes cowards. Flight closes the fight of those who do not have the Lord in the front of the army. **And those who hate us have taken spoils for themselves.** After defeat and retreat comes plunder; the poor, vanquished nation paid a terrible penalty for being overcome. Plunder and murder desolated the conquered land, and the invaders took every precious thing they could carry. In spiritual experience, we know what it is to be plundered by our enemies. Doubts and fears rob us of comforts, and terrible forebodings spoil our hopes. All because the Lord, for wise purposes, sees fit to leave us to ourselves. Pity the deserted soul! No calamity can equal the sorrow of being left, even for a moment, by God.

**(Ps. 44:12) You sell Your people for next to nothing.** As merchandise is sold to anyone who cares to have it, so the Lord seemed to hand over His people to any nation who might choose to make war on them. Meanwhile, no good result was perceptible from all the miseries of Israel. As far as the psalmist could discover, the name of the Lord received no honor from the sorrow of His people. They were given to their foes as if they were of less value than ordinary slaves. The Lord did not care to gain by them so long as they suffered. The woe expressed in this line is vinegar mixed with gall, the expression is worthy of the weeping prophet, Jeremiah.

**And are not enriched by selling them.** If Jehovah had been glorified by this wretchedness, it could have been borne patiently, but it was the reverse. The Lord's name, through the nation's calamities, had been despised by the insulting heathen. They counted the overthrow of Israel to be the defeat of Jehovah. It always lightens a believer's trouble when God's great name is honored, but it is a grievous aggravation of misery when we appear to be tortured in vain. For our comfort, let us rest satisfied that in reality the Lord is glorified. When no revenue of glory is manifestly rendered to Him, He still accomplishes His secret purposes, of which the grand result will be revealed in due time. We do not suffer for nothing, nor are our griefs without results.

**(Ps. 44:17) All this has come upon us; but we have not forgotten You.** The psalmist urges that Israel had not turned away from allegiance to Jehovah. When in the midst of grief we can still cling to God in loving obedience, it must be well with us. True fidelity can endure rough usage. Those who follow God for what they get will leave Him when persecution strikes. Not the sincere believers, however, they will not forget God, even though worst come to worst.

**Nor have we dealt falsely with Your covenant.** No idol was set up, and the ordained worship was not relinquished. God was still nationally acknowledged, and so the psalmist is more earnest that the Lord interpose. This and the succeeding verses are suitable for the lips of martyrs; indeed, the entire Psalm might be called "The Martyr's Complaint." Not for sin but for righteousness did the saints suffer, not for falsehoods but for truth, not for forsaking the Lord but for following hard after Him. Sufferings of this sort may be terrible but exceedingly honorable. The comforts of the Lord will sustain those who are accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**For whose sake are we killed all day long and accounted as sheep for the slaughter (Ps. 44:22)?**

### **Psalm 45:1-17**

The many titles of this Psalm mark its royalty, its deep and solemn import, and the delight the writer had in it. **To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." A Contemplation of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love.** These lilies are beautiful, pure, and choice; their brightness outshone the glory of Solomon (Matt. 6:29). **The sons of Korah.** Special singers are appointed for so divine a hymn. King Jesus deserves to be praised not with random, ranting ravings but with the sweetest and most skillful music of the best trained choristers. The purest hearts in the spiritual temple are the most harmonious singers in the ears of God. Acceptable song is not a matter so much of tuneful voices as it is of sanctified affections, but in no case should we sing of Jesus with unprepared hearts. **A Contemplation,** not an idle song or a romantic ballad but a Psalm of holy teaching, edifying and doctrinal, proving that it is to be spiritually understood. Blessed are the people who know the meaning of its joyful sound (Ps. 89:15). **A Song of Love.** Not a carnal, sentimental love song but a celestial song of everlasting love, fit for the tongues and ears of angels.

Some see only Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, but they are short-sighted. Others see both Solomon and Christ, but they are cross-eyed. Well-focused spiritual eyes see only Jesus. If Solomon is present at all, it must be like those hazy shadows of passers-by who cross the face of the camera and are only dimly traceable on a photographic landscape. "The King," the God whose throne is forever and ever, is no mere mortal; His everlasting dominion is not bounded by the rivers of Lebanon and Egypt. This is no wedding song of earthly nuptials; it is a nuptial song for the Heavenly Bridegroom and His elect spouse.

**(Ps. 45:6) Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.** Who can this be but our Lord? The psalmist cannot restrain his adoration. His enlightened eye sees in the royal Husband of the church, God—God to be adored, God reigning, God reigning forever. Blessed sight! Blind are the eyes that cannot see God in Christ Jesus! Until we have fully rejoiced in His essential glory and deity, we never appreciate the tender condescension of our King in becoming one flesh with His church and placing her at His right hand. What mercy that our Savior is God! Who but God could execute the work of salvation? What a glad thing, that He reigns on a throne that will never pass away, for we need both sovereign grace and eternal love to secure our happiness. Could Jesus cease to reign, we would cease to be blessed! He is God, and therefore eternal. No throne can endure forever, except that on which God sits. **A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.** He is the lawful monarch of all things. His rule is founded in right; its law is right, and its result is right. Our King is no usurper or oppressor. Even when He breaks His enemies with a rod of iron, He will do no one wrong. His vengeance and His grace conform with justice. Thus, we trust Him without suspicion, for He cannot err. No affliction is too severe, for He sends it. No judgment too harsh, for He ordains it. Oh, blessed hands of Jesus, the reigning power is safe with You. The just rejoice in the government of the King who reigns in righteousness.

**(Ps. 45:7) You love righteousness and hate wickedness.** Christ Jesus is not neutral in the great contest between right and wrong; as warmly as He loves one, He abhors the other. What qualifications for a sovereign! What grounds of confidence for a people! Our Lord's life on earth proved the truth of these words. His death, to put away sin and bring in the reign of righteousness, sealed the fact beyond all question. His providence, by which He rules from His mediatorial throne, when rightly understood, reveals the same. His final court will proclaim it before all worlds. We should imitate Him both in love and hate, for both are necessary to complete a righteous character.

**(Ps. 45:10) Listen, O daughter, consider.** This is the church's great duty. Faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17), and confirmation by consideration.

No precept can be more worthy of the attention of those who are honored to be engaged to Christ than this, **and incline your ear.** Lean forward, so that no syllable will be unheard. All the faculties of the mind should be bent on receiving holy teaching.

**Forget your own people also, and your father's house.** To renounce the world is not easy, but it must be done by all who are engaged to the Great King. He cannot endure a divided heart; that would be misery to the beloved and dishonor to her Lord. Evil acquaintances, and even those who are neutral, must be forsaken. They can confer no benefits; they only inflict injury. The house of our nativity is the house of sin. "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5). "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). We must leave the house of fallen nature, for it is built in the City of Destruction. Natural ties are not broken by grace; only ties of sinful nature and bonds of graceless affinity are broken. We have as much to forget as to learn. The unlearning is so difficult that only diligent hearing, considering, and bending of the entire soul can accomplish the work. Yet even these would be too feeble if divine grace did not help. Why should we remember Egypt (Ex. 14:11)? Are the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic anything (Num. 11:5), when the iron bondage, the slavish tasks, and the death-dealing Pharaoh of hell are remembered? We part with folly for wisdom, bubbles for eternal joys, deceit for truth, misery for bliss, and idols for the living God. If only Christians were more mindful of the divine precept. But worldliness abounds, the church is defiled, and the glory of the Great King is veiled. Only when all the church leads the separated life will the full splendor and power of Christianity shine on the world.

**(Ps. 45:11) So the King will greatly desire your beauty.** Whole hearted love is the duty and bliss of the marriage state, especially in this lofty mystic marriage. The church must forsake all others and hold to Jesus only, or she will not please Him and enjoy the full manifestation of His love. What less can He ask, what less may she dare propose, than to be wholly His? Jesus sees a beauty in His church, a beauty which He delights in, when it is not marred by worldliness. He has always been most near and precious to His saints when they have cheerfully taken up His Cross and followed Him. His Spirit is grieved when they mingle with the world and learn its ways. No great and lasting revival of religion can be granted until the professed lovers of Jesus prove their affection by coming out from among them and being separate, touching not the unclean thing (2 Cor. 6:17).

**(Ps. 45:13) The royal daughter is all glorious within.** Within her secret chambers, her glory is great. Though unseen by the world, her Lord sees and commends her. "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). Or, the passage may be understood as meaning *within herself*. Her beauty is not only outward; her choicest charms are found in her heart, her secret character, her inner desires. Truth and wisdom in the hidden parts are what the Lord regards, mere skin-deep beauty is nothing in His eyes. The church is of royal extraction, of imperial dignity, for she is a king's daughter. She has been purified, renewed in nature, and is glorious within. Note the word **all**. The Bridegroom was said to have **all** His garments perfumed, and now the bride is **all** glorious within, entire and complete. There is no mixture of ill savor in Jesus, nor will there be alloy of unholiness in His people, "that He might present her to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

**Her clothing is woven with gold.** Best material and best workmanship, our Lord laboriously worked the precious material of His righteousness into clothing for His people! No embroidery of golden threads can equal that masterpiece of

holy art; such clothing becomes one who is honored by relationship to the Great King. The Lord sees that nothing will be wanting to the glory and beauty of His bride.

**(Ps. 45:14) She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors.** The day comes when the celestial marriage will be openly celebrated. These words describe the wedding procession, when the queen is brought to her royal Husband by her attendants. In the latter day glory, the glory of the bride, the Lamb's wife, will be seen by all the universe with admiration. While she was indoors, and her saints hidden, the church was glorious. What will her splendor be when she appears in the likeness of her Lord? The finest embroidery is only a faint image of the church's perfection when sanctified by the Spirit. This verse tells of the ultimate rest of the church on the King's bosom. She comes to it; she is **brought** by the power of sovereign grace. When this is done, **she shall be** dressed in the richest clothes and attended by the brightest spirits.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What verses in this Psalm are applied to Christ?**

### **Psalm 46:1-11**

**(Ps. 46:1) God is our refuge and strength,** not our enemies or our fortresses. Israel's boast is in Jehovah, the only living and true God. Others vaunt their impregnable castles, placed on inaccessible rocks and secured with gates of iron. But God is a far better refuge than all these. When the time comes to carry the war to the territories of the enemy, the Lord stands His people in a better stead than all the valor of legions or all the boasted strength of chariots and horses. Soldiers of the Cross, remember this. Count yourselves safe, and make yourselves strong in God. Do not forget the personal possessive word **our**. Make so sure of your portion in God that you may say, "He is *my* refuge and strength." Never forget the fact that God is our refuge right now, in the immediate present, as truly as when David penned these words. God alone is our all in all. All other refuges are lies, all other strength is weakness, for power belongs to God. God is all-sufficient. His defense and might are equal to all emergencies.

**(Ps. 46:2) Therefore we will not fear.** With God on our side, how irrational would fear be! Where He is all power and all love, why should we languish? **Even though the earth be removed,** though the basis of all visible things should be so convulsed as to be entirely changed.

**And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea,** though the firmest of created objects fall to headlong ruin, submerged in total destruction.

**(Ps. 46:4) There is a river.** Divine grace, like a smoothly flowing, fertilizing, full, and never failing river, brings refreshment and comfort to believers. This is the river of the water of life. The church above as well as the church below partakes of it forever. It is not a boisterous ocean but a placid stream. It is not stopped in its course by earthquakes or crumbling mountains; it follows a serene course without disturbance. Happy are they who know from experience that there is such a river.

**(Ps. 46:9) He makes war cease to the end of the earth.** His voice quiets the tumult of war and calls for the silence of peace. However remote and barbarous the tribe, He awes the people into rest. He crushes the great powers until they cannot provoke strife again. He gives His people profound rest.

**He breaks the bow,** the sender of swift-winged death, He makes useless. **And cuts the spear in two.** The lance of the mighty, he breaks.

He burns the chariot in the fire. The mighty war chariots, with their death-dealing scythes, He commits to the flames. Heaps on heaps, He piles all sorts of weapons and utterly destroys them. It was this way in Judea, and it will occur in all lands in eras yet to come. Blessed deed of the Prince of Peace!

**(Ps. 46:10) Be still, and know that I am God.** Hold off, you enemies! Sit and wait in patience, you believers! Acknowledge that Jehovah is God, you who feel the terrors of His wrath! Adore Him, and Him only, you who partake in the protection of His grace. Since none can worthily proclaim His nature, let "expressive silence ponder His praise." The boasts of the ungodly and the timid fear of the saints should certainly be hushed by a sight of what the Lord has done in the past. **I will be exalted among the nations.**

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**How are our deficiencies an opportunity for God?**

Ps. 36:10      Ps. 102:26      Hag. 2:21-22

### **Psalm 47:1-9**

The immediate subject of this Psalm, whether it is the carrying of the ark from the house of Obbedom to Mount Zion or the celebration of some memorable victory, is hard to decide. Even the scholars differ, so who should dogmatize? Yet

it is clear that both the present sovereignty of Jehovah, the final victories of our Lord, and the prophecy of His ascension are here properly hymned.

**(Ps. 47:1) Oh, clap your hands!** The most natural and enthusiastic signs of exultation are to be used in view of the Lord's victories and universal reign. Our joy in God may be demonstrative, but He will not censure it.

**Shout**, let your voices keep tune with your hands. **To God.** Let Him have all the honors, and let them be loud, joyous, universal, and undivided. **With the voice of triumph**, with glad sounds equal to such splendid victories, to so great a King, to so excellent a rule, and to such happy subjects. There are many human languages, and yet the nations may triumph as with one voice. Faith's view of God's government is full of delight. The prospect of the universal reign of the Prince of Peace is enough to make the silent sing.

**(Ps. 47:2) For the LORD.** This is Jehovah, the self-existent and only God. **Most High**, greatest in power, loftiest in dominion, most eminent in wisdom, most elevated in glory, **is awesome.** None can resist His power or stand before His vengeance.

**(Ps. 47:3) He**, with whom is infinite power, **will subdue the peoples under us.** The battle is not ours, "for the battle is the LORD'S" (1 Sam. 17:47). He will take His time, but He will certainly achieve victory for His church. Truth and righteousness will through grace climb to predominance. We wage no doubtful war. Hearts, the most rebellious, and wills the most stubborn, will submit to all-conquering grace. All the Lord's people, whether Jews or Gentiles, may clap their hands, for God's victory will be theirs. Yet surely apostles, prophets, ministers, and those who suffer and labor the most may take the largest share in the joy. Idolatry, infidelity, and superstition we will step on as people walk on the street's pavement.

**(Ps. 47:4) The excellence of Jacob whom He loves.** He gave His ancient people their portion. He will give us ours, and we ask nothing better. This is the most spiritual and true way of clapping hands. Because of His sovereignty, namely, leaving all our affairs in His hands, our hands are empty of all care and free to be used in His honor. As He was the boast and glory of Israel, He is and will be ours. He loved His people and became their greatest glory. He loves us, and He will be our exceeding joy. As for the latter days, we ask nothing better than to stand in our appointed spot, for if we have but a portion in our Lord Jesus, it is enough for our largest desires. Our beauty, our boast, and our best treasure lies in having such a God to trust, such a God to love us.

**(Ps. 47:5) God has gone up with a shout.** Faith hears the people shouting. The command of the first verse is regarded as a fact. The fight is over! The conqueror ascends to His triumphant chariot and rides to the gates of the city, resplendent with the joy of His return. These words are fully applicable to the ascension of the Redeemer. We do not doubt that angels and glorified spirits welcomed Him with acclamations. He came with a song (Luke 2:14). Can we imagine that He returned in silence? **The LORD with the sound of a trumpet.** Jesus is Jehovah. The joyful strain of the trumpet tells the splendor of His triumph. One returning from the wars was welcomed with martial music. "Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?—'I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save'" (Is. 63:1). He ascended, leading captivity captive. Well might the clarion ring out the news of Emmanuel's victorious return.

**(Ps. 47:8) God sits on His holy throne.** He occupies an undisputed throne. His decrees, acts, and commands are holiness itself. What other throne is like this? Never was it stained with injustice or defiled with sin. Neither is He who sits on it dismayed nor in a dilemma. He sits in serenity, for He knows His power and sees His purposes will not miscarry. This is reason enough for holy song.

All principalities and powers must be subject to Jehovah and His Christ, for **He is greatly exalted.** In nature, in power, in character, in glory, there is none to compare with Him. Oh, glorious vision of a coming era! Make haste, you wheels of time! Meanwhile saints, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

Psalms 47:5 says: "God has gone up with a shout." **What is the mood now as "God sits on His holy throne" (Ps. 47:8)?**

### **Psalms 48:1-14**

**(Ps. 48:1) Great is the LORD.** No one can conceive how great Jehovah is. We can, however, see that He is great in the deliverance of His people, great in the esteem of the delivered, and great in the hearts of the enemies He scatters. Instead of the mad cry of Ephesus, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:28), we bear the reasonable, demonstrable, self-evident testimony, "Great is Jehovah!" There is none great in the church but the Lord. Jesus is "the great Shepherd." He is a great Savior, our great God and Savior, and our great High Priest. His Father has given Him a portion with the great, and His name will be great to the ends of the earth. **And greatly to be praised.** According to His nature should His worship be. It cannot be too constant, too favorable, too earnest, too reverent, too sublime.

**In the city of our God.** He is great there, and should be greatly praised there. If all the world renounced Jehovah's worship, the chosen people in His favored city would continue to adore Him, for in their midst and on their behalf, His

glorious power has been unmistakably revealed. In the church, the Lord is to be extolled, though all the nations rage against Him. Jerusalem was the distinctive abode of the God of Israel, the seat of the theocratic government, and the center of prescribed worship. Thus is the church the place of divine manifestation.

**In His holy mountain.** Here, His holy temple, His holy priests, and His holy sacrifices might continually be seen. Zion was a mountain, the most renowned part of the city, a synonym for the city itself. The church of God is elevated and conspicuous, and it should be adorned with holiness, her members partaking of the holiness of God. Only by holy people can the Lord be properly praised, and they should be incessantly occupied with His worship.

**(Ps. 48:5) They were troubled, they hastened away.** The troublers were troubled. Their haste in coming was nothing to their hurry in going. Panic seized them. Horses were not fast enough; they would have borrowed the wings of the wind. They fled ignominiously, like frightened children. Glory to God, it will always be so with the foes of His church. When the Lord comes to our help, our enemies will be as nothing. If they could have foreseen their ignominious defeat, they would not have attacked.

**(Ps. 48:7) As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God.** Our father's stories are reproduced before our eyes. We heard the promise, and we have seen the fulfillment. The records of Zion, wonderful as they are, are truthful because the facts are in perfect harmony. Note how the Lord is first spoken of as **LORD of hosts**, a name of power and sovereignty. Then He is spoken of as **our God**, a name of covenant relation and condescension. No wonder that, since the Lord has both titles, we find Him dealing with us after the precedents of His lovingkindness and the faithfulness of His promises.

**God will establish it forever.** The true church can never be disestablished. What kings establish can last for time only. What God establishes endures to all eternity.

**Selah.** Here is a proper place to pause, viewing the past with admiration and the future with confidence.

**(Ps. 48:9) In the midst of Your temple.** This is a proper place for devout meditation. Where God is most seen, He is best loved. The assembled saints constitute a living temple. Our deepest contemplations should consider the Lord's lovingkindness as it is exhibited in the varied experiences of each living stone. Memories of mercy should be associated with continuous praise. Close to the table of shew bread, commemorating His bounty, should stand the altar of incense, denoting our praise.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### What does it mean for us to "Walk about Zion" (Ps. 48:12)?

#### Psalm 49:1-20

**(Ps. 49:4) I will incline my ear to a proverb.** Those who would have others listen begin *by* listening themselves. As the minstrel leans ear to harp, so must the preacher give his whole soul to the ministry. This truth came to the psalmist as a parable, and he attempted to interpret it for popular use, for he would not leave the truth in obscurity. He listened to its voice until he understood and was able to interpret and translate it into the common language.

Still, it would remain a problem and a dark saying to the unenlightened. But this would not be the songster's fault, for he said, **I will disclose my dark saying on the harp.** The writer was no mystic, delighting in deep and cloudy things; nevertheless, he was not afraid of the most profound topics. He tried to open the treasures of darkness and lift pearls from the deep. To win attention, he cast his proverbial philosophy into a song and tuned his harp to the solemn tone of the subject. Gather round the minstrel of the King of kings, hear the Psalm led by the chief musician, as the chorus of the sons of Korah lifted their voices in the temple.

**(Ps. 49:5) Why should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?** The man of God looks calmly forward to dark times, when evils that have dogged his heels will gain a temporary advantage. Iniquitous people, here called in the abstract iniquity, lie in wait for the righteous, as serpents that aim at the travelers' heels. The iniquity at our heels is the evil that aims to trip or impede us. It was an old prophecy that the serpent would wound the heel of the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15), and the enemy of our souls is diligent to fulfill that premonition. In some dreary part of our road, it may be that evil will grow stronger and bolder and, gaining on us, will openly assail. Those who followed at our heels like a pack of wolves may overtake and surround us. What then? Will we yield to cowardice? Will we be a prey to their teeth? God forbid. No, we will not even fear, for what are these foes? What indeed? Mere mortals who will perish and pass away. There can be no real ground of alarm to the faithful. Their enemies are too insignificant to be worthy of one thrill of fear. Does not the Lord say "I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die, and of the son of a man who will be made like grass?" (Isa. 51:12).

**(Ps. 49:12) Nevertheless man, though in honor, does not remain. He is like the beasts that perish.** He is not like the sheep preserved by the Great Shepherd; he is like the hunted beast doomed to die. He lives a senseless life and dies a senseless death. Wallowing in riches, overflowing with pleasure, he is fatted for the slaughter and dies like the ox in the slaughter house. It is sad that so noble a creature should use his life so unworthily and end it so disgracefully. So far as this world is concerned, wherein does the death of many people differ from the death of an animal? They go down:

To the vile dust from whence they  
sprung,  
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

**(Ps. 49:14) Like sheep they are laid in the grave. Death shall feed on them.** Death, like a grim shepherd, leads them to their eternal pasturage, where all is barrenness and misery. The righteous are led by the Good Shepherd, but the ungodly have death for their shepherd, and he drives them onward to hell. As the power of death rules them in this world, for they have not passed from death unto life, so the terrors of death will devour them in the world to come.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**How was the minstrel or preacher able to disclose the secrets of a proverb into common language?**

Ps. 49:3-4 Jam. 3:13-18

### **Psalm 50:1-23**

**(Ps. 50:3) Our God shall come.** The psalmist speaks of himself and his brethren as standing in immediate anticipation of the Lord's appearance. "He comes," they say, "our covenant God is coming." They can hear His voice from a distance and perceive the splendor of his attending retinue. So should we await the long promised appearing of the Lord from heaven. **And shall not keep silent.** He comes to speak, to plead with His people, to accuse and judge the ungodly. He has long been silent, but soon He will speak with power. What a moment of awe when the Omnipotent reveals Himself! What will be the reverent joy and solemn expectation when the poetic scene of this Psalm becomes reality!

**A fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.** Flame and hurricane are frequently described as attendants of the divine appearance. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). "From the brightness before Him, His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire" (Ps. 18:12). "He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind" (Ps. 18:10). "Rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7-8). Fire is the emblem of justice in action; the tempest is a token of His overwhelming power. Who will not listen in solemn silence when this is the tribunal from which the Judge pleads with heaven and earth?

**(Psalm 50:7-15)** The address that follows is directed to the professed people of God. It is clearly meant for Israel, but it is equally applicable to the visible church of God in every age. It declares the futility of external worship when spiritual faith is absent and only outward ceremony is used.

**(Ps. 50:7) O Israel, and I will testify against you.** Their covenant name is mentioned to give emphasis. It was a double evil that the chosen nation should become carnal, unspiritual, false, and heartless to their God. God Himself, whose eyes sleep not, and who is not misled by rumor but sees for Himself, enters the scene as a witness against His favored nation. Alas for us, when God, even our fathers' God, testifies to the hypocrisy of the visible church.

**(Ps. 50:15) Call upon Me in the day of trouble.** Blessed sentence! Is this true sacrifice? Is it an offering to ask for aid from heaven? Yes! The King Himself so regards it. This is faith manifested; this is love proved, for in the hour of peril, we fly to those we love. It seems a small thing to pray to God when we are distressed, yet it is a more acceptable worship than the heartless presentation of bullocks and goats. This is a voice from the throne, and how full of mercy it is! It is tempestuous around Jehovah, but what soft drops of the rain of mercy fall from the bosom of the storm! Who would not offer such sacrifices? Troubled one, hurry; present it now! Who will say that Old Testament saints did not know the gospel? Its spirit and essence breathe like frankincense around this holy Psalm.

**(Psalm 50:16-21)** The Lord now turns to the manifestly wicked among His people, who were even in the highest places of His sanctuary. If moral formalists had been rebuked, how much more these immoral pretenders? If lack of heart spoiled the worship of the decent and virtuous, how much more would violations of the Law, committed with a high hand, corrupt the sacrifices of the wicked?

**(Ps. 50:16) But to the wicked God says. What right have you to declare My statutes?** You openly violate My moral law, and yet you are great sticklers for My ceremonial commands! What have you to do with them? What interest can you have in them? Do you dare to teach My Law to others and profane it yourselves? What impudence, what blasphemy! Even if you claim to be sons of Levi, so what? Your wickedness disqualifies you, disinherits you, and puts you out of the succession.

**(Ps. 50:22) Now, or, "Oh!"** It is a plea, for the Lord is loath to let even the most ungodly run on to destruction. **Consider this.** Take these truths to heart, both you who trust in ceremonies and you who live in vice, for you both sin, in that you **forget God.** Think how unaccepted you are and turn to the Lord. See how you have mocked the eternal and repent of your iniquities.

**Lest I tear you in pieces,** as the lion rips his prey, **and there be none to deliver,** no Savior, no refuge, no hope. You reject the Mediator, so beware. You will sorely need one in the day of wrath and none will plead for you. How

terrible, how complete, how painful, how humiliating will be the destruction of the wicked! God uses no soft words or velvet metaphors, nor may His servants when they speak of the wrath to come.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **What are the two requirements of us in this Psalm to be blessed of the Lord?**

Ps. 50:14, 23 Hos. 14:2 Heb. 13:15

### **Psalm 51:1-19**

This Psalm is suitable for the loneliness of individual penitence or for an assembly of the poor in spirit. **When Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.** When the divine message had aroused his dormant conscience, and made him see the greatness of his guilt, he wrote this Psalm. David had forgotten his sacred singing while he was indulging his flesh, but he returned to his harp when his spiritual nature was awakened. He poured out his song to the accompaniment of sighs and tears. The great sin of David is not to be excused. It is well, however, to remember that his case has an exceptional collection of specialities in it. He was a man of strong passions, a soldier, and an Oriental monarch with despotic power. No other king of his time would have felt any compunction for having acted as he did, and hence David did not have around him those restraints of custom and association that, when broken through, make the offense more monstrous. David never hints at any form of extenuation, nor do we mention these facts to apologize for his sin, for it was detestable to the last degree. The psalmist's sin is a warning to others to reflect on their licentiousness, for they might have even graver guilt than the erring King of Israel. When we remember his sin, let us dwell most on his penitence and the long series of chastisements that turned the rest of his life into a mournful history.

- Verses 1-12 is the penitent's confessions and plea for pardon.
- Verses 13-19 comes his anticipatory gratitude and the way he resolved to display it.

**(Ps. 51:7) Wash me.** Let it not merely be in type that I am clean, but also by a real spiritual purification remove the pollution of my nature. Let the sanctifying as well as the pardoning processes be perfected in me. Save me from the evils that my sin has created and nourished in me. **And I shall be whiter than snow.**

**(Ps. 51:10) Renew a steadfast spirit within me.** It was there once, Lord, put it there again. The law on my heart has become like an inscription hard to read. Write it again, gracious Maker. Remove the evil, as I have pleaded with You. Replace it with good, lest into my swept, empty, and garnished heart, from which the devil has gone for a while, seven other spirits more wicked than the first should enter and dwell (Matt. 12:45).

**Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.** Do not withdraw His comfort, counsel, assistance, and awakening, else I am indeed as dead. Do not leave me as You did Saul, when neither by prophet nor dream would You answer him (1 Sam. 28:6). Your Spirit is my wisdom; leave me not to my folly. He is my strength; do not leave me to my own weakness. Drive me not from You; neither go away from me. Keep the union between us, for it is my only hope of salvation. It will be a great wonder if so pure a Spirit deigns to stay in so base a heart as mine. Yet, Lord, it is all wonder; therefore, do this for Your mercy's sake, I earnestly ask You.

**(Ps. 51:14) And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.** A great sinner pardoned makes a great singer. Sin has a loud voice and so should our thankfulness. We will not sing our own praises if we are saved, but our theme will be the Lord our righteousness, in whose merits we stand righteously accepted.

**(Ps. 51:17) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.** All sacrifices are presented to You in one, by the man whose broken heart presents the Savior's merit to You. When the heart mourns for sin, You are better pleased than when the bullock bleeds beneath the axe. "A broken heart" is an expression implying deep sorrow, embittering life itself; it carries the idea of all but killing anguish in that most vital of human organs. So excellent is a spirit humbled and mourning for sin that it is not only a sacrifice, but also a plurality of excellencies and, preeminently, God's **sacrifices**.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

David had sinned greatly by taking Bathsheba and pleaded with God to purge him (Ps. 51:7) and not to take His Holy Spirit from him (Ps. 51:11). **What evidence is there that shows that David had been restored to a right place with God?**

Ps. 51:17

### **Psalm 52:1-9**

**When Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul, and said to him, "David has gone to the house of Ahimelech."** By deceitful tale bearing, Doeg caused the deaths of all the priests at Nob (1 Sam. 22:16-18).

(Ps. 52:1-3)

**Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?  
The goodness of God endures continually.  
Your tongue devises destruction,  
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.  
You love evil more than good,  
Lying rather than speaking righteousness.**

**Selah.** Let us pause and look at the proud blustering liar. Doeg is gone, but other dogs bark at the Lord's people. Saul's cattle master is buried, but the devil still has his drovers, who would hurry the saints like sheep to the slaughter.

(Ps. 52:4-5)

**You love all devouring words,  
You deceitful tongue.  
God shall likewise destroy you forever;  
He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place,  
And uproot you from the land of the living.**

**Selah.** Pause again, and behold divine justice proving itself more than a match for human sin.

(Ps. 52:6) **The righteous**, the object of the tyrant's hatred, will outlive his enmity and **also shall see** the end of the ungodly oppressor. God permits Mordecai to see Haman hanging on the gallows (Esth. 7:10). A man brought David the tokens of Saul's death on Gilboa (2 Sam. 1:10). **And fear.** Holy awe will sober the mind of the good man. He will reverently adore the God of providence.

(Ps. 52:9) **I will wait on Your name.** God is the psalmist's hope. He will not look elsewhere. He whose name has been so gloriously made known in truth and righteousness is justly chosen as our expectation for years to come. **For it is good.** Before or among the saints, David intended to wait. It was good both for him and them to look to the Lord alone and to wait for the manifestation of His character in due season. People must not fluster us. Our strength is to sit still. Let the mighty boast; we will wait on the Lord. If haste brings them present honor, our patience will have its turn and bring us the honor that excels.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What is the meaning of David's statement in Psalm 52:8: "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God"?**

Jer. 11:16 Rom. 11:17

### **Psalm 53:1-6**

**To the Chief Musician.** If the leader of the choir is privileged to sing the jubilation of divine grace, he must be willing to chant the misery of human depravity. The word **Mahalath** appears to signify "disease," and truly this Psalm is "The Song of Man's Disease," the mortal, hereditary taints of sin.

(Ps. 53:1) **There is none who does good.** The one typical fool is reproduced in the whole race. Without exception, people have forgotten the right way. This accusation is made twice in the Psalm and is repeated a third time by the inspired apostle Paul (Rom. 3:12). It is a solemn and sweeping indictment. He who makes it cannot err. He knows what is in man, neither will He lay more to man's charge than he can prove.

(Ps. 53:2) **To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.** He saw all nations and all people in all nations; He saw all hearts in all people and all motions of all hearts. But He saw neither a clear head nor a clean heart among them. Where God's eyes see no favorable sign, we may rest assured there is none.

(Ps. 53:3) **Every one of them has turned aside.** All of humanity, all of it, has turned aside. In Psalm 14, humanity was said to turn aside, which was bad enough, but here it is described as running in a diametrically opposite direction to God. The life of the unregenerate is in direct defiance of God's law, not merely apart from it but opposed to it.

**There is none who does good, no, not one.** The fallen race of man, left to its own energy, has not produced a single lover of God or one holy person, nor will it. Grace must interpose, or not one specimen of humanity will be found to follow the good and true. This is God's verdict after looking down on the race. Who can argue with it?

(Ps. 53:4) **Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?** They certainly have no wisdom, but even so common a thing as knowledge might have restrained them. Can they not see there is a God, that sin is evil, and that persecution recoils on one's own head? Are they such fools as not to know that they are their own enemies and ruining themselves?

**Who eat up my people as they eat bread.** Do they not see that such food will be hard to digest and will bring a horrible vomit when God deals with them in justice?

**What name is given to those in this Psalm who deny the existence of God?**

Ps. 53:1

**What is God's testimony concerning man's nature?**

Ps. 53:2-4

**Do we get rid of this rottenness and infection in our life after we become new creatures in Christ? What brings spiritual victory over the depravity that exists in man?**

Ps. 51:5-12 Rom. 7:13-22

### **Psalm 54:1-7**

**A Contemplation of David.** David's productions were as plentiful as they are profitable. His varied life was for our benefit, for from it we derive these hymns, which at this hour are as fresh and as precious as when he wrote them. **A Contemplation of David when the Ziphites went and said to Saul "Is David not hiding with us?" (1 Sam. 23:19).** They were guilty of gross inhospitality in order to curry Saul's favor. They did not care if innocent blood was shed, so long as they earned the graceless monarch's smile! David came quietly among them, hoping for a little rest, but they deserted and betrayed him. David turns to God in prayer. His faith was so strong that he soon sang himself into a delightful serenity.

From verses 1-3, where the *Selah* makes a pause, the psalmist pleads with God.

Then, in the rest of the song, laying aside all doubt, he chants a hymn of joyful triumph. The vigor of faith is the death of anxiety and the birth of security.

**(Ps. 54:1) Save me, O God.** You are my Savior, and all around me are my foes and their eager helpers. No shelter is permitted me; every land rejects me and denies me rest. But You, O God, will give me refuge and deliver me from all my enemies. **By Your name**, by Your great and glorious nature, employ all Your attributes for me. Let every one of the perfections that are blended in Your divine name work for me. Is not Your honor pledged for my defense?

**Vindicate me by Your strength.** Give justice to me, for no one else will or can. You can give me efficient justice and right my wrongs by Your omnipotence. We dare not appeal to God in a bad cause, but when we know that we can fearlessly carry our cause before His justice, we may commit it to His power.

**(Ps. 54:2) Hear my prayer, O God.** This is the saint's defense. As long as God has an open ear, we cannot be shut up in trouble. All other weapons may be useless, but all-prayer is always available. No enemy can silence this gun.

**(Ps. 54:4) The Lord is with those who uphold my life.** The reigning Lord, the great Adonai, is in the camp of my defenders. Here was a greater champion than all the valiant men who chose David for their captain. The psalmist was confident. He was so certain that his heart was on the Lord's side that he knew God was on *his* side. He asked in the first verse for deliverance, and here he returns thanks for upholding. When we seek a mercy that we do not have, we must be mindful of another that we do have. It is a great mercy to have some friends, but it is a greater mercy to see the Lord among them. Like so many zeros, our friends stand for nothing until the Lord sets Himself as a great unit in the front of them.

**(Ps. 54:7) For He has delivered me out of all trouble.** Up to this time, deliverance had not come, but he felt that rescue was near. David lived a life of danger and of hairbreadth escapes, yet he was always safe. In retrospect for his many deliverances, he feels that he must praise God. Looking on mercy as though already received, he sang this song over it:

And a new song is in my mouth,  
To long loved music set,  
Glory to Thee for all the grace  
I have not tasted yet.

Our covenant God is pledged to bring us out of all trouble. Even now, let us lift the note of triumph to Jehovah, the faithful preserver of those that trust in Him. So far have we proved His promise good. And He changes not. In all the unknown future, He will be equally our guardian and defense. "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chr. 16:9).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Show the truth of Charles Spurgeon's words in the introduction of this Psalm "The vigor of faith is the death of anxiety and the birth of security."**

## Psalm 55:1-23

It would be idle to fix a time and find an occasion for this Psalm with any dogmatism. It reads like a song of the time of Absalom and Ahithophel. It was after David had enjoyed peaceful worship (v. 14), when he was or had just been a city dweller (vv. 9-11), and when he remembered his former roaming in the wilderness. Together, it seems to relate to that mournful era when the king was betrayed by his trusted counselor. The spiritual eye sees the Son of David, Judas, and the chief priests appearing and disappearing on the glowing canvas of this Psalm.

- The suppliant spreads his case before God, verses 1-8.
- He portrays his enemies, verses 9-11.
- David mentions one special traitor, verses 12-14.
- He cries for, or foretells, vengeance, verses 15.
- The psalmist is consoled by prayer and faith, verses 16-19.
- He again mentions the deceitful covenant breaker, verses 20, 21.
- David gives a cheering exhortation to the saints, verse 22.
- It ends with the psalmist's denunciation of destruction on the wicked and deceitful, verse 23.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **In what ways was Ahithophel a type (foreshadow) of Judas?**

2 Sam. 15:12      Ps. 41:9      Ps. 46:2

## Psalm 56:1-13

**When the Philistines captured him in Gath.** David was like a dove in strangers' hands, and on his escape he records his gratitude.

**(Ps. 56:1) Fighting all day he oppresses me.** He gives me no interval; he fights daily and is successful in his unrighteous war. He oppresses me; he crushes me and oppresses me greatly. David has his eye on the leader of his foes, and he brings his complaint to the right place. If we may plead against man, how much more should we plead against that great enemy of souls, the devil? We ask the Lord to forgive us our debts (Matt. 6:12), which is another way of saying, **Be merciful to me, O God.** Then we may say, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13). The more violent Satan's attacks, the stronger our plea for deliverance.

**(Ps. 56:4) I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?** Here is faith exercised and fear banished, so holy triumph follows. The soul asks, **What can flesh do to me?** What indeed? He can do me no real injury. All his malice will be overruled for my good. Man is flesh, and flesh is grass. Lord, in Your name I defy its utmost wrath. There were two verses of complaint, and here are two of confidence. It is well to weigh out a sufficient quantity of the sweet to counteract the sour.

**(Ps. 56:5) All day they twist my words.** This is a common method of warfare among the ungodly. They put our language on the torture rack, they extort meanings from it which it cannot be made fairly to contain.

**(Ps. 56:6) They mark my steps,** as hunters track game. The malicious are frequently sharp-sighted to detect the failings, or supposed failings, of the righteous.

**(Ps. 57:9) This I know.** This is one of the believer's certainties, one of his axioms, one of his infallible and indisputable truths. **God is for me.** This we know, and we know therefore that none who are against us are worth a moment's fear. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Who will restrain prayer when it is so potent? Who will seek any other ally than God? Who is immediately present as soon as we pray? By this, we testify both to our need and to our confidence.

**Ps. 57:13) That I may walk before God in the light of the living,** enjoying the favor and presence of God and finding the joy and brightness of life. This I seek, to walk at liberty, in holy service, in sacred communion, in constant progress in holiness, enjoying the smile of heaven. Here is the loftiest reach of ambition, to dwell with God, to walk in righteousness before Him, to rejoice in His presence and in the light and glory that it yields. In this short Psalm, we have climbed from the ravenous jaws of the enemy into the light of Jehovah's presence, a path that only faith can walk.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **In what state of mind did David begin this Psalm and what was his mindset at the end?**

## Psalm 57:1-11

This Psalm is called golden, or secret, and it certainly deserves the name. We may read the words and yet not know the secret joy of David, which he locked up in this golden treasure box. **When he fled from Saul into the cave.** This is a song from the depths of the earth, and like Jonah's prayer from the bottom of the sea, it has a taste of the place. At first, the poet is in the shadow of the cave, but he finally comes to the mouth of the cavern, sings in the sweet fresh air, and, with his eyes on the heavens, joyously watches the clouds float by. Prayer is the theme of verses 1-6 and praise in verses 7-11. The hunted one takes a long breath of prayer, and when he is fully inspired, he breathes out his soul in jubilant song.

**(Ps. 57:1) For my soul trusts in You.** Faith urges her case well. How can the Lord be unmerciful to a trusting soul? Our faith does not deserve mercy, but it always wins it from the sovereign grace of God when *the sincere soul* believes. "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:10).

**And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge.** Not in the cave alone would he hide, but in the cleft of the Rock of ages. As little birds find ample shelter under the parental wing, the fugitive places himself beneath the secure protection of divine power. The metaphor is delightfully familiar and suggestive. May we all know its meaning personally. When we cannot see the sunshine of God's face, it is blessed to hide under the shadow of His wings.

**(Ps. 57:3) He shall send from heaven.** If there are no fit instruments on earth, heaven will send legions of angels to comfort the saints. In times of great distress, we may expect remarkable mercies. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we will have our bread hot from heaven, fresh every morning. And for the overthrow of our enemies, God will open fire with His celestial batteries and put them to utter confusion. Wherever the battle is fiercest, comfort will come from headquarters, for the Commander-in-chief sees all.

**(Ps. 57:4) My soul is among lions.** He was like Daniel, howled at, hunted, wounded, but not slain. His place was one of extreme peril, but faith made him feel so secure that he could lie down. The cave reminded him of a lion's den. The lions were Saul and his band, shouting and yelling in their disappointment because they had missed David. But beneath the divine shelter, he is safe.

**I lie among the sons of men who are set on fire.** Perhaps Saul and his troops kindled a fire in the cavern when they halted there; this reminded David of the fiercer fire of their hate. Like the bush in Horeb, the believer is often in the midst of flames, but never consumed (Ex. 3:2). It is a mighty triumph of faith when we can lie down among firebrands and find rest because God is our defense.

**(Ps. 57:6) They have dug a pit before me; into the midst of it they themselves have fallen.** He likens his persecutors' plans to a pit. To trap prey, pits were commonly dug along the prey's usual path. In this case, David says **before me**, or in my *ordinary* way. He rejoices that these devices had recoiled on themselves. Saul hunted David, but David caught him more than once and could have slain him on the spot. Evil is a stream that one day will flow back to its source.

**Selah.** We may sit at the mouth of the pit and view with wonder the just retaliations of Providence.

**(Ps. 57:10) For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens.** From our lowliness to heaven's loftiness, mercy reaches. Imagination fails to guess the height of heaven, and the riches of mercy exceed our highest thoughts. The psalmist, as he sits at the mouth of the cave and looks up to the heavens, rejoices that God's goodness is more vast and more sublime than the skies.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What does Charles Spurgeon mean when he says the prayer (Psalm, song) "has a taste of the place"?**

Ps. 56:1-2      Ps. 57:1-5

### **Psalm 58:1-11**

The wicked are judged and condemned, but over the godly the sacred **Do Not Destroy** is solemnly pronounced.

**(Ps. 58:1) Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men?** You are only men, though you are dressed in authority for a brief time. Your office for men and your relation to men bind you to morality. But have you remembered this? Have you not put aside all truth when you condemned the godly and united in seeking the overthrow of the innocent? Yet in doing this, do not be too sure of success, for you are only **sons of men**, and there is a God who can and will reverse your verdicts.

**(Ps. 58:3) The wicked are estranged from the womb.** Little wonder that some persecute the righteous seed of the woman, for they are the serpent's brood and enmity is set between them. They are no sooner born than alienated from God.

**(Ps. 58:4) They are like the deaf cobra that stops its ear.** While speaking of serpents, the psalmist remembers that many cobras have been conquered by the skill of a charmer, but the men he had to deal with, no art could tame or restrain. Therefore, he likens them to a serpent less susceptible than others to the charmer's music, and says that they

refuse to hear reason, just as the cobra shuts its ears to the incantations that fascinate other reptiles. Man in his natural corruption appears to have all the bad points of a serpent without any of its excellences. Sin, what have you done?

**(Ps. 58:10) The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance.** He will have no hand in meting out vengeance, neither will he rejoice in the spirit of revenge, but his righteous soul will acquiesce in the judgments of God, and he will rejoice to see justice triumph. There is nothing in Scripture of that sympathy with God's enemies which modern traitors are so fond of parading as the finest species of benevolence. We will at the end say, "Amen," to the condemnation of the wicked, and feel no disposition to question God's ways with the impenitent. Remember how John, the loving disciple, puts it. "After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.' Again they said, 'Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever'" (Rev. 19:1-3).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### **What is the "poison" spoken of in Psalm 58:4?**

Deut. 18:9-12    Ecc. 10:11    Jer. 8:17    Jam. 3:7-8

#### **What does David mean in Psalm 58:6 when he says; "break their teeth"?**

Job 4:8-10

#### **Is there any correlation between this Psalm and the judgment that occurs in Revelation chapters 17-19?**

### **Psalm 59:1-17**

It is strange that the painful events in David's life would enrich the repertoire of the national music. Out of sour, ungenerous soil springs honey-bearing flowers of sacred music. If he had never been cruelly hunted by Saul, Israel and the church of God would have missed this song. The music of the sanctuary is indebted to the trials of the saints. Affliction tunes the harps of sanctified songsters. **Set to "Do Not Destroy,"** it is another **Do Not Destroy** Psalm. Who God preserves, Satan cannot destroy. The Lord can even preserve His prophets' lives with ravens, who would naturally pick out their eyes (1 Kin. 17:6). David always found a friend to help when his case was particularly dangerous, and that friend was in his enemy's household. In this case, it was Michal, Saul's daughter (1 Sam. 19:12), and on another occasion it had been Jonathan, Saul's son (1 Sam. 20:16). **A Michtam of David.** This is the fifth of the *Golden Secrets of David*. God's chosen people have many golden secrets. **When Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill him.**

**(Ps. 59:14, 15) And at evening they return, They growl like a dog, And go all around the city.** Here verse six is repeated. It is as if the songster defied his foes and reveled in the thoughts of their futile search, their malice, their disappointment, their rage, their defeated vigilance, and their wasted energy. He laughs to think that the entire city knows how they were deceived, and all Israel would be talking about the image and the goats' hair in the bed. Nothing was more a subject for Oriental merriment than a story about the crafty who were deceived, and nothing made a man more the object of derision than being outwitted by a woman, as in this case Saul and his minions were by Michal. The warrior poet hears in his imagination the howl of rage in the council of his foes, when they found their victim had escaped.

**(Ps. 59:15) They wander up and down for food.** Like dogs that have missed the expected carcass, they go up and down dissatisfied, snapping at one another and too disappointed to be quiet and take the matter lightly.

**And howl if they are not satisfied.** Let them act like those who cannot believe they have lost their prey. Like a herd of dogs, unhoused and without kennels, let them prowl around, seeking a prey they will never find. Thus, the menial followers of Saul paraded the city in the vain hope of satisfying their malice and their master. "Surely," they said, "we will have him. We cannot miss him. Perhaps he is in yonder corner, or concealed in a hiding place. We must have him. We grudge him his life. Our lust for his blood is hot, and we cannot be persuaded that we will not find him." The restlessness of the wicked will increase as their enmity to God increases, and in hell, it will be their infinite torment. What is the state of the lost but the condition of an ambitious camp of rebels, who have espoused a hopeless cause and will not give up. They are compelled by their raging passions to rave on against the cause of God, of truth, and of His people.

**(Ps. 59:16) But I will sing of Your power.** The wicked howl, but I sing. Their power is weakness, but You are Omnipotence. I see them vanquished and Your power victorious. Forever and ever **I will sing of Your power.**

**Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning.** When those lovers of darkness find the game is over, and their midnight howling dies away, then I will lift my voice and praise God's lovingkindness, without fear of being disturbed. What a blessed morning will soon break for the righteous! What a song will be theirs! Sons of the morning, you may sigh tonight, but joy will come on the wings of the rising sun. Tune your harps, for the signal to commence the eternal music will soon be given. The morning comes, and your sun will never set. **For You have been my defense.** The song is for God alone, and it is one that only those who have experienced the loving-kindness of God can sing. Looking back on a

past full of mercy, the saints will bless the Lord with their whole hearts. They will triumph in Him as the high place of their security.

**And refuge in the day of my trouble.** The greater our present trials, the louder our future songs and the more intense our joyful gratitude. If we had no day of trouble, there would be no season of retrospective thanksgiving. David's harassment by Saul's bloodhounds creates an opportunity for divine interposition and triumphant praise.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **What personal comfort can you get from reading Psalm 59:9 and Psalm 59:17**

#### **Psalm 60:1-12**

**(Ps. 60:1)** Before Saul's time, Israel had been brought low. Under Saul's government, Israel suffered internal strife, and his reign ended by an overwhelming disaster at Mount Gilboa (2 Sam. 1:6). As a result, David found himself the possessor of a tottering throne that was troubled with the double evil of factions at home and invasion from abroad. He immediately traced the evil to its true source and began at the fountainhead. His were the politics of piety, which after all are the wisest and most profound. He knew that the Lord's displeasure had brought calamity on the nation, and to remove that displeasure, he prayed earnestly. **O God, You have cast us off.** You have treated us as foul and offensive, to be put away as worthless, to be shunned with contempt. We are as useless as dead branches torn from the tree they disfigure. To be cast off by God is the worst calamity that can befall anyone, but the worst form occurs when the person is unaware and indifferent. When divine desertion causes mourning and repentance, the mourning will only be partial and temporary. When a cast off soul sighs for God, it is indeed not cast off at all.

**You have broken us down.** David clearly sees the fruit of divine anger. He traces the flight of Israel's warriors, the breaking of her power, and the division in her body politic to the hand of God. Whoever might be the secondary agent of these disasters, David sees the hand of the Lord as the prime cause, and He pleads with the Lord concerning the matter. Because God was angry with Israel, she was like a city with a breach in its wall. These first two verses with their depressing confession, must be regarded as greatly enhancing the power of the faith. The later verses rejoice in better days, through the Lord's gracious return to His people.

**You have been displeased.** This is the secret of our miseries. Had we pleased You, You would have pleased us. But as we have walked contrary to You, You have walked contrary to us.

**Oh, restore us again!** Forgive the sin and smile once more. Turn us to You; You turn to us. Once Your face was toward Your people, so please look again with Your favor and grace.

**(Ps. 60:2) You have made the earth tremble.** Things were as unsettled as if the solid earth had quaked. Nothing was stable. The priests had been murdered by Saul (1 Sam. 22:18), the worst men were in office, the military power had been broken by the Philistines, and the civil authority had grown despicable through insurrections and internal contests.

**You have broken it.** As the earth cracks and opens during violent earthquakes, so the kingdom was rent with strife and calamity.

**(Ps. 60:3) You have shown Your people hard things.** Hardships had been heaped on them, and the psalmist traces these rigorous providences to their fountainhead. Nothing had happened by chance; all had come by divine design and with a purpose. Yet, for all that, things had gone hard *for* Israel. Although in the first verse he said, "You have cast us off," the psalmist claims that they were still the Lord's people. The language of complaint is usually confused, and faith in time of trouble soon contradicts the despondent statements of the flesh. **You have made us drink the wine of confusion.** Our afflictions have made us drunk with some potent and bitter wine. We are in amazement, confusion, and delirium. We reel and stagger like those about to fall. The great physician gives His patients potent potions to purge their abounding and deep-seated diseases. Astonishing evils bring astonishing results. The grapes of the vineyard of sin produce a wine that fills the most hardened with anguish when justice compels them to drain the cup. There is a firewater of soul-anguish that even to the righteous is a cup of trembling; it causes them to be exceedingly sorrowful, almost to death. When grief becomes so habitual as to be our drink and to take the place of our joys, then we are in an evil situation.

**(Ps. 60:4) You have given a banner to those who fear You, That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.** Here the melody takes a turn. The Lord has called His servants, commissioned them for His service, and presented them with a flag to be used in His wars. **You have given a banner to those who fear You.** Their afflictions had led them to exhibit holy fear. Then, being prepared for the Lord's favor, He gave them an ensign. This would be a rallying point, proof that He had sent them to fight and a guarantee of victory. The bravest are usually trusted with the banner. It is certain that those who fear God have less fear of man. The Lord has given us the standard of the gospel. Live to uphold it, and if necessary die to defend it. Our right to contend for God and our reason for expecting success are found in the faith that has been once committed to the saints by the Lord Himself.

**That it may be displayed because of the truth.** Banners are for the breeze, the sun, and the battle. Israel could come boldly, for a sacred standard was raised. To proclaim the gospel is a sacred duty; to be ashamed of it is a deadly sin. The truth of God was involved in the triumph of David's armies. God had promised them victory. In the proclamation

of the gospel, we need feel no hesitancy, for as surely as God is true, He will give success to His word. For the truth's sake, and because the true God is on our side, let us in these days of warfare emulate Israel's warriors and unfurl our banners to the breeze with confident joy. Dark signs of present or coming ill must not dishearten us. If the Lord had meant to destroy us, He would not have given us the gospel. The fact that He has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus involves the certainty of victory.

**(Ps. 60:6) God has spoken in His holiness.** Faith is never happier than when it can fall back on God's promise. She sets this against all discouraging circumstances. Let outward providences say what they will, the voice of a faithful God drowns every sound of tears. God had promised Israel victory and David the kingdom. God's holiness secured the fulfillment of His covenant, and so the king spoke with confidence. The goodly land had been secured to the tribes by the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 15:18), and that divine grant was an abundantly sufficient guarantee for the belief that Israel would be successful in battle. Believers, make good use of this; banish doubts while promises remain.

**I will rejoice**, or "I will triumph." Faith regards the promise not as fiction but fact. It drinks in joy from the promise and grasps victory by it. **God has spoken in His holiness: I will rejoice.** This is a proper motto for every soldier of the Cross.

**I will divide Shechem.** As a victor, David would allot the conquered territory to those whom God had given it. Shechem was an important portion of the country that had not yielded to his government. But he saw that with Jehovah's help, it would yield, and indeed it was all His own. Faith divides the spoil. She is sure of what God has promised and takes possession.

**And measure out the Valley of Succoth.** As the east was, so should the promised land west of Jordan be allotted to the proper people. Enemies would be expelled and the landmarks of peaceful ownership set up. Where Jacob had pitched his tent, his rightful heirs would till the soil. When God has spoken, His divine **I will** becomes no idle boast; it becomes the fit echo of the Lord's decree. Believer, take possession of covenant mercies. **Divide Shechem and measure out the Valley of Succoth.** Do not let Canaanitish doubts and legalisms keep you out of the inheritance of grace. Live up to your privileges; take the good that God provides.

**(Ps. 60:11) Give us help from trouble.** Help us to overcome the disasters of civil strife and foreign invasion; save us from further incursions without and division within. Lord, work this deliverance **for the help of man is useless.** We have painfully learned the utter impotence of armies, kings, and nations without Your help. Our banners trailing in the mire have proven our weakness without You. But the raised standard before us will witness our valor, now that You have come to the rescue. How sweetly this verse suits God's tried people as a frequent prayer. We know how true it is.

**(Ps. 60:12) Through God we will do valiantly.** From God, all power proceeds, all we do well is by divine operation. Yet as soldiers of the great king, we are to fight and fight valiantly. Divine working is not an argument for human inaction; rather, it is the best encouragement for courageous effort. Helped in the past, we will be helped in the future. Assured of this, we resolve to do valiantly.

**For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.** From Him, all might proceeds; to Him, all honor will be given. Like straw on the thrashing floor under the oxen's feet, we will step on our abject foes, but it will be His foot that presses them down. His hand will go against them, so as to put them down and keep them in subjection. In the case of Christians, there is much encouragement here for a resolve similar to that of the first clause, **We will do valiantly.** We will not be ashamed of our colors, afraid of our foes, or fearful of our cause. The Lord is with us, Omnipotence sustains us, and we will not hesitate. We dare not be cowards. May our King, the true David, come and claim the earth, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the governor among the nations.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

"You have given a banner to those who fear You. That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah" (Ps. 60:4) **What banner should we be carrying?**

Ps. 20:5 Rom. 15:8

### **Psalm 61:1-8**

This Psalm is a pearl, little but precious. To many a mourner, it has furnished words when the mind could not have devised a speech. It was evidently composed by David after he had come to the throne (v. 6). The second verse leads us to believe that it was written during the psalmist's enforced exile from the tabernacle, the visible abode of God. If so, the period of Absalom's rebellion has been suitably suggested as the date of its authorship, and Delitzsch is correct in calling it, "Prayer and thanksgiving of an expelled king on his way back to his throne."

**(Ps. 61:5) For You, O God, have heard my vows.** Proofs of divine faithfulness are to be remembered and mentioned to the Lord's honor. The prayer in verse 1 is certainly answered because of the experience of verse 5. We deal with an immutable God. **Vows** may rightly be joined with prayers when they are lawful, well considered, and for God's glory. It is a great mercy on God's part to notice the vows and promises of such faithless and deceitful creatures as us. What we promise Him is His due, and yet He accepts our vows as if we were not so much His servants as His free suitors, who could give or withhold at pleasure.

**You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name.** We are made heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). With this, we ought to be delighted. If we suffer, it is the heritage of the saints. If we are persecuted, or if we are in poverty or trials, all this is contained in the title deeds of the heritage of the chosen. We have the same inheritance as the Firstborn. What better is conceivable? Saints are described as fearing God's name. They are reverent worshipers standing in awe of the Lord's authority. They are afraid of offending Him. They feel their nothingness in the sight of the Infinite One. To share with them, to be treated by God with the same favor that He metes out to them, is a subject for endless thanksgiving. All the privileges of all the saints are also the privileges of each saint.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Should we be making vows to God and if so what should be their content?**

### **Psalm 62:1-12**

**(Ps. 62:4) They only consult to cast him down from his high position.** The excellence of the righteous is obnoxious to the wicked and the main object of their fury. The elevation God gives to the godly in Providence is the envy of the wicked, who labor to pull down the righteous. Observe the concentration of malice on one point: **only**, as it is here set in contrast with the saints' sole reliance on the Lord. If the wicked could ruin the work of grace in us, they would be content. To crush our character and overturn our influence is the object of their consultation.

**They delight in lies.** They hate the truth and the truthful, and with falsehood, they try to surround those they overthrow. Lying is worthless enough, but to delight in it is one of the blackest marks of infamy.

**They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.** Flattery has always been a favorite weapon of the enemies of the godly. They can curse bitterly enough when it serves their turn, but when it answers their purpose, they mask their wrath and with smooth words pretend to bless those they would just as soon tear in pieces. It was fortunate for David that he was well practiced in silence, for there is no other safe reply to cheating deceivers.

**Selah.** Pause and consider with astonishment the futile rancor of the unholy and the perfect security of those who rest on the Lord.

**(Ps. 62:6) He only is my rock and my salvation.** Alone, without other help, God is the foundation and completion of my safety. We cannot too often hear the toll of that great bell **only**. Let it ring the death-knell of all carnal reliance. Let it lead us to cast ourselves on the bare arm of God.

**He is my defense.** He is not only my defender, but also my actual protection. I am secure because He is faithful.

**I shall not be moved,** not even to the least degree. See how David's confidence grows. In the second verse, an adverb qualified his confidence, "I shall not be greatly moved." Here, however, it is absolute, **I shall not be moved.** He altogether defies the rage of his adversaries. He will not stir an inch, nor will he be made to fear even in the smallest degree. A living faith grows. Experience develops the saint's spiritual muscles and gives them an adult force that is not possible in their religious childhood.

**(Ps. 62:7) In God is my salvation and my glory.** Where else should we glory except in Him who saves us? Honor may well be left with Him who secures our souls. To find all in God, and to glory that it is so, is one of the sure marks of an enlightened soul.

**The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.** David multiplies titles, for he would give much honor to the Lord. He had tested Him and had proved Him faithful. Ignorance needs only a few words, but experience brings a wealth of knowledge. We need varied expressions to serve as coffers for our treasure. God, who is our rock when we flee for **refuge**, is our *strong rock* when we stand firm and defy the foe. He is to be praised under both characteristics. Observe how the psalmist brands his initials on every name that he joyously gives to God: **my** expectation, **my** rock, **my** salvation, **my** glory, **my** strength, **my** refuge. David is not content just to know that the Lord is all these things; he acts in faith toward Him and lays claim to Him under every characteristic. What are the gold mines of Peru if I have no inheritance in them? It is the word **my** that puts the honey in the comb. If our experience has not enabled us to realize the Lord in these consoling titles, we must seek grace that we may yet be partakers of their sweetness.

**(Ps. 62:8) Pour out your heart before Him.** You to whom His love is revealed, reveal yourselves to Him. His heart is set on you, bare your heart to Him. Turn the vessel of your soul upside down in His secret presence. Let your inner thoughts, desires, sorrows, and sins be poured out like water. Hide nothing from Him, for you can hide nothing anyway. Unburden your soul to the Lord. Let Him be your only father confessor, for only He can absolve you when He has heard your confession. To keep our griefs to ourselves is to hoard up wretchedness. The stream will swell and rage if you dam it up. Give it a clear course and it leaps along and creates no alarm. Sympathy we need, and if we unload our hearts at the feet of Jesus we will obtain a sympathy as practical as it is sincere, as consolatory as it is ennobling.

**(Ps. 62:9) Surely men of low degree are a vapor.** Here the word is *only* again; men of low degree are only vapor, nothing more. They are many and enthusiastic, but they are not to be depended on. They are as mobile as the waves of the sea, ready to be driven to and fro by any and every wind. They cry "Hosanna!" today and "Crucify Him!" tomorrow.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

David's calm resolve to wait for the salvation of God during his affliction can be seen in Psalm 62:2: "I shall not be moved." **Did Paul also mention not being moved from his present course?**

Acts 20:24

### Psalm 63:1-11

A wilderness song! What a strange, unlikely place for a song to proceed from but it is perhaps the special characteristic of God's people that they *can* sing in the wilderness. The children of the world have also their wildernesses, but they cannot sing there; they can sing only amid flowers and sunshine, but flowers and sunshine do not last forever, and then, when the flowers of outward prosperity fade, and the world's sun begins to set, their music ceases. But the song of God's people is not dependent upon outward circumstances; yea, the history of the Church proves that it is in the wilderness, in times of suffering and persecution, that she has sung the sweetest. And it is so also in our individual experience. It is not always when we are settled on our lees, and everything goes well with us outwardly, that the melody of praise and true worship ascends on high. God has often to allure His people into the wilderness in order that there, under the sense of outward need and isolation, shut up to none but Him, our hearts may respond to His wondrous Word and works with true psalms of prayer and adoration.

**(Ps. 63:1)** *"My soul thirsteth for Thee."* The emphasis is on the word "Thee," which is repeated three times in the first verse. It reminds us of the words in another psalm :

*"My soul thirstest for God, for the living God; When shall I come and behold the face of God?" (Ps. 42:2)*

Thirst is a figure of speech often used in the Scriptures to express intense desire for something indispensable, and the indispensable to the Psalmist is God; without Him he cannot live. And the intense desire and emotion of his soul strongly affects his body. *"My flesh,"* too, he says, all that is within me, my whole being, *"longeth for Thee, in a dry and weary land without water."*

Here is the terrible moral desert of which the wilderness of Judah was the outward and visible type. It still graphically describes this present evil world in its moral and spiritual relations to the child of God.

1. It is a "Dry Land." Not only is there no moisture or sustenance to be drawn from it, but it is "a land of drought," as the same expression is elsewhere rendered (Jer. 2:6)— "a drying-up land," which absorbs every drop of moisture which may perchance come in contact with it, and yet itself remains the same arid waste. There is no child of God but knows from painful experience the truth of this part of the picture. Not only is there no nourishment for the life of God in our souls to be drawn from this world, but we feel on the other hand its terrible drying-up influences upon us, so that, but for the constantly fresh supplies of His grace, and the continual descent of His Holy Spirit, we would become parched by reason of our very contact with it.

2. It is "a weary land" of toil and pressure, a veritable land of the shadow of death, in which life itself is an almost unendurable burden to millions who are not cheered with a hope beyond the grave, and who have not learned the secret of the Apostle's words, that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

3. And there is "no water" in it, nothing that can alleviate the distress it occasions, or satisfy even the thirst which it itself creates. All seek for it. Some rush hither and thither in mad pursuit of imaginary fountains at which to drink and be satisfied, but only to have all their hopes disappointed, and to find in the end that what they were following was a *mirage* of their fancy, and what they were digging were "broken cisterns that can hold no water." Oh, ye sons of men, believe it, there is a place in the human heart which all the world's pleasures, and riches, and fame cannot satisfy, for over all that is of the world the words of Christ are written, *"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."*

The words we are considering have not only been *written* by David, but they have been, so to say, enacted in him, and as the expressions were wrung of his inmost experience they were caught up, and crystallized, and preserved by God's Spirit for the instruction, or warning, or encouragement of God's people in all times. Not long ago a learned gentleman remarked to me that the Psalms were a literary puzzle to him. "I can understand," he said, "the classics of the Greeks or Romans, or the lyrical writings of our modern poets: there is always a certain method and continuity of thought in them, but in most of the Hebrew Psalms there seems no harmony or sequence. They seem like so many disjointed fragments, some of them mere exclamations, put together without any apparent connection. There is, for instance, a sigh, a prayer, a song of praise, a moan of despondency, and a shout of victory, all mingled together!" I ventured to say to him that the reason for it was that the Psalms were not mere literary productions, but expressions and records of real life, and their harmony is not discoverable by the rules and principles of literary art, but by the test of actual life and experience. They correspond in this respect to the life of the Christian, which is also made up, not only of prayer, or of one continuous song of praise, but of many groans, and prayers, of songs of deliverance, moans of distress, and shouts of victory, all mingled together, and often without apparent harmony or order of sequence, but all the time working out together one beautiful pattern, the real harmony and interdependence of which we shall behold with wonder by and by. Sometimes in

one verse we have the history of a mighty conflict, and we can follow the Psalmist descending into the valley of humiliation, and emerging again on the mountain top of communion and joy in the Lord.

**(Ps. 63:5-6)** *"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips—When I remember Thee."*

"When I remember Thee!"—the secret and source of satisfaction is not in myself, but in Him. Only in the living God, "my exceeding joy"; and more especially in the remembrance of Him who loved me unto death can I find rest to my heart and peace to my soul. When I remember myself, or look into my own heart, I find no cause for satisfaction. When I look down on my present wilderness surroundings; or around me on my fellow-believers; or on a marred and distracted Church; or on a world lying in the hands of the wicked one, there is everything to make me unhappy, and to take satisfaction from me; but when I look up, "when I remember Thee, Lord Jesus, Thy power and glory, Thine everlasting unchangeable love, Thy life and death, Thy resurrection and ascension, Thy life of intercession for me, Thy coming again when mine eye shall behold Thee as Thou art—oh, then, my heart is overwhelmed with joy, and my soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness." That was indeed good advice, given by Robert Murray McCheyne, that for one look at self we should give ten at our Lord Jesus.

(Types, Psalms and Prophecies, David Baron)

**What is the "thirst" (Ps. 63:1) we should have? Site places in scripture where God quenches this type of thirst?**

Ps. 27:4, 13      Ps. 43:3      Ps. 84:2      Isa. 44:1-5

### **Psalm 64:1-10**

**(Ps. 64:2)** **Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, from the rebellion of the workers of iniquity.** When their secret counsels break into clamorous tumult, be my preserver. When they think evil, let Your divine thoughts defeat them. When they do evil, let Your powerful justice overthrow them. In both cases, let me be out of reach of their cruel hand, even out of sight of their evil eye. It is a good thing to conquer malicious foes, but it is better to be screened from all conflict with them by being hidden from the strife. The Lord knows how to give His people peace. When He wills to make quiet, He is more than a match for all disturbers. He can defeat their deeply laid plots and overt hostilities.

**(Ps. 64:4)** **That they may shoot in secret at the blameless.** They lie in ambush, bows bent to aim a coward's shaft at the godly. Sincere and upright conduct will not secure us from the assaults of slander. The devil shot at our Lord, and we may rest assured he has a fiery dart reserved for us. Jesus was absolutely perfect, but we are only perfect in the relative sense, hence in us there is fuel for fiery darts to kindle on. Observe the cruelty of the malicious. They will not accept fair combat; they shun the open field and hide in the bushes, lying in ambush against those who are not so acquainted with deceit as to suspect treachery. And they do this against those who are too godly to imitate their despicable warfare.

**Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear.** To secrecy, they add suddenness. They give their unsuspecting victim no chance of defense; they pounce like a wild beast leaping on its prey. They lay their plans so warily that they fear no detection. We have seen the arrow of slander sorely wound its victim. Yet we have not been able to discover the quarter from which the weapon was shot, nor have we been able to detect the hand that forged the arrowhead or tinged it with poison.

**(Ps. 64:7)** **But God shall shoot at them with an arrow.** They shoot and will be shot; a greater archer will take sure aim at their hearts. One of His arrows will be enough, for He never misses. The Lord turns the tables on His adversaries and defeats them at their own weapons.

**Suddenly they shall be wounded.** They were looking to surprise the saint, but they were taken by surprise. They wanted to inflict deadly wounds, but they were smitten with wounds that none can heal. While they were bending their bows, the great Lord prepared His bow. When least they expected an unsparing messenger of justice, He let His arrow fly. "'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). The righteous need not learn the arts of self defense or attack, for their avengement is in better hands than their own.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What are some of the poison arrows Satan and his emissaries shoot at us?**

2 Sam. 12:14      Ps. 55:2-4      Ps. 83:3      Jer. 7:9

**Give some examples of those who have fought against God's people and "stumble over their own tongue" (Ps. 64:8).**

Num. 16:34      Ps. 31:9-13

### **Psalm 65:1-13**

**(Ps. 65:3) Iniquities prevail against me.** Others accuse and slander me, and in addition, my sins rise and would confuse me were it not for the remembrance of the atonement that covers every one of my **iniquities**. Our sins would, but for grace, prevail against us in the court of divine justice, in the court of conscience, and in the battle of life. Unhappy is the one who despises not these enemies, and worse, counts them as friends! He is best instructed who knows iniquities' deadly power and flees for refuge to Him who pardons iniquity.

**As for our transgressions, You will provide atonement for them.** You cover them all. *You* have provided a covering propitiation, a mercy seat that totally covers Your law. Note the word **our**; the faith of the penitent one who speaks in the first clause embraces all the faithful in Zion. He is so persuaded of the largeness of forgiving love that he leads all the saints to sing about the blessing. What a comfort! Iniquities that prevail against us do not prevail against God. They would keep us away from God, but He sweeps them away. They are too strong for us, but not for our Redeemer, who is mighty, yes, and almighty to save. It is worthy to note that as the priest washed in the laver before he sacrificed (Ex. 30:18), so David leads us to obtain purification from sin before we enter the service of song. When we have washed our robes and made them white in his blood, then we will acceptably sing, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain" (Rev. 5:12).

**(Ps. 65:4) Blessed is the man You choose, and cause to approach You.** After cleansing comes blessing. This is rich, for it comprehends both election, effectual calling, access, acceptance, and sonship. First, we are chosen of God, "according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5); this alone is blessedness. Then, since we cannot and will not come to God by ourselves, He works graciously and powerfully attracts us. He subdues our unwillingness and removes our inability by the mighty workings of His transforming grace. This is no small blessing. "But now in Christ Jesus you who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). "We have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him" (Eph. 3:12). This is unrivaled blessedness. To crown all, we do not come in peril of dire destruction, as did Nadab and Abihu (Num. 26:61). We approach as chosen and accepted, to become dwellers in the divine household. This is heaped up blessedness, vast beyond conception. Dwelling in the house, we are treated as sons. "A slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever" (John 8:36). "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1). We may dwell in His house and never go out again. Happy are we who dwell at home with God. May both writer and reader enjoy this.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### **How does Psalm 65:4 speak to you.**

Ex. 19:4-6 Ps. 15:1 Ps. 27:4 Ps. 33:12 Ps. 36:8 Ps. 63:5 Ps. 84:4 Rom. 5:20 Eph. 2:19

#### **Psalm 66:1-20**

**(Ps. 66:4) All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You. They shall sing praises to Your name.** The nature and works of God will be the theme of earth's universal song. God Himself will be the object of the joyful adoration of our emancipated race. Acceptable worship not only praises God as the mysterious Lord, but it is also made fragrant by knowledge of His name and character. God will not be worshiped as an unknown God! He will not have it said of His people, "You worship what you do not know" (John 4:22). May the knowledge of the Lord soon cover the earth (Is. 11:9), so that the universality of intelligent worship may be possible. Such a consummation was evidently expected by the writer of this Psalm. Throughout all Old Testament writings, there are intimations of the future spread of the worship of God. It was an instance of willful ignorance and bigotry when the Jews raged against the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. Perverted Judaism may have been exclusive, but the religion of Moses, David, and Isaiah was not.

**(Ps. 66:5) Come and see the works of God. He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.** For the defense of His church and the overthrow of her foes, He deals awesome blows and strikes the mighty with fear. Oh, you enemy, why do you exalt yourself? Stop speaking proudly. Remember the plagues that bowed the will of Pharaoh, the chariots of Egypt that were lost in the Red Sea, the overthrow of Og and Sihon, and the scattering of the Canaanites before the tribes of Israel. This same God still lives. He is to be worshiped with trembling reverence.

**(Ps. 66:9) Who keeps our soul among the living.** At any time, the preservation of life, especially the soul's life, is a great reason for gratitude. But this gratitude increases when we are called to undergo extreme trials that could crush us. Blessed be God who put our souls into possession of life, and who has been pleased to preserve that heaven-given life from the destroying power of the enemy.

**And does not allow our feet to be moved.** This is another precious blessing. If God has enabled us not only to keep our life, but also our position, we are bound to give him double praise. Living and standing is the saint's condition through divine grace. Immortal and immovable are those whom God preserves. Satan is put to shame, for instead of being able to slay the saints as he hoped, he is not even able to trip them. God is able to make even the weakest stand, and He will do so.

**(Ps. 66:10) For You, O God, have tested us.** God tested Israel with hard trials. David had his temptations, and all the saints must go to the testing house. God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without trial. Why should we complain if we are subjected to the rule that is common to all the family and from which so much benefit has flowed?

The Lord tests us; who, then, will question the wisdom and the love that are displayed in the process? The day may come when, as in this case, we will make hymns out of our grief and sing more sweetly because our mouths have been purified with bitter drinks.

**You have refined us as silver is refined.** Searching and repeated, severe and thorough, so has the test been, and the same result followed as in the case of testing precious metal. The dross has been consumed and the pure ore has been discovered. Since trials are sanctified to so desirable an end, we should submit with abounding resignation.

**(Ps. 66:12) You have caused men to ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water. But You brought us out to rich fulfillment.** There is a blessed end to a mournful story. Canaan became a broad and royal domain for the once enslaved tribes. God, who took them to Egypt, brought them into the land that flowed with milk and honey. In His purposes, Egypt was the route to Canaan. The way to heaven is via tribulation:

The path of sorrow and that path alone.  
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.

Wealthy is the place of every believer in Christ, and we doubly feel it when it is contrasted with our former slavery. What songs can suffice to tell our joy and gratitude for such a glorious deliverance and bountiful heritage?

**(Ps. 66:13) I will go into Your house with burnt offerings, I will pay You my vows.** He would not appear before the Lord empty, but at the same time, he would not boast of what he offered, for it was all payable from former vows. After all, even our largest gifts are but payments. When we have given all, we must confess, "All things come from You, and of Your own we have given You" (1 Chr. 29:14).

**(Ps. 66:15) I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals.** The good man will give his best to God.

**(Ps. 66:20) Blessed be God.** May His name be honored and loved.

**Who has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me!** He has withdrawn neither His love nor my liberty to pray. He has cast out neither my prayer nor me. His mercy and my cries still meet. The Psalm ends on its key note. Praise throughout is its spirit and design. Lord enable us to enter it. Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

This Psalm was probably written after some calamity or after the nation had been subjected to oppression by some powerful enemies. They praise God for His awesome works but also make "vows" or promises. **What were the vows made during this joyful time?**

Ps. 66:13-15

### Psalm 67:1-7

**(Ps. 67:1) God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us.** This is a proper refrain to the high priest's blessing, "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace" (Num. 6:24-26). It begins with a cry for mercy. Forgiveness of sin is always the first link in the chain of mercies experienced by us. Mercy is a foundation attribute in our salvation. The best saints and the worst sinners may unite in this petition. It is addressed to the God of mercy by those who feel their need of mercy. It implies the death of all legal hopes or claims of merit.

**Bless us;** this is a comprehensive and far-reaching prayer. When we bless God, we do little, for our blessings are but words. Yet when God blesses, He enriches, for His blessings are gifts and deeds. But His blessing alone is not all that His people crave; they want a personal consciousness of His favor, and so they pray for a smile from His face. These three petitions include all that we need here or hereafter.

This verse may be regarded as the prayer of Israel and, spiritually, of the Christian church. **Bless us.** It would, however, be wrong to let our charity end where it begins. Our love must make long marches, and our prayers must have a wide sweep. We must embrace the whole world in our intercessions.

**Selah.** Lift up the heart; lift up the voice. A higher key, a sweeter note, is called for.

**(Ps. 67:4) For You shall judge the people righteously.** When governors do wrong, it is a fruitful source of national woe, but where the Lord rules, lightness is supreme, for He does ill to no one. His laws are righteousness itself. He rights all wrongs and releases all who are oppressed. Justice on the throne is the cause for national exultation.

**(Ps. 67:6) Then the earth shall yield her increase.** Sin laid a curse on the soil, and only grace can remove it. Under tyrannical governments, land becomes unproductive; even the land that flowed with milk and honey is almost a wilderness under Turkish rule. But when the principles of true religion have elevated mankind, and the dominion of Jesus is universally acknowledged, the science of agriculture will be perfected. People will be encouraged to labor, industry will banish poverty, and the soil will be restored to the highest condition of fertility. We read, "He turns rivers into a wilderness, and the water springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of those who dwell in it" (Ps. 107:33, 34). Observations confirm the truth of the divine threatening. Yet under the Law it was promised, "The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and

in the produce of your land for good" (Deut. 30:9). There is certainly an intimate relation between moral and physical evil, and between spiritual and physical good.

**God, our own God, shall bless us.** He will make increase of the earth a blessing. In His gifts, people will see the hand of that same God whom Israel of old adored. Israel will especially rejoice in the blessing and praise her God. We never rightly love God until we know Him to be ours, and the more we love Him the more we long to be fully assured that He is ours. What dearer name can we give to Him than "My God." The spouse in the song has no sweeter canticle than, "My beloved is mine, and I am his" (Song 2:16). Every believing Jew must feel a holy joy at the thought that the nations will be blessed by Abraham's God. But every Gentile believer also rejoices that the whole world will yet worship the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is our Father and our God.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Is verse one necessary in order for us to have the true energy to what is asked of us in verses three through seven?**

### **Psalm 68:1-35**

This Psalm is obviously to be sung when the ark was moved. In all probability, it was sung when David moved it from the house of Obed-edom to Mount Zion. It is a soul-stirring hymn.

- The ark is lifted and the procession begins, verses 1, 2.
- The godly in the assembly are exhorted to begin their joyous songs, and arguments are advanced to help their joy, verses 3-6.
- The glorious march of Jehovah in the wilderness is sung, verses 7-10.
- His victories in war are celebrated, verses 11-14.
- The joyous shouts are louder, as Zion comes in sight and the ark is carried up the hill, verses 15-19.
- On the summit of the mount, the priests sing a hymn concerning the Lord's goodness and justice, verses 20-23.
- The procession is described as it winds up the hill, verses 24-27.
- The poet anticipates a time of wider conquest, verses 28-31.
- David concludes with a noble burst of song to Jehovah, verses 32-35.

**(Ps. 68:1) Let God arise.** Moses spoke similar words when the cloud moved and the ark was carried forward. The ark would have been a poor leader if the Lord had not been present with the symbol. Before we move, we should always want to see the Lord lead the way. The words suppose that the Lord was passive for a while, permitting His enemies to rage while He restrained His power. Israel beseeches Him to **Arise** and elsewhere to "Awake, put on His sword," and other similar expressions. We too may *cry* to the Lord to bare His arm in our defense and plead His cause.

**(Ps. 68:2) As wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.** Wax is hard by itself, but when put to the fire it is soft. The wicked are haughty until they come in contact with the Lord; then they faint for fear. Their hearts melt like wax when they feel the power of His anger.

**(Ps. 68:3) But let the righteous be glad.** God's presence on the throne of grace is an overflowing source of delight to the godly. Let them not fail to drink of the streams that make them glad.

**(Ps. 68:7) O God, when You went out before Your people.** What a sweet, suitable association, **You** and **Your people**. You before and Your people following! The Lord went before and, whether Red Sea or burning sand, it mattered not; the pillar of cloud and fire always led the right way.

**(Ps. 68:8) The earth shook.** Beneath the sublime tread, the solid ground trembled.

**(Ps. 68:9) You, O God, sent a plentiful rain.** God's march was not marked only by displays of terror, but goodness and bounty were also conspicuous. Such rain as never fell before dropped bread from heaven (Ex. 16:4) on the desert sand, and quails came up all around the camp (Ex. 16:13). Good gifts were poured on them; rivers leaped from rocks (Num. 20:11). The earth shook with fear, and in reply, the Lord, as from a cornucopia, shook blessings on it; thus the original may be translated.

**Whereby You confirmed Your inheritance, when it was weary.** At the end of each stage, when they halted, weary with the march, they found such showers of good things that they were readily refreshed. Their feet did not swell all those forty years (Deut. 8:4). When they were exhausted, God was not. When they were weary, He was not. They were His chosen heritage, and for their good, He allowed them to be weary. Yet He watchfully tended them and tenderly considered their distress. In like manner, to this day, the elect of God in this wilderness state are apt to become tired and faint, but their ever-loving Jehovah comes with timely comfort. He cheers the faint, strengthens the weak, and refreshes the hungry. Once again, when the silver trumpets sound, the church militant will advance with bold and firm steps toward its rest. By this faithfulness, the faith of God's people is confirmed and their hearts established. If fatigue and lack make them waver, the timely supply of grace supports them again on the eternal foundations.

**(Ps. 68:18) You have ascended on high.** The ark was brought to the summit of Zion. God Himself, being extolled and very high, took possession of the high places of the earth. The antitype of the ark, the Lord Jesus, has ascended into the heavens with signal marks of triumph. To do battle with our enemies, the Lord descended and left His throne, but now the fight is finished. He returns to His glory and is exalted high above all things.

**(Ps. 68:33) Indeed He sends out His voice, a mighty voice.** Was there a thunder clap just then heard in heaven? Or, did the poet's mind flash back to the time when from the heaven of heavens Jehovah's voice broke the long silence and said, "Let there be light"; and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). To this hour, the voice of God is power. This gospel that utters and reveals His word "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). Our voices are called to praise Him whose voice spoke us into being and gives us the effectual grace that secures our well-being.

**(Ps. 68:34) Ascribe strength to God.** If His voice can split the rocks and uproots the cedars, what can His hand do? His finger shakes the earth; who can conceive the power of His arm? Let us never, by doubts or daring defiance, appear to deny power to God. On the contrary, by yielding to Him and trusting in Him, let our hearts acknowledge His might. When we are reconciled to God, His omnipotence is an attribute of which we sing with delight.

**His excellence is over Israel.** The favored nation is protected by His majesty. His greatness is to them goodness. His glory is their defense.

**And His strength is in the clouds.** He does not confine His power but makes it like a canopy to cover the skies. Rain, snow, hail, and tempests are His artillery. He rules all nature with awe-inspiring majesty. Nothing is so high as to be above Him or too low to be beneath Him. Praise Him, then, in the highest.

**(Ps. 68:35) O God, You are more awesome than Your holy places.** You inspire awe and fear. Your saints obey with fear and trembling. Your enemies flee in dismay. From Your threefold courts, and especially from the Most Holy Place, Your majesty flashes and makes the sons of men prostrate themselves in awe.

**The God of Israel is He who gives strength and power to His people.** You, who are Israel's God by covenant, are terrible to Your foes by making Your people so strong that one will chase a thousand and two will put ten thousand to flight (Deut. 32:30). All the power of Israel's warriors is derived from the Lord, the fountain of all might. He is strong and makes them strong. Blessed are they who draw from His resources, for they will renew their strength. While the self-sufficient faint, the All-sufficient will sustain the weakest believer.

**Blessed be God!** A short but sweet conclusion. Let our souls say Amen to it, and yet again, Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### **What words were spoken by Moses when the ark was moved?**

Num. 10:33-36

**Compare Psalm 68:34, the last part of David's soul stirring song with Judges 5:31, the last part of Deborah's and Barak's song.**

#### **Psalm 69:1-36**

For the second time, we have a Psalm **set to "The Lilies."** In Psalm 41, they were golden lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh and blooming in the fair gardens that skirt the ivory palaces. In this Psalm, we have the lily among thorns, the lily of the valley, fair and beautiful, blooming in the garden of Gethsemane. **A Psalm of David.** If any ask, "Who is the psalmist writing about, himself or some other person?" we would reply, "Himself and some other person." Who that other person is we soon discover. It is the Crucified alone who can say, "For my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Ps. 69:21). His footprints throughout this sorrowful song have been pointed out by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Thus, we are sure that the Son of Man is here. Yet it seems to be the Holy Spirit's intention, while He gives us personal types (foreshadows), to show the likeness to the Firstborn that exists in the heirs of salvation and to show the disparities between the best of the sons of men and the Son of God. There are verses here that we dare not apply to our Lord; we shudder when we see our brethren attempting to do so (v. 5). Especially, we note the difference between David and the Son of David in invoking evil *against* his enemies and the prayers of the other *for* his enemies. We begin our exposition of this Psalm with much trembling, for we feel that we are entering with our Great High Priest into the Most Holy Place.

**(Ps. 69:19) You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor.** It is no novelty or secret, for it has been long continued. You, O God, have seen it, and for You to see the innocent suffer is an assurance of help. Here are three words piled up to express the Redeemer's keen sense of the contempt poured on Him and His assurance that every form of malicious despite was observed by the Lord.

**My adversaries are all before You.** The whole lewd and loud company is present to Your eye. Judas and his treachery, Herod and his cunning, Caiaphas and his counsel, Pilate and his vacillation, Jews, priests, people, rulers, all. You see, and You will judge.

**(Ps. 69:20) Reproach has broken my heart.** There is no hammer like it. Our Lord died of a broken heart, and reproach had done the deed. Intense mental suffering arises from slander. In the case of the sensitive nature of the immaculate Son of Man, it lacerated His heart until it broke, "Then burst His mighty heart."

**And I am full of heaviness.** Slander and insult bowed Him to the dust, and He was heartsick. Our Lord's heaviness in the garden is expressed by many forcible words in the gospels. Each term shows that the agony was beyond measure. He was filled with misery, like a cup full to the brim.

**I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none.** He was, "Deserted in His utmost need by those His bounty had fed." No one said a kind word or dropped a sympathetic tear. Among ten thousand foes, there was not one touched by the spectacle of His misery, not one with a heart capable of humane feelings toward Him.

**And for comforters, but I found none.** Even His dearest ones had sought safety and left their Lord alone. The sick need comforters, and the persecuted need sympathy. But our blessed Surety found neither on that dark night when the powers of darkness had their hour. A spirit like our Lord's feels acutely deserted by beloved and trusted friends and yearns for real sympathy.

**(Ps. 69:29) But I am poor and sorrowful.** The psalmist was greatly afflicted, but his faith was in God. The poor in spirit and mourners are both blessed under the gospel, so there is a double reason for the Lord to smile on His suppliant. No one was ever poorer or more sorrowful than Jesus of Nazareth. Yet His cry out of the depths was heard, and He was lifted to the highest glory.

**Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high.** This has been fully answered in our great Master's case. He not only personally escaped His foes, but also became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. This continues to glorify Him evermore. Oh, you poor and sorrowful, lift your heads, for as with your Lord so it will be with you. You are trodden down today as the mire of the streets, but you will ride on the high places of earth before long. Even now you are raised and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).

**(Ps.69:32) And you who seek God, your hearts shall live.** A similar assurance is given in Psalm 22.

It would have been useless to seek God if Jesus' victories had not cleared the way and opened a door of hope. Since the Breaker has gone before and the King leads us, our hope is living, our faith is living, our love is living, and our renewed nature is full of a vitality that challenges and dampens the cold hand of death.

**(Ps. 69:33) For the LORD hears the poor.** David's examples, David's Lord, and tens of thousands of saints prove this. Monarchs of nations are deaf to the poor, but the Sovereign of the universe has a quick ear for the needy. None can be brought lower than the Nazarene, but see how highly He is exalted. Descend into what depths we may, the God who hears prayer can bring us up again.

**And does not despise His prisoners.** The poor have liberty, even though they are prisoners; they are, however, God's prisoners, and therefore prisoners of hope. The captive in the dungeon is the lowest and least esteemed, but the Lord does not see as man sees. He visits those who are in chains and proclaims deliverance from jail for His afflicted. God despises no person and no prayer that is honest and sincere. Distinctions of rank are nothing with Him; the poor have the gospel preached to them, and the prisoners are loosed by His grace. Let all the poor and needy hasten to seek His face and give Him their love.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### **What is more acceptable to God than sacrifice?**

Ps. 22:6 Ps. 69:29-33

**Compare the following verses: Ps. 69:4 - John 15:25 Ps. 69:9 - John 2:17 Ps. 69:9 - Rom. 15:3 Ps. 69:21 - Matt 27:34 Ps. 69:25 - Acts 1:20**

#### **Who are those who will be "blotted out of the book of the living" (Ps. 69:28)?**

Ex. 32:32-33 Prov. 10:7 Ezek. 13:9 Dan 12:1 Matt. 7:23 Rev. 17:8 Rev. 21:27

#### **Psalm 70:1-5**

**To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. To bring to remembrance.** This is the poor man's memorial. David personally pleads with God not to be forgotten, but David's Lord may also be heard here. Even if the Lord seems to forget us, we must not forget Him. This memorial Psalm acts as a link between two Psalms of supplication, and with them it makes a precious triad of song.

**(Ps. 70:1) Make haste.** Or, as in the Hebrew, with an abrupt and broken cry, **O God, to deliver me;** O Lord, to help me hasten! It is not forbidden in hours of deep distress to ask for speed on God's part in His coming to rescue us.

**(Ps. 70:2)** David's enemies wanted to put his faith to shame, so he eagerly pleads that they will be disappointed and covered with confusion. And it will certainly be so, if not sooner, at that dread day when the wicked awake to shame and

everlasting contempt. **Let them be ashamed and confounded who seek my life; let them be turned back and confused who desire my hurt.**

**(Ps. 70:4) Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You.** All true worshipers, though still in the humble ranks of seekers, will have cause for joy. Even though the seeking begins in darkness, it will bring light.

**And let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified!"** Those who have tasted divine grace and are wedded to it are an advanced race. They will not only feel joy, but they will also, with holy consistency and perseverance, tell others about their joy and call on others to glorify God.

**(Ps. 70:5) But I am poor and needy.** This is the same plea as in the preceding Psalm (69:29). It seems to be a favorite argument with tried saints. Evidently, our poverty is our wealth, just as our weakness is our strength. Learn well this riddle.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

"Make haste, O God, to deliver me! (Ps. 70:1) **What are we to do if it seems God has forgotten us?**

Ps. 71:14-21

"But I am poor and needy" (Ps. 70:5). **Explain how our poverty can be our wealth and our weakness our strength.**

2 Cor. 12:7-10

### **Psalm 71:1-24**

We have here "The Prayer of the Aged Believer." In holy confidence, strengthened by a long and remarkable experience, he pleads against his enemies and asks for further blessings. Anticipating a gracious reply, he promises to exceedingly magnify the Lord.

**(Ps. 71:3) You have given the commandment to save me.** Nature is told to be tender with God's servants; providence is ordered to work their good, and the forces of the invisible world are ordained as guardians. David charged his troops to spare Absalom (2 Sam. 18:5), but he was killed anyway (2 Sam. 18:15). God's commandment is of far higher virtue, for it compels obedience and secures its end. Destruction cannot destroy us; famine cannot starve us. We laugh at both when God's mandate shields us. No stones of the field can throw us down. "He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you clash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot" (Ps. 91:11-13). David's God delivers us from their ferocity, and Daniel's God puts them in awe of us.

**(Ps. 71:7) But You are my strong refuge.** Here is the answer to our riddle. If we are strong, it is in God. If we are safe, our refuge shelters us. If we are calm, our soul has found her peace in God. When faith is understood and the grounds of her confidence seen, the believer is no longer a wonder. The marvel is that so much unbelief remains in all of us.

**(Ps. 71:8) Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day.** What a blessed mouthful! One never grows nauseated, though the flavor is in the mouth all day. God's bread is always in our mouths, and so should His praise be. He fills us with good; let us also be filled with gratitude. This would leave no room for complaining or backbiting. Join holy David in this sacred wish.

**(Ps. 71:18) Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me.** There is something touching in the sight of hair whitened with the snows of many winters. The old and faithful soldier receives consideration from his king; the venerable servant is loved by his master. When our infirmities multiply, we may with confidence expect enlarged privileges in the world of grace to make up for our narrowing range in the field of nature. Nothing can make God forsake those who have not forsaken Him. Our fear is that He will, but His promise kisses that fear into silence.

**(Ps. 71:19) Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high.** Sublime, unsearchable, exalted, and glorious is God's holy character and His way of making us righteous. His plan of righteousness lifts us from the gates of hell to the mansions of heaven. The gospel is a high doctrine, giving high experience, leading to high practice, and ending in high joy.

**(Ps. 71:20) You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, shall revive me again.** This is faith's inference from the Lord's infinite greatness. The Lord has been strong to strike; He will be strong to save. He has shown me many heavy and severe trials, and He will also show me many and precious mercies. He has almost killed me, and He will speedily revive me. Though I have been almost dead and buried, He will give me a resurrection **And bring me up again from the depths of the earth.** However low the Lord may permit us to sink, He will fix a limit to the descent and in due time bring us up again. Even when we are laid low in the tomb, the mercy is that we can go no lower; we will retrace our steps and rise to better lands, because the Lord is ever mighty to save. A little god would fail us, but not Jehovah the Omnipotent. It is safe to lean on Him, since He holds up the pillars of heaven and earth.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Cite the number of times David uses the personal pronoun “me” and “my.” Would it be wrong to take the “me” of this Psalm and substitute our own name in its place?**

### **Psalm 72:1-20**

This psalm has primary reference to Solomon, and is called a Psalm or Song for Solomon. But it is greater than even Solomon in all his glory, and reaches its true fulfillment in the "King of kings" (Revelation 19:16) and "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), of whom Solomon was but a type (foreshadow). David was the type of Christ our King, with special reference to His conflicts and conquests. Solomon typifies His peaceful throne and His millennial kingdom. This is the picture of Christ's millennial throne.

1. We behold here the picture of a wise king. "Endow the king with your justice, O God" (72:1). This word "justice" means the power to rule and judge with wisdom, such as God gave to Solomon in so preeminent a measure. This was his special request of God, and it was marvelously given.

We all remember the wonderful wisdom with which he detected the true mother of the child that was brought to him for judgment, and how his wisdom brought from the uttermost parts of the earth the wondering pilgrims, who came to sit at his feet and propound their hard questions until nothing was left unsolved of all their hearts' desires. But "one greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42), the "Wonderful Counselor" (Isaiah 9:6), the Man of whom it was said by His enemies, "No one ever spoke the way this man does" (John 7:46); the One who answered the craft and subtlety of His foes until they were glad to escape from His presence in silence and confusion—"Christ... the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24).

Earth owes much to wise sovereigns, but her true King has yet to come, a glorious day that will be when upon the throne of earth shall sit that One, whose infinite wisdom shall govern the happy nations and bring to earth its highest possibilities of blessing!

2. He is a righteous King. "He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice" (Psalm 72:2). How much the world has suffered from injustice, oppression and wrong! All the sorrows of men spring from their sins. But the King that is coming shall be not only the Righteous One, but His people shall be all righteous. "In his days the righteous will flourish" (72:7), and sin and wrong shall disappear from the earth. This is the secret of failure in all our social and political attempts at reform. The material itself is wrong, and until that is rectified, all the best of human plans must end in failure.

A building lay in ruins, and many were discussing the cause of the wreck. The architect said that the plans were perfect; the contractors declared that the specifications had all been complied with—every brick was in its place, and every arch was rightly set. Why had it tumbled in ruins? A plain workman took up a brick and crushed it beneath his fingers. "There," he said, "is the cause; the brick is rotten, and one is not able to support the weight of another. The material is worthless, and all your best designs are useless with a lot of rotten brick." Alas! republicanism, social reform, philanthropy, humanitarianism, legislation, example, philosophy, poetry, patriotism can do nothing to elevate and save humanity so long as the human heart is corrupt and the materials are worthless.

But the day is coming when sin shall disappear, when righteousness shall prevail, and when it shall be said of earth, in the language of the ancient prophet: "The LORD bless you, O righteous dwelling, O sacred mountain" (Jeremiah 31:23). What a glorious day it will be when truth and virtue, honesty and uprightness, unselfishness and love shall bind man to man in a chain of holy benignity, and the prayer of ages shall be fulfilled: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

3. It is a kingdom of peace. "The mountains will bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness" (Psalm 72:3). "In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more" (72:7). Other kings have ruled by the sword. But He shall be called the Prince of Peace. Oh, the unspeakable horrors of war! Who can measure its frightful expense in treasure and blood, in tears and agony! Oh, the horrors of bloody strife and the mutilated forms of dying men! Oh, the wild and devilish strife of the sanguinary battlefield! Oh, the myriads of graves that have marked the track of earthly conquerors! In the last few decades there is not an important nation under the sun that has not been deluged in blood. But all this is coming to an end.

But that is only one side of peace. There are a thousand strifes that never end in blood. There are a thousand swords that shed only the richer blood of the spirit. Oh, the sorrows and sins that come from lack of harmony, from the discords of human hearts, from the ill adjustments of human lives, from the clash and friction of human spirits! Men are at war with themselves, at war with each other, at war with God. Oh, for the coming of the Prince of Peace! That will bring rest to every restless heart, harmony to every divided home, unity and love to all human lives, and peace with God. And it will be so perfect that like the planets around their sun, all earth's inhabitants will move in harmony with the will of God, and earth once more will become the counterpart of heaven, and its troubled sea of unrest like the sea of glass before the throne (Revelation 4:6).

4. It will be a kingdom of grace and love. "He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor. ... He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth. . . . 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" (Psalm 72:4, 6, 12-14).

He will be the King of grace, of gentleness, of meekness. He will be the Protector of the poor, the Comforter of the sorrowing, the Friend of the friendless. Earth has had its Prince Arthurs and its Peters the Great, whose glory it was to live among their peasantry and to befriend the lowly and the poor. But the coming King is the ideal of gentleness and grace.

Oh, the happiness His reign will bring! "God will wipe away every tear" (Revelation 7:17) and redress all wrongs, destroy all enemies, heal all the wounds of the ages. What a world that will be where there will be no sin, no sickness, no sorrow, no selfishness, no Satan! What a Millennium that will be where we shall have our perfect bodies, our perfect spirits, our parted friends, our blessed Savior forever!

5. It will be a kingdom of glory, riches and splendor. "The kings of Tar-shish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts" (Psalm 72:10). "May gold from Sheba be given him. May people ever pray for him/ and bless him all day long" (72:15). While all the elements of spiritual blessings will be there, there will not be lacking one thing which can constitute material happiness and glory.

The earth will be transformed. Its physical features will be materially changed, its climate adjusted, its thorns and thistles, rocks and desert waste places exchanged for beauty and fertility, "the desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom" (Isaiah 35:1). The very animal creation will be so changed that they will perfectly minister to man as in the first creation, and violence, cruelty, and suffering will pass away from earth. The riches and the glory of earth will be laid at the feet of Jesus and shared with His redeemed. Has He not said: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33)?

It is then that the reward will come, and they who have followed Him in the sacrifice of all earthly ambitions will sit with Him on thrones and receive with Him a hundredfold of houses and lands and earthly distinctions and glories. This is not to be the chief element of their happiness. These things are nothing without Him. But having taught them to find their portion first in Him, He will give them all besides, and Himself with it and in it, and make real the old testimony of one of His saints: "First, I have everything in God, and then I have God in everything."

6. It will be a universal kingdom. "He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Psalm 72:8). "All kings will bow down to him/ and all nations will serve him" (72:11).

There will never be another universal kingdom until Jesus comes. Our boasted democracy is not going to include the world. Its next hope is a king, and the earth is waiting for His advent with groans of pain. The Church is not going to become universal, but Christ Himself, by His personal coming, shall gather all nations and tribes and tongues beneath His peaceful scepter.

7. It will be an everlasting kingdom. "He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations" (72:5). "May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed" (72:17).

Not only for a thousand years will His kingdom last, but forever and ever. The scriptural conception of the future is very glorious. It is not a monotonous forever, but it is a succession of *aeons*, or ages, of surpassing glory. The Millennium is but one of these ages. The new heavens and the new earth will be the next, and beyond that is age after age forever. Could we be told the glory of some of these distant ages, we could not even comprehend it. But as these mighty *aeons* roll on, we shall be prepared for yet greater progressions and this mighty universe will expand until that great promise is fulfilled: "In order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

Such is a feeble outline of this inspired picture of the millennial kingdom of the Lord Jesus. The other Scriptures are full of the picture of this golden age of Christian hope and promise.

In Scotland's darkest day, the nation at last felt that its only hope lay in the return of John Knox. So he was sent for, and eagerly they awaited the first signal of the great reformer's advent. At length a messenger hastened up from Leith, entered the chamber where the delegates were secretly assembled, and carefully shutting the door, a whisper was breathed, "John Knox has come." It went from lip to lip, and men stood up with strange excitement, buckled on their armor and helmets, went from village to village, and from home to home, until, ere many hours had passed, the tidings had been whispered to every waiting heart, "John Knox has come!" Brave men gathered quickly to the secret meeting place where a mighty host stood around their glorious leader, and the enemies of Scotland trembled on their throne before the power of one mighty man. Scotland was saved, and the religious liberties of the world were settled.

Oh, this is the only hope of the world! Let us send it up to heaven as the cry of prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus!" Soon the whisper will sweep down from yonder skies, "The Lord has come!" Around Him will silently gather His faithful waiting ones; scepters will fall and thrones will crumble, and the King of kings will take the kingdom, and the saints of the Most High will reign with Him forever and ever.

*Oh day of days! Oh hope of hopes! Oh King of kings and Lord of lords! We wait, we watch, we long, we hope, we pray, we work for Thee. Amen.*

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

**Was Solomon given the Spirit of right judgment in measure? Did Christ receive the gift of the Spirit with measure?**

1 Kings 3:9, 28    Isa. 11:1-5    John 3:34

**Use scripture to show the "peace" that will be characteristic during the coming reign of the Messiah.**

Isa. 2:4    Isa. 9:5-6    Isa. 65:25    Joel 3:18    Mic. 4:3    Zech. 9:10

**Will our present earth and moon pass away for newer ones?**

Ps. 102:25-26    2 Pet. 3:12-13

**During this time spoken of in Psalm 72 how widespread and enduring will the name of the Lord be?**

Ps. 72:17-19    Isa. 9:7    Zech. 9:10    Rev. 1:17-18

### **Psalm 73:1-28**

**A Psalm of Asaph.** This is the second Psalm ascribed to Asaph, and the first of eleven consecutive Psalms bearing the name of this eminent singer. Some writers feel that David was the author and Asaph the person to whom they were dedicated. Asaph would then be expected to sing them when he became the chief musician. My heart turns that direction, but facts must be heard. Hezekiah "commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph" (2 Chr. 29:30). David and Asaph are mentioned as distinct from "the chiefs of singers" (Neh. 12:46). Thus, it would seem that they are joint authors. We believe that Asaph is the author of some, if not all, of the twelve Psalms ascribed to him. Often a great star seems one to the eyes of ordinary observers, but on closer inspection it turns out to be a binary character. So here the Psalms of David are also those of Asaph. The great sun of David has a satellite in the moon of Asaph.

**(Ps. 73:3) When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.** His eye was fixed on one thing: He saw the wicked in the present and forgot their future. He saw their outward display and overlooked their soul's discomfort.

**(Ps. 73:4) But their strength is firm.** What do they care about death? Frequently, they are brazen, insolent, and vent defiant blasphemies even on their death bed. This may occasion sorrow and surprise among saints, but it certainly should not suggest envy.

**(Ps. 73:5) They are not in trouble as other men.** The prosperous wicked escape the killing toils that afflict the mass of mankind. Their bread comes to them without care, their wine without stint. They have no need to ask, "Where shall we get bread for our children or clothing for our little ones?" Ordinary domestic and personal troubles do not appear to harass them.

**Nor are they plagued like other men.** Fierce trials do not assail them; they do not smart under the divine rod. While many saints are both poor and afflicted, the prosperous sinner is neither. They are worse than others and yet are better off. They plow the least but have the most fodder. They deserve the hottest hell but have the warmest nest. All this is clear to the eyes of faith, which understands the riddle, but to the dim eye of the senses, it seems an enigma. They are to have nothing hereafter; let them have what they can here. They only possess what is of secondary value, and their possessing it teaches us to set little store by transient things. If earthly possessions were of much value, the Lord would not give so large a measure of it to those who have the least of His love.

**(Ps. 73:11) And they say, "How does God know?"** Thus, dare the ungodly speak. They flatter themselves that their oppressions and persecutions are unobserved by heaven. If there is a God, is He too occupied with other matters to know what is going on in this world? So they console themselves if judgments are threatened.

**(Ps. 73:12) Behold, these are the ungodly, who are always at ease.** Look! See! Consider! This is the standing enigma! The crux of Providence! The stumblingblock of faith! The unjust are rewarded and indulged, not for a day, or an hour, but in perpetuity. From their youth, those who deserve perdition revel in prosperity. They deserve to be hung in chains, but chains are hung on their necks. They are worthy to be chased from the world, but the world becomes their own. Poor pure blind sense cries, "See this!" Wonder, be amazed, and make this square with providential justice, if you can.

**(Ps. 73:13) Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain.** Poor Asaph. He questions the value of holiness when its wages are paid in the coin of affliction. His sincerity has had no effect; no advantage has come through his purity. The filthy-hearted are exalted and feed on the fat of the land. Foolishly, the wisest will argue when faith is napping. Asaph was a prophet, but he could not see when reason left him in the dark. Even prophets must have the sunlight of revealed truth, or they grope like the blind. In the presence of temporal circumstances, the pure in heart seem to have cleansed themselves in vain. But we must not judge after the sight of the eyes.

**And washed my hands in innocence.** Asaph had been as careful of his hands as of his heart. He had guarded his outer as well as his inner life. It was a bitter thought, that all of this was useless, and it left him in a worse condition than foul-handed, black-hearted sinners. Surely the horrible character of the conclusion must have made it untenable. This could not be, while God was God. It smelled too strong a lie to be tolerated long in the good man's soul. Thus, in a verse or two, we see his mind turning in another direction.

**(Ps. 73:17) Until I went into the sanctuary of God.** His mind entered eternity, where God dwells as in a holy place. Asaph left the things of the senses for the things invisible. His heart gazed within the veil; he stood where the thrice holy God stands. Thus, he shifted his point of view and the apparent disorder resolved into harmony.

**(Ps. 73:18) Then I understood their end.** He had seen too little to judge. A wider view changed his judgment. He saw with an enlightened eye the future of the wicked, and his soul was no longer in debate as to the happiness of their condition. No envy now gnaws at his heart, for it is replaced with a holy horror of their present guilt and impending doom. He recoils from being dealt with in the same manner as the proud sinners, whom until now he regarded with admiration.

The psalmist's sorrow had culminated, not in the fact that the ungodly prospered but that God had arranged it. Had it been mere chance, he would have wondered but could not have complained. How the arranger of all things could so dispense his temporal favors was the vexatious question. Here he sees that the divine hand purposely placed these people in prosperous and eminent circumstances, not with the intent to bless but the very reverse.

**(Ps. 73:21) And I was vexed in my mind.** He was as full of pain as one afflicted with kidney disease. He had pierced himself with many sorrows. His hard thoughts were like kidney stones. He was utterly wretched, caused by his own reflections. Miserable philosophy that stretches the mind on the rack and breaks it on the wheel! Blessed faith that drives away the inquisitor and sets the captives free!

**(Ps. 73:22) I was so foolish.** Asaph, a saint of God, acted as if he had been one of the fools whom God abhors. Had he not envied them? What is that but to aspire to be like them? The wisest have enough folly to ruin them unless grace prevails. **And ignorant.** He acted as if he knew nothing, babbled like an idiot, and uttered the drivel of a witless loon. He did not know how to sufficiently express his foolishness.

**(Ps. 73:26) My flesh and my heart fail.** Flesh and heart had failed him; he had almost fallen. They would fail in the hour of death, and, if he relied on them, they would fail him at once. **But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.** God would not fail him, either as protection or a joy. His heart would be kept by divine love and filled eternally with divine glory. Having been driven far out to sea, Asaph casts anchor in the old port.

**(Ps. 73:26) I have put my trust in the Lord God.** He dwells on the glorious name of the Lord Jehovah, and he avows it as the basis of His faith. Faith is wisdom. It is the key of enigmas, the clue of mazes, and the pole star of pathless seas. Trust and you will know.

**That I may declare all "Your works.** He who believes will understand and will be able to teach. Asaph hesitated to utter his evil surmises, but he has no difficulty publishing a good subject. God's ways are more admired the more they are known. Those who are ready to believe the goodness of God will always see fresh goodness to believe in. Those who are willing to declare the works of God will never be silent for lack of wonders to declare.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What expressions are used to describe those who do not stand on God's promises?**

Ps. 73:18, 27

**What is the Psalmist final thought on not being able to understand the ways of the world and God?**

Ps. 73:21-28

### Psalm 74:1-23

**A Contemplation of Asaph.** The history of the suffering church is always edifying. We see how the faithful trusted and wrestled with God in times of dire distress. This Psalm teaches how to behave under similar circumstances. We learn that when fiery trials come, no strange thing happens to us, for we are following the trail of God's people.

#### **Division**

- The poet pleads the nation's sorrows and the malice done to the Lord's assemblies, w. 1-11.
- Then he urges former displays of divine power as a reason for present deliverance, w. 12-23.

It is difficult to determine if this is a prophetic Psalm, intended for use in troubles foreseen, or if it was written by a later Asaph, after the invasion by Sennacherib or during the Maccabean wars. We see no difficulty with the first supposition.

**(Ps. 74:2) This Mount Zion where You have dwelt.** That the Lord has made Zion the special center of His worship and the place of His manifestation is another plea for Jerusalem's preservation. Will the sacred temple of Jehovah be desecrated by heathen and the throne of the Great King defiled by His enemies? Has the Spirit of God dwelt in our hearts? Will He leave and allow them to become a haunt for the devil? Has He sanctified us by His indwelling? Will He vacate the throne? God forbid!

**(Ps. 74:8) They said in their hearts, "Let us destroy them altogether."** This was no idle wish, for their cruelty was sincere, deep seated, and a matter of the inmost heart. Not a remnant of God's people would have been left if the oppressors had their way. Pharaoh's policy to stamp out the nation was a precedent, yet the Jews survive; the bush, though burning, has not been consumed (Ex. 3:2). The church of Christ has gone through baptism of blood and fire, but it is all the brighter because of it.

**(Ps. 74:20) Have respect to the covenant.** This is the master key! Heaven's gate must open to it. "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent" (Num. 23:19). He will not break His covenant or alter the thing that has gone from His lips. The Lord had promised to bless the seed of Abraham and to make them a blessing (Gen. 12:2). Here, they plead that ancient promise, just as we may plead the covenant made with the Lord Jesus for all believers. What a grand word! Reader, do you know how to cry, **Have respect to the covenant?**

**(Ps. 74:22) Arise, O God, plead Your own cause.** Answer the taunts of the profane with arguments that will annihilate both the blasphemy and the blasphemer. God's judgments are awful replies to the defiance of His foes. When He makes empires crumble and strikes persecutors, His cause is pleaded as no other could advocate it. If only the Lord would come to the battlefield, for long has the fight been in the balance. One glance of His eyes, one word from His lip, and the banners of victory will be raised on the breeze.

**Remember how the foolish man reproaches You daily.** The Lord is begged to remember that He is reproached by mere man, and that man is a fool. He is also reminded that these foul reproaches are incessant and repeated with every revolving day. It is bravely done when faith can pluck pleas from the dragon's mouth and out of the blasphemies of fools find arguments with God.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Show how this Psalm fits in during the period when Israel was taunted by Sennacherib and his Babylonian army?**

2 Kings 19:3-4    2 Kings 25:9    2 Chron. 36:19    Jer. 52:12-30

**Use Psalm 74, Job 41:1-34 Isaiah 10:12-13, Isaiah 14:24-27, Isaiah 27:1-13, Nahum 3:14-19 and any other verses you may find to show how this Psalm may also be prophetic and will describe what will happen during the tribulation period.**

### Psalm 75:1-10

**To the Chief Musician.** Here is noble work for him, for the cry of the last Psalm is about to be heard, and the challenge of Israel's foes is taken up by God. Zion's virgin daughter despises her foes and laughs them to scorn. The destruction of Sennacherib's army is a notable illustration of this sacred song.

**(Ps. 75:6) For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south.** There is a God and a providence, and things do not happen by chance. Though deliverance is hopeless from all points of the compass, yet God can work it for His people. Though judgment comes from neither the rising nor the setting of the sun, nor from the wilderness of mountains, yet come it will, for the Lord reigns. People forget that all things are ordained in heaven. They see only the human force and the carnal passion. But the unseen Lord is far more real than these. He is at work behind and within the cloud. The foolish dream that He is not, but He is near even now and is on the way, bringing in His hand a cup of spiced wine of vengeance, one drink of which will stagger all His foes.

**(Ps. 75:7) But God is the Judge.** Even now He is judging. His seat is not vacant. His authority is not abdicated. The Lord reigns evermore.

**He puts down one, and exalts another.** Empires rise and fall at His bidding. His will assigns a dungeon here and a throne there. Assyria yields to Babylon, and Babylon yields to the Medes. Kings are puppets in His hand. They serve His purpose when they rise and when they fall. A certain author (Timbs) has issued a work called *Historic Ninepins.*, a proper name of scorn for all the earth's great ones. God only is. And all power belongs to Him. All else is shadow, coming and going, unsubstantial, misty, dreamlike.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Apply this Psalm to the end time.**

## Psalm 76:1-12

In Psalm 75, faith sang of victories to come, and here it sings of triumphs achieved. The present Psalm is a most jubilant war song, a triumphant song to the King of kings, the hymn of a theocratic nation to its divine ruler.

**(Ps. 76:5) The stouthearted were plundered.** They came to plunder, and they are plundered, and their stout hearts are now cold in death. The angel of the pestilence dried up their lifeblood; their heart is taken.

**They have sunk into their sleep,** their last sleep, the sleep of death.

**And none of the mighty men have found the use of their hands.** Their arms are paralyzed; they cannot lift a finger, for the rigor of death has stiffened them. What a scene! Mighty Sennacherib's army is utterly destroyed in one night (2 Kings 19:35, 36). The most valiant warriors, the hands that were furious to pull down Jerusalem, could not even be raised from the sod. They were as weak as the cripples at the temple gate. They could not open their eyes; a deep sleep sealed their vision in everlasting darkness. Oh, God, You will fight for us, and in the hour of peril, You will overthrow the enemies of Your gospel. Thus, we will trust and not be afraid.

**(Ps. 76:7) You, Yourself, are to be feared,** not Sennacherib or Nisroch, his god (2 Kings 19:37), but Jehovah alone. It was He who, with a silent rebuke, had withered all the monarch's host:

The fear of man is a snare, but the fear of God is a great virtue. It has great power for good over the human mind. God is to be feared profoundly, continually, and alone. Let all worship be to Him only.

**And who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry?** Who indeed? The angels fell when their rebellion provoked His justice. Adam lost his place in Paradise in the same manner. Pharaoh and other proud monarchs passed away at His frown. There is none in earth or hell who can abide the terror of His wrath. How blessed are they who are sheltered in the atonement of Jesus and have no cause to fear the righteous anger of the Judge of all the earth.

**(Ps. 76:8) You caused judgment to be heard from heaven.** This complete overthrow was a judgment from heaven. Those who did not see it but heard the report, said, "This is the finger of God." Man will not hear God's voice if he can help it, but God causes it to be heard. The echoes of that judgment executed on the haughty Assyrian are still heard, and it will ring down through all the ages to the praise of divine justice.

**The earth feared and was still.** All nations trembled at the news and sat in humbled awe. When the oppressor's power was broken, rest followed the turmoil of war, and God was revered for having given quiet to the people. How readily can Jehovah command an audience! It may be that in the latter days He will, by some miracle of power in the realms of grace, constrain all the earth's inhabitants to hear the gospel and submit to the reign of His all-glorious Son. So be it, good Lord.

**(Ps. 76:10) Surely the wrath of man shall praise You.** It will not only be overcome, but also be rendered subservient to Your glory. The threatening breath of humanity is just blowing the trumpet of the Lord's eternal fame. Furious winds often drive ships more swiftly to port. The devil blows the fire and melts the iron; then the Lord fashions it for His purposes. Let people and devils rage, for they can only be subservient to the divine purposes.

**With the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.** Malice is tied and cannot break its bounds. The fire that cannot be used will be put out. It is as if the Lord girded himself with the wrath of humanity as a sword to be used for His designs. Sinners are often a sword in God's hand to scourge others. This verse clearly teaches that even the most rampant evil is under the Lord's control and will in the end be overruled for His praise.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **Explain how Sennacherib's army was destroyed as it prepared to invade Israel.**

2 Kings 19:35

## Psalm 77:1-20

It was proper that another sacred song leader should have a turn, for no harp should be silent in the courts of the Lord's house. **A Psalm of Asaph.** Asaph often touched the minor key. He was thoughtful, contemplative, and believing, but there was a dash of sadness about him that imparted a certain flavor to his songs. To understand Asaph, it is necessary to have done business on great waters and weathered many Atlantic gales.

### **Division**

- If we follow the poetical arrangement and divide at the Selahs, we find the troubled man of God pleading, verses 1-3.
- Then we hear him lamenting and arguing with himself, verses 4-9.
- His meditations run God-ward, and in the close, he seems to see the wonders of the Red Sea and the wilderness, verses 10-15.

At this point, as if lost in ecstasy, he hurriedly closes the Psalm with an abruptness that is startling. The Spirit of God knows when to stop speaking. This is more than those do who, for the sake of making a methodical conclusion, prolong

their words to weariness. Perhaps this Psalm was meant to be a prelude to the next. If so, this accounts for the sudden close. This hymn is for experienced saints. Its rare value is that it is a transcript of their inner conflicts.

**(Ps. 77:1) I cried out to God with my voice.** This Psalm has much sadness, but it ends well because it began with prayer, and prayer never has an ill issue. Asaph did not run to man but to the Lord. He went not with studied, stately, stilted words, but he went with a cry, the natural, unaffected, unfeigned expression of pain. He also used his voice, for though vocal utterance is not necessary to the life of prayer, it often seems forced on us by the energy of our desires. Sometimes the soul feels compelled to use the voice, for it finds a freer expression for its agony. It is a comfort to hear the alarm ringing when the house is invaded by thieves.

**To God with my voice.** He returned to his pleading. Once was not enough. He needed an answer, and he expected one; he was eager to have it, so he cried again and again. He used his voice, for the sound helped his earnestness.

**And He gave ear to me.** Importunity prevailed. The gate opened to the steady knock. It will be so in our hour of trial. The God of grace will hear us in due season.

**(Ps. 77:3) I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.** He pondered and pondered, but only sank deeper. His inner disquiet did not fall asleep as soon as it was expressed; it returned and leaped over him like the raging billows of an angry sea. It was not his body alone that hurt, but his nature writhed in pain. His life seemed crushed. Death is coveted when life becomes an intolerable burden. With no spirit left to sustain our infirmity, we become forlorn. Like one in a tangle of briars, we are stripped of our clothes and every hook of the thorns becomes a knife; we bleed with ten thousand wounds. Alas, my God, the writer of this exposition well knows what Your servant Asaph meant. My soul is familiar with the way of grief, with the deep glens and lonely caves of depression. I know full well your awful glooms!

**Selah.**

**(Ps. 77:6) I meditate within my heart.** He did not cease introspection. He was resolved to find the bottom of his sorrow and trace it to its fountain head. He made sure work of it by talking not with his mind but with his inmost heart. It was heart work. He was no idler, no melancholy trifler. Asaph was up and at it, resolutely resolved that he would not tamely die of despair, but that he would fight for his hope to the last moment of life.

**And my spirit makes diligent search.** He ransacked his experience, memory, intellect, nature, and his entire self, either to find comfort or to discover the reason it was denied. A person who has enough force of soul to struggle in this fashion will not die by the enemy's hand.

**(Ps. 77:7) Will the Lord cast off forever?** This was the question. Asaph painfully knew that the Lord might leave His people for a season, but his fear was that the time might be prolonged with no end. Eagerly he asked, "Will the Lord utterly and finally reject those who are His own and let them be the objects of His contemptuous reprobation, His everlasting cast-offs?" This, he was persuaded, could not be. No instance in the years of ancient times led him to fear that this would be the case.

**(Ps. 77:10) And I said, "This is my anguish."** He won the day. He talks reasonably now and surveys the field with a cooler mind. Asaph confesses that unbelief is an infirmity, a weakness, a folly, a sin. He may also be understood to mean, "This is my appointed sorrow," and I will bear it without complaint. When we perceive that our affliction is from the Lord, that it is the ordained portion of our cup, we become reconciled to it and no longer rebel against the inevitable. Why should we not be content, if it is the Lord's will? It is not for us to object to what He arranges.

**(Ps. 77:11) I will remember the works of the LORD.** Fly back, my soul, away from your present turmoil! Fly to the grandeurs of history, to the sublime deeds of Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts! He is the same today and is ready even now to defend His servants as in days of yore.

**Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.** Whatever else may glide into oblivion, the Lord's marvelous works in ancient days must not be forgotten. Memory is a suitable handmaid for faith. When faith has its seven years of famine, memory, like Joseph in Egypt, opens her granaries.

**(Ps. 77:16) The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You, they were afraid.** As if conscious of its Maker's presence, the sea was ready to flee from His face. The conception is highly poetical; the psalmist has the scene before his mind's eye and describes it gloriously. The water saw its God, but man refuses to discern Him. It was afraid, but proud sinners are rebellious and do not fear the Lord.

**The depths also trembled.** Even to their heart, the floods were made afraid. Quiet caves of the sea, far down in the abyss, were moved with fear. The lowest channels were left bare, as the water rushed from its place in terror of the God of Israel.

**(Ps. 77:20) You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.** What a transition: tempest to peace, wrath to love! Quietly, like a flock, Israel was guided by a human agency that veiled the excessive glory of the divine presence. The smiter of Egypt was the shepherd of Israel. He drove His foes before Him, but He went before His people. Heaven and earth fought on His side against the sons of Ham, but they were equally subservient to the interests of the sons of Jacob. Therefore, with devout joy and full consolation, we close this Psalm, which is the song of one who forgot how to speak and yet learned to sing far more sweetly than his fellows.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

## How are Habakkuk's writings similar to Asaph's?

Ps. 77:1-3 – Hab. 1:1-3      Ps. 77:11 – Hab. 3:2

The Psalmist was troubled, overwhelmed in spirit, spent sleepless nights in despair. **How did the Psalmist change his disposition and show where in the Psalm it occurred?**

### Psalm 78:1-72

**A Contemplation of Asaph.** This is correctly titled. It is not a mere review of important events in Israel's history, but it is intended to be seen as a parable showing the conduct and experience of believers in all ages. It is a singular proof of the obtuseness of believers who object to sermons and expositions on the historical sections of Scripture, as if they contained no instruction in spiritual matters. Were these people truly enlightened by the Spirit of God, they would perceive that all Scripture is profitable, and they would blush at their folly in undervaluing any portion of the inspired volume.

#### Division

The unity is well maintained throughout, but for the sake of the reader's convenience, we note that the first eight verses may be viewed as a preface, setting out the psalmist's objective in the epic he is composing.

- The theme is Israel in the wilderness, verses 9-41.
- Then there is an account of the Lord's goodness toward His people in bringing them out of Egypt, verses 42-52.
- The history of the tribes is resumed, verses 53-66.
- We then have the removal of the ark to Zion and the transfer of Israel's leadership from Ephraim to Judah, verses 67-72.

**(Ps. 78:1) Give ear O my people, to my law.** The inspired bard (poet) calls on his countrymen to heed his patriotic teaching. We naturally expect God's chosen nation to be first in obeying His voice. When God gives His truth a tongue, and sends His trained messengers to declare His word with power, the least we can do is give them our ears and the earnest obedience of our hearts. Will God speak and His children refuse to hear? His teaching has the force of law; let us yield both ear and heart.

**(Ps. 78:2) I will open my mouth in a parable.** Analogies are not only to be imagined; they are also intended by God to be traced between the story of Israel and the lives of believers. Israel was ordained to be a type. The tribes and their marches are living allegories traced by the hand of an all-wise Providence. Unspiritual people may sneer about fancies and mysticisms, but Paul spoke well when he said that such things "are symbolic" (Gal. 4:24). Asaph, in our case, spoke to the point when he called this narrative a parable. This meaning is clear from the quotation, "Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 'I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world'" (Matt. 13:34, 35).

**I will utter dark sayings of old.** Enigmas of antiquity and riddles of yore, the poet-prophet's mind was so full of ancient lore that he poured it out in a copious stream of song. And under the gushing flood lay pearls and gems of spiritual truth, capable of enriching those who could dive to the depths and bring them up. The letter of this song is precious, but the inner sense is beyond all price. Where the first verse called for attention, the second justified the demand by hinting that the outer sense conceals an inner and hidden meaning, which only the thoughtful will perceive.

**(Ps. 78:9) The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.** Well equipped and furnished with the best weapons, the leading tribe failed in both faith and courage, for they retreated before the foe. There were several examples of this, but probably the psalmist refers to the general failure of Ephraim to conquer Canaan (1 Chr. 7:21, 22). How often have we, although supplied with every gracious weapon, failed to wage successful war against our sins? We have marched gallantly until the testing hour. Then, **in the day of battle**, we proved false to good resolutions and holy obligations. How altogether vain is the unregenerate man! Dress him in the best that nature and grace can supply, and as long as he lacks loyal faith in God, he remains a helpless coward in the holy war.

**(Ps. 78:10) They did not keep the covenant of God.** Vows and promises were broken, idols were set up, and the living God was forsaken. The Jews were brought out of Egypt to be a people separated to the Lord, but they fell into the sins of other nations. They did not maintain a pure testimony for the one only true God.

**(Ps. 78:18) And they tested God in their heart.** God was not tested, for He cannot be tested, but they acted in a manner calculated to test Him. Christ cannot die again, but many crucify Him afresh, because this would be the result of their behavior if its effects were not prevented by other forces. The sinners in the wilderness would have had the Lord change His wise proceedings to humor their whims. Thus, they are said to test Him.

**(Ps. 78:21) Therefore the LORD heard this and was furious.** God was not indifferent to what they said. He dwelt among them in the holy place. Thus, they insulted Him to His face. He did not hear a report of it, for the language came directly to His ears.

**So a fire was kindled against Jacob.** The fire of His anger literally burned.

**And anger also came up against Israel.** Whether He viewed them in the lower or higher light, as Jacob or Israel, He was angry with them. Even as mere humans, they should have believed Him. As the chosen tribes, their wicked unbelief was without excuse. The Lord does well to be angry at so ungrateful, gratuitous, and dastardly an insult as the questioning of His power.

**(Ps. 78:22) Because they did not believe in God, and did not trust in His salvation.** This is the peculiar spot that the Lord points at, the special provocation that angered Him. Let every unbeliever learn to tremble more at unbelief than at anything else. If you are not a fornicator, thief, or liar, there is quite enough to condemn you if you do not trust in God's salvation.

**(Ps. 78:32) In spite of this they still sinned.** Judgments moved them no more than mercies. They defied God's wrath. Though death was in the cup of their iniquity, they would not put the cup away. They drank as if it were healthful. These words might be applied to the ungodly who have been often afflicted, laid on a sick bed, broken in spirit, impoverished, and yet have persevered in their evil ways, unmoved by terrors and unswayed by threats.

**(Ps. 78:33) Therefore their days He consumed in futility.** Apart from faith, life is futile. To wander in the wilderness was a futile thing when unbelief had shut them out of the promised land. It was fitting that those who would not live to follow the divine purpose, by believing and obeying God, would be made to live to no purpose and to die before their time, unsatisfied and unblessed. Those who wasted their days in sin had little cause to wonder when the Lord cut their lives short. He vowed that they would never enter the rest they had despised.

**And their years in fear.** Weary marches were their trouble, and finding no resting place was their futility. Innumerable graves were left along the trail of Israel. "Who killed all these?" The answer must be, "They could not enter because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19). Much of the vexation and failure of many lives results from being sapped by unbelief and honeycombed by evil passions. None live so fruitlessly and so wretchedly as those who allow sense and sight to override faith, and reason and appetite to domineer over their fear of God. Our days go fast enough. Yet the Lord can make them rust away at a bitter rate, until we feel as if sorrow actually ate the heart of our life, and like a cancer devoured our existence. This was the punishment of rebellious Israel. The Lord grant that it may not be ours.

**(Ps. 78:34) When He slew them, then they sought Him.** Like whipped dogs, they licked their Master's feet; they only obeyed when they felt the whip. Hard are the hearts that only death can move. When thousands died around them, the people of Israel suddenly became religious. They ran to the tabernacle door like sheep who run en masse when the black dog drives them, but they scatter and wander when the shepherd whistles the dog off.

**And they returned and sought earnestly for God.** They could not be too zealous. They were in hot haste to prove their loyalty to the divine King. "The devil was sick, and the devil a monk would be." Who would not be pious while the plague is around? Doors that were never sanctified put on the white cross. Even reprobates send for the minister when they lay dying. Thus, sinners pay involuntary homage to God's power of right and supremacy. Yet their hypocritical homage is of small value in the sight of the Great Judge.

**(Ps. 78:38) But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them.** Though they were full of flattery, He was full of mercy and had pity. Not because of their pitiful and hypocritical pretensions to penitence, but because of His compassion He overlooked their provocations.

**Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath.** When He had grown angry with them, He withdrew His displeasure. Seventy times seven He forgave their offenses. He was slow, very slow, to anger. The sword was lifted and flashed in mid air, but it was sheathed again and the nation lived. Though not mentioned in the text, we know that a mediator interposed, the man Moses stood in the gap (Num. 12:21). Today, even at this hour, the Lord Jesus pleads for sinners and averts divine wrath. Many a barren tree is left standing because the vineyard keeper cries, "Let it alone this year" (Luke 13:8).

**(Ps. 78:54) And He brought them to His holy border.** He conducted them to the frontier of the Holy Land. It was here that He intended the tabernacle to become the permanent symbol that He lived among His people. He did not leave them halfway on the journey. His power and wisdom preserved the nation until Jericho's palm trees were within sight on the other side of the river.

**(Ps. 78:56) Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God.** Change of condition had not altered their manners. They left their nomadic habits, but not their tendencies to wander from God. Though every divine promise had been fulfilled to the letter, though the land flowing with milk and honey was actually theirs, they tested the Lord again with unbelief and provoked Him with other sins. He is not only high and glorious, but Most High; yes, the Most High God, the only one who deserves to be so highly honored. Yet, instead of honoring Him, Israel grieved Him with rebellion.

**(Ps. 78:61) And delivered His strength into captivity.** The ark was captured by the Philistines in battle (1 Sam. 4:11), only because the Lord chose to punish Israel. The sign of divine presence is poetically called **His strength**. The Lord's presence is His strength among His people. It was a dark day when the mercy seat was removed, when the cherubim took flight, and Israel's defense was carried away.

**(Ps. 78:62) He also gave His people over to the sword.** They fell in battle because they were no longer aided by divine strength. Sharp was the sword, but sharper the cause of its being unsheathed.

**And was furious with His inheritance.** They were still His. Twice in this verse they are called His, but His regard for them did not prevent Him from chastening them, even with a rod of steel. Where love is most fervent, jealousy is most cruel. Sin cannot be tolerated in those who are near God.

**(Ps. 78:65) Then the Lord awoke as from sleep.** Justly inactive, He allowed the enemy to triumph, His ark to be captured, and His people; to be slain. Now He arises. His heart is full of pity for His chosen and anger against the insulting foe. Woe to you, Philistia, now you will feel the weight of His right hand!

Awake and putting out strength, as a man who has taken a refreshing drink, the Lord is said to be **like a mighty man who shouts because of wine.** Strong and full of energy, He smashes His foes and makes them stagger beneath His blows: His ark went from city to city as an avenger, rather than as the trophy His enemies thought it was. In every place, the false gods fell helplessly before the ark (1 Sam. 5:3).

**(Ps. 78:67) And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim.** He would no longer leave the leadership to Ephraim, since that tribe had been tried and found wanting. Sin, folly, and instability had been found in them, and so they were set aside as unfit to lead.

**(Ps. 78:68) But chose the tribe of Judah.** To give the nation another trial, this tribe was elected to supremacy. This was according; to Jacob's dying prophecy (Gen. 49:8). Our Lord sprang out of Judah, and He it is whom His brothers will praise.

**Mount Zion which He loved.** The tabernacle and ark were moved to Zion during David's reign. No honor was left the wayward Ephraimites. Near this mountain, the father of the faithful had offered up His only son (Gen. 22:14), and there in the future, His chosen heirs would gather. Thus, Zion is lovely to God.

**(Ps. 78:69) And He built His sanctuary like the heights.** The sanctuary was built on the heights, literally and spiritually, it was a mountain of beauty. True religion was exalted in the land. For holiness, it was a temple; for majesty, it was a palace.

**(Ps. 78:70) He also chose David His servant.** It was a sovereign gracious election. It operated practically, by making the chosen man a willing servant of the Lord. He was not chosen because he was a servant, but in order to be a servant. David always esteemed it a high honor that he was both elect of God and a servant of God.

**(Ps. 78:72) So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart.** David was upright before God; he never swerved from the obedient worship of Jehovah. Whatever faults he had, he was sincere in his allegiance to Israel's superior King. He shepherded for God with an honest heart.

**And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.** He was a sagacious ruler, and the psalmist, here, magnifies the Lord for having appointed him. Under David, the Jewish kingdom rose to an honorable position among the nations and exercised an influence over its neighbors. In closing the Psalm, which has described the varying conditions of the chosen nation, we are glad to end so peacefully. All noise of tumult and sinful rites are hushed. After a long voyage over a stormy sea, the ark of the Jewish state rested on its Ararat. Under a wise and gentle reign, it will not be driven hither and thither by floods and gales. The psalmist intended all along to make this his last stanza, and we, too, may be content to finish all our songs of love with the reign of the Lord's anointed. Only we may eagerly inquire, when will it come? When will the desert wanderings, the rebellions, and the chastenings end? When will we enter the rest of a settled kingdom, with the Lord Jesus reigning as "the Prince of the house of David?"

We have ended this lengthy parable. May we in our life parable have less of sin and as much grace as is displayed in Israel's history. Let us close this Psalm under the safe guidance of "that great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. 13:20). Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

This Psalm shows God's eternal principle of government and are spiritual lessons for all ages. **What are these principles and lessons?**

Psalm 78:5-8, 9-11, 56-64

**Give some examples of Ephraim's (Israel's) haughty, rebellious spirit.**

Jud. 8:1 Jud. 12:1 2 Sam. 20:2 Job. 27:15 Ps. 78:17-18

**Using Psalm 78:8 and 78:37 give insight into why the many generations of Israelites were so rebellious?**

**What message does Psalm 78:9 have for us?**

God rejected Ephraim and chose the tribe of Judah to dwell in the tabernacle. **Where is the permanence since the tabernacle was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and again by Titus.**

1 Kings 8:13 Ps. 132:14 Matt. 16:18 Rev. 21:10-16

### Psalm 79:1-13

**Psalm of Asaph.** This is a Psalm of complaint such as Jeremiah might have written amid the ruins of the beloved city. This Psalm speaks of invasion, oppression, and national overthrow. Asaph was a patriotic poet, and never more at home than when telling his nation's history. Would to God that we had national poets whose songs were of the Lord.

**(Ps. 79:1) O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance.** It is the cry of amazement at sacrilegious intrusion. The poet was struck with horror. Strangers pollute Your sacred courts with their steps. All Canaan is Your land, but Your foes have ravaged it.

**Your holy temple they have defiled.** They have profanely forced their way into the inner sanctuary and behaved arrogantly. The holy land, the holy house, and the holy city were polluted by the uncircumcised. It is an awful thing when the wicked are found in the church and numbered within her ministry. Then, tares are sown with the wheat (Matt. 13:25) and poisoned herbs in the pot of stew (2 Kings 4:39).

**They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.** After devouring and defiling, they destroyed Jerusalem. They did their work with cruel completeness. Jerusalem, the beloved city, the joy of the nation, the dwelling of her God, was totally wrecked. It is sad to see the foe in our house, but worse to meet him in the house of God.

**(Ps. 79:2) The dead bodies of Your servants they have given as food for the birds of the heavens, the flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth.** The enemy did not bury the dead and there were not enough Jews left to perform the funeral rites. The precious bodies of the departed were left to be devoured by vultures and torn by wolves.

**Your inheritance, Your holy temple, Your servants, and Your saints.** Surely the Lord will defend His own. He will not allow rampant adversaries to ravage them.

**(Ps. 79:5) How long, LORD?** Will there ever be an end to these chastisements? They are sharp and overwhelming. Will You continue them much longer?

**Will You be angry forever?** Is Your mercy gone? Will You strike forever?

**Will Your jealousy burn like fire?** There was a great reason for the Lord to be jealous. Idols had been set up; Israel had left His worship. Yet the psalmist begs the Lord not to consume His people as with fire, but to diminish their woes.

**(Ps. 79:6) Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You.** If You must strike, look further afield. Spare Your children and strike Your foes. There are lands where You are not acknowledged, please visit these first with Your judgments, and let *Your* erring Israel have a rest.

**Ps. 79:9) And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, for Your name's sake!** Sin, the root of the evil, is seen and confessed. Pardon of sin and removal of chastisement is sought. Both are asked, not as matters of right but as gifts of grace. God's name is brought into the pleading a second time. Believers will find it wise to use this admirable plea frequently, for it is the great gun of the battle, the mightiest weapon in the armory of prayer.

**(Ps. 79:10) Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"** Why should those blasphemous mouths be filled with food so sweet to them but so bitter to us? When the afflictions of God's people become the derision of sinners, and cause them to ridicule religion, we have a good basis for discussion with the Lord.

**Let there be known among the nations in our sight the avenging of the blood of Your servants which has been shed.** Justice is desired, that God may be vindicated and feared. It is justice, that those who taunted God's people because they smarted under the Lord's rod should be made to smart by the same hand. If any complain about the spirit of this calamity, they do so needlessly, for it is the common feeling of every patriot to see the wrongs of his country redressed. Every Christian wishes for the overthrow of error, and so to see an admirable vengeance for the church. The destruction of Antichrist is the reward of the martyrs' blood. It is not to be deprecated; it is one of the most glorious hopes of the latter days.

**(Ps. 79:11) Let the groaning of the prisoner come before You.** When Your people cannot sing and dare not shout, let their silent sigh ascend to Your ear and secure their deliverance. These words are suitable in a great variety of conditions, in which the afflicted can find themselves. People of experience will know how to adapt them to their position and use them in reference to others.

**According to the greatness of Your power preserve those who are appointed to die.** Faith grows while it prays. The appeal to the Lord's tender mercy is supplemented by another addressed to the divine power. The petitioner rises from a request for those who are brought low, to a prayer for those who are on the verge of death, those set apart as victims for the slaughter. It is comforting to despondent believers to reflect that God can preserve even those who carry the death sentence. Men and devils may consign us to perdition when sickness drags us to the grave and sorrow sinks us in the dust, but there is One who can keep our soul alive and bring it up again from the depths of despair. A lamb shall live between the lion's jaws if the Lord wills it. Even in the graveyard, life will vanquish death if God is near.

**(Ps. 79:12) And return to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom their reproach with which they have reproached You, O Lord.** They denied Your existence, mocked Your power, insulted Your worship, and destroyed Your house. Lord, make them fully feel that You are not to be mocked with impunity. Pour in their laps a good store of shame because they dared to insult the God of Israel. Compensate them with the perfect number of punishments. It will be so, for the wish of this text will become a fact. The Lord, in time, will avenge His elect.

**(Ps. 79:13) So we, Your people and sheep of Your pasture, will give You thanks forever; we will show forth Your praise to all generations.** The church's gratitude is lasting as well as deep. On her tablets are memorials of great deliverance, and as long as she exists, her children will repeat them with delight. We have a history that will survive all

other records. It is bright in every line with the glory of the Lord. God's glory springs from the direst calamities, and the dark days of His people become the prelude to unusual displays of the Lord's love and power.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

The poet was struck with horror because God's holy temple in Jerusalem was being defiled. **As Christians how can our holy temple be defiled today?**

**What are the Psalmist prayers and for what reason should God answer them?**

Ps. 31:16      Ps. 79:9

### **Psalm 80:1-19**

To the chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." For the fourth time, we have a song set to **The Lilies**. The other Psalms to lilies are 45, 60, and 69. It is difficult to say why this charming title is used, but the delightfully poetic form of Psalm 80 justifies it.

The nation is represented in beautiful allegory as a vine.

**(Ps. 80:8) You have brought a vine out of Egypt.** There it was in unfriendly soil, the Nile did not water it, for it was as death to its shoots. The inhabitants despised and trampled it down. Glorious was the Lord's right hand, when with power and great wonder, He removed His pleasant plant from the face of those who sought its destruction.

**You have cast out the nations, and planted it.** Seven nations dug to make space for the Lord's vine. The old trees that had occupied the soil a long time were torn up. The oaks of Bashan and the palm trees of Jericho were displaced for the chosen vine. It was securely placed in its appointed position with divine prudence and wisdom. The vine was small in appearance, dependent, exceedingly weak, and apt to trail on the ground. Yet this vine of Israel was chosen because the Lord knew that with incessant care and abounding skill He could make it a good fruit bearing plant.

**(Ps. 80:9) You prepared room for it.** The weeds, brambles, and huge stones were cleared. The Amorites, and their friends in iniquity, were forced to leave. Their forces were routed, their kings slain, their cities captured. Canaan became like a plot of land prepared to become a vineyard.

**And caused it to take deep root, and it filled the land.** Israel was settled and established like a well-rooted vine. It flourished and spread on every side. This analogy might be applied to the experience of every believer in Jesus. The Lord has planted us. We are growing down, "rooting roots," and by His grace, we are unquestionably growing. This is also true of the church. At this moment, through the vineyard keeper's goodwill, the church's branches are spreading *far* and wide.

**(Ps. 80:10) The hills were covered with its shadow.** Israel cultivated every foot of soil, including the mountains' summits. The nation multiplied and became so great that other lands felt their influence or were overshadowed by them.

**And the mighty cedars with its boughs.** The nation was so great that even her individual tribes were powerful and worthy to be ranked with the mighty. A better translation describes the cedars as covered with the vine. We know that in many lands the vines climb and cover the trees. What a vine to climb and top God's mighty cedars! It is a beautiful picture of Israel's prosperity in its best days. During Solomon's time, the little land of Israel occupied a high place among the nations. There have been times when the church of God has also been highly conspicuous and her power felt far and near.

**(Ps. 80:12) Why have You broken down her hedges.** You have withdrawn protection after caring for her. Lord, why is this? An unprotected vine is exposed to every type of injury. No one respects it; everyone preys on it. This was Israel when given over to enemies, and it has often been the position of the church.

**(Ps. 80:17) Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand.** Let Your power rest on *Your* true Benjamin, son of *Your* right hand. Give a commission to the Chosen One, by whom *You* will deliver us. Honor Him, save us, and glorify Yourself. There is no doubt that this a foreshadow of the Messiah, for whom believing Jews had looked to in time of trouble.

**Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.** Send Your power with Him whom *You* will strengthen to accomplish *Your* purposes of grace. It pleases God to work for the sons of men, by sons of men. "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:21). Nations rise or fell largely through individuals. By a Napoleon, the kingdoms are scourged; by a Wellington, nations are saved *from* the tyrant. It is by the man Christ Jesus that fallen Israel is yet to rise. And indeed, through Him, who calls Himself the Son of Man, the world is to be delivered from the dominion of Satan and the curse of sin. Lord, fulfill Your promise to the man of Your right hand, who participates in *Your* glory. Let Him see the Lord's pleasure prospering in His hand.

**(Ps. 80:18) Then we will not turn back from You.** Under the leadership of one whom God had chosen, the nation will be kept faithful; grace will work gratitude and cement them to their allegiance. It is in Christ that we abide faithful; because He lives, we live. There is no hope of perseverance apart from Him.

**Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.** If the Lord gives life out of death, His praise is sure to follow. The Lord Jesus is our leader. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). He is our life. When He visits our souls, we will be revived, and our praise will ascend to the name of the triune God.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Why is the term "vine" used to describe Israel?**

**What are the "boar" and the "wild beast" of Psalm 80:13?**

Ps. 80:12 Ps. 89:40-41 Isa. 5:4-7 Ezek. 17:1-6

### **Psalm 81:1-16**

**(Ps. 81:1) Sing** in tune and time, so that the public praise will be harmonious. **Sing** with joyful notes and melodious sounds. Aloud. The heartiest praise is due our good Lord. His acts of love speak more loudly than any words of our gratitude can ever speak. No dullness should ever affect our song service, no half-heartedness should cause it to limp. Sing aloud you debtors to sovereign grace. Your hearts are profoundly grateful; let your voices express thankfulness. **To God our strength.** The Lord's mighty hand was the strength of His people in delivering them out of Egypt and sustaining them in the wilderness. He placed them in Canaan, preserved them from their foes, and gave them victory. Whom do people honor? Those on whom they rely. So let us sing aloud to God, for He is our strength and our song.

**Make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob.** The God of the nation, the God of their father Jacob, was extolled in happy music by the Israelites. Let no Christian be silent or slack in praise, for this God is our God.

**(Ps. 81:5) Where I heard a language I did not understand.** He knows all things, and no form of speech is incomprehensible to Him. The answer is that the Lord speaks as Israel's God, identifying Himself with His chosen nation. Therefore, He calls a language that is unknown to them as if it were unknown to Him. He had never been adored by Psalm or prayer in the Egyptian language. Hebrew was the speech in His sacred house, and the Egyptian language was foreign there. In strictest truth, and not in allegory, the Lord speaks; Egypt's wicked customs and idolatrous rites were disapproved by Him, and in that sense were unknown. Jesus will say of the wicked, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23). This expression should probably be understood in the same sense, for it may be correctly translated, "A speech I knew not I am hearing." It was one of Israel's griefs that their taskmasters spoke an unknown language, and so they were continually reminded that they were strangers in a strange land. The Lord had pity on them, emancipated them, and now it was their duty to maintain the memorial of divine goodness. It is no small mercy to be brought out from an ungodly world and separated to the Lord.

**(Ps. 81:7) I tested you at the waters of Meribah.** They had proved Him and found Him faithful. He then proved them in return. Precious things are tested. Israel's loyalty to her King was put on trial, and it failed miserably. The God who was adored one day for His goodness was then reviled when the people felt momentary pangs of hunger and thirst. Israel's story is our history in another form. God has heard us, delivered us, and liberated us. Too often, our unbelief returns to us the wretched yield of mistrust, murmuring, and rebellion. Great is our sin. But greater is the mercy of our God. Let us reflect on both and pause awhile.

**(Ps. 81:8) Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you!** What? Are the people so insensible as to be deaf to their God? So it would seem, for He earnestly asks a hearing. Are we not at times as careless and immovable?

**O Israel, if you will listen to Me!** There is much in this if. How low have they fallen who will not listen to God?

**(Ps. 81:10) I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.** This is the way Jehovah introduced Himself to His people. The great deliverance out of Egypt was the claim on His people's allegiance that He most often pleaded. If ever a people were morally bound, Israel was a thousand times pledged to Jehovah by His marvelous deeds in the Exodus.

**(Ps. 81:11) But My people would not heed My voice.** His warnings were rejected, His promises forgotten, His principles disregarded. Though the divine voice proposed nothing but good on an unparalleled scale of liberality, they turned aside.

**And Israel would have none of Me.** They would not consent to His proposals. They walked in direct opposition to His commands; they hankered after the ox-god of Egypt. Their hearts were bewitched by the idols of other nations. The same spirit of apostasy is in all our hearts, and if we have not altogether turned aside from the Lord, it is only His grace that has prevented it.

**(Ps. 81:12) So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart.** No punishment is more just or severe. If people will not be checked, but madly take the bit between their teeth and refuse to obey, who will wonder if the reins are thrown on their necks and they are left alone to work out their destruction. It is better to be given to the lions than to the lusts of our hearts.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**How did God react to Israel when they did not listen to His voice?**

## How does God relate to those who have submitted themselves to Him?

Ps. 81:13-16

### Psalm 82:1-8

This is Asaph's sermon to the judges. He speaks plainly; his song is characterized by strength rather than sweetness. This is clear proof that all psalms and hymns need not be direct expressions to God. We may, according to the example of this Psalm, admonish one another in song. Asaph saw much bribery and corruption, and while David punished it with the sword, Asaph resolved to scourge it with a prophetic Psalm. In doing this, the sweet singer was not forsaking his profession as the Lord's musician; he was praising God when he rebuked sin. If he was not making music, he was hushing discord, when he told the rulers to dispense impartial justice. This Psalm needs no formal division.

**(Ps. 82:1) God stands in the congregation of the mighty.** He sees all that is done by the great ones of the earth. When they sit in state He stands over them, ready to act if they pervert justice. Judges will be judged, and to justices, justice will be dispensed. Our elected and appointed officials should remember this. Some of them should go to Asaph's school until they have mastered this Psalm. Their harsh decisions and strange judgments are made in the presence of Him who will surely visit them for every inappropriate act. There is no partiality with the champion of the poor and needy (Col. 3:25). A higher authority will criticize the decisions of petty sessions, and even the decisions of our most impartial judges will be revised by the High Court of heaven.

**He judges among the gods.** They are gods to others, but He is God to them. He lends them His name, and this is their authority to act as judges. Yet they must be careful not to misuse the power, for the Judge of judges is in session among them.

**(Ps. 82:2) How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?** It is indirectly stated that the judges had been unjust and corrupt; they not only excused the wicked, but also made decisions against the righteous. A little of this is too much, a short time too long. Some plaintiffs could get their claims favorably settled at once, while others were wearing out their lives waiting for an audience, or else they were robbed by legal process because their opponents had the judge's ear. How long were such things to be perpetuated? Would they never remember the Great Judge and renounce their wickedness? This verse is so grandly stern that one is tempted to say, "Surely an Elijah is here."

**Selah.** This gives the offenders a pause to consider and confess.

**(Ps. 82:3) Defend the poor and fatherless.** Cease to do evil, learn to do well, and do not look after the interests of the wealthy who offer you bribes. Protect the rights of the needy, and uphold the claims of orphans, whose property too often becomes a prey. Do not hunt down the peasant for gathering a few sticks, and do not allow the wealthy swindler to break through the meshes of the law.

**(Ps. 82:5) They do not know, nor do they understand.** It is a wretched plight for a nation when its justices know no justice and its judges lack judgment. Not to know duty, nor to wish to know it, is the mark of an incorrigible criminal rather than a magistrate. Yet such a stigma was justly set on Israel's rulers.

**They walk about in darkness.** They are as reckless as they are ignorant. Being both ignorant and wicked, they still dare to pursue a path in which knowledge and righteousness is essential. They go without hesitation, forgetful of their responsibilities and the punishment they are incurring.

**(Ps. 82:6) I said, "You are gods."** The greatest honor was placed on them. They were delegated gods, temporarily clothed with a little of the authority by which the Lord judges the sons of men.

**And all of you are children of the Most High.** This was their *ex officio* character, not their moral or spiritual relationship. There must be some government among the people, and since angels are not sent to dispense it, God allows people to rule over people. He endorses their offices, but the prostitution of it becomes an insult to His prerogatives. Magistrates would have no right to condemn the guilty if God had not sanctioned the establishment of government, the administration of law, and the execution of sentences. Here the Spirit speaks honorably of these offices, even when it censures the officers. It teaches us to give honor to whom honor is due, and to give honor to the office even if we censure the officer holder.

**(Ps. 82:7) But you shall die like men.** What sarcasm! Great as the office made them, they were still human and must die. To every judge this verse is a death memo! They must leave the bench to stand at the bar, and on the way must take off the robe and put on the shroud.

**(Ps. 82:8) Arise, O God, judge the earth.** Come, Judge of all mankind, put the bad judges to Your bar and end their corruption and despotism. This is the world's true hope of rescue from the fangs of tyranny.

**For You shall inherit all nations.** The time will come when all races will acknowledge God and accept Him as their King. There is one who is "King by right divine," and He is even now on His way. The last days will see Him enthroned,

and all unrighteous potentates will be broken by His potent scepter. The Second Coming is still earth's brightest hope. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **Who is God speaking to when He addresses those as gods in Psalm 82:1 & 6? Could some be addressed in the same manner today?**

Ex. 4:16    Ex. 7:1    Ex. 22:28    Ex. 23:3    Lev. 19:15    Deut. 1:16-17    Isa. 1:17    John 10:34-35

### **Psalm 83:1-18**

**A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.** This is the last time we meet this eloquent writer. The patriotic poet sings again of imminent wars and dangers, but it is not the godless song of a thoughtless nation entering war with a light heart. Asaph is well aware of the serious dangers from powerful confederate nations, but his soul in faith remains on Jehovah, as the poet preacher inspires his countrymen to pray. The Asaph who wrote this song was in all probability the person in 2 Chr. 20:14; the internal evidence that refers the subject of the Psalm to the time of Jehoshaphat is overwhelming. The division in the camp of the confederate people in the wilderness of Tekoa not only broke up their league, but also led to a mutual slaughter, which crippled the power of some of the nations for many years afterward. They thought to destroy Israel and destroyed each other.

#### **Division**

- The Psalm begins with an appeal to God in a general manner, verses 1-4.
- The psalmist details the confederacy, verses 5-8.
- This leads to an urgent prayer for the enemy's overthrow, verses 9-15.
- Here is an expression of desire that God's glory may be promoted by this, verses 16-18.

**(Ps. 83:1) Do not keep silent, O God!** Man is boisterous, so do not be speechless. Man rails and reviles. Will You reply? One word of Yours can deliver Your people. Lord, break Your silence and let Your voice be heard.

**Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God!** Here the appeal is to EL, the Mighty One. He is urged to act and speak because His nation suffers and is in great jeopardy. The psalmist looks entirely to God; he does not ask for "a leader bold and brave," or for any form of human force. Asaph casts His burden on the Lord, well assured that His eternal power and Godhead can meet every difficulty.

**(Ps. 83:2) For behold, Your enemies make a tumult.** They do not spare their words; like a hungry pack of dogs, they all bark at the same time. They are so certain of devouring Your people that they already shout over the feast.

**And those who hate You have lifted up their head.** Confident of conquest, they proudly exalt themselves, as if their anticipated victories were already obtained. Israel's enemies were also God's enemies, and they are described to add intensity to the intercession.

**(Ps. 83:3) They have taken crafty counsel against Your people.** Our enemies use their wits and put their heads together. They discuss their demands and campaign plans with great treachery and serpentine cunning. Malice is cold-blooded enough to plot with deliberation. Pride, though never wise, is often allied with craftiness.

**And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.** Hidden from all harm are the Lord's chosen. Their enemies do not think so, for they hope to strike. But they might as well attempt to destroy the angels before God's throne.

**(Ps. 83:4) They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation." That the name of Israel may be remembered no more.** They would blot them out of history as well as existence. Evil is intolerant of good. If Israel had left Edom alone, Edom still could not have been quiet; like its ancestor, it seeks to kill the Lord's chosen.

**(Ps. 83:5) For they have consulted together with one consent.** They are hearty and unanimous in their plans. They seem to have one fierce heart against the chosen people and their God. **They form a confederacy against You.** They aim at the Lord through His saints. They make a covenant, ratify it with blood, and resolutely band together to fight the Mighty God.

**(Ps. 83:6) Assyria also has joined with them.** Assyria was a rising power, anxious for growth, and it early distinguished itself for evil. What a motley group! A league against Israel is always attractive and gathers nations into its confederacy. Herod and Pilate are friends if Jesus is to be crucified.

**They have helped the children of Lot.** All these came to the aid of Moab and Ammon, the two fiercest nations in the confederacy. They were ten to one against Israel, and yet she overcame all her enemies. Israel's name is not blotted out. Yet most of her adversaries are now only a name; their power and excellence are gone.

**Selah.** There was good reason for a pause when the nation was in jeopardy. Yet it needs faith to make a pause, for unbelief is always in a hurry.

**(Ps. 83:12) Who said, "Let us take for ourselves the pastures of God for a possession."** Viewing the temple and the tribes' dwellings as belonging to God, these greedy plunderers determined to evict the inhabitants, kill them, and become both landlords and tenants. These were large words and dark designs, but God could bring them all to nothing.

It is useless to say, **Let us take**, if God does not give. Those who rob God's house will find they have a property reeking with a curse. It will plague them and their descendants forever. "Will a man rob God?" (Mal. 3:8). Let him try. He will find it hot and heavy work.

**(Ps. 83:15) So pursue them with Your tempest, and frighten them with Your storm.** The Lord will follow His enemies; He will alarm and chase them until they are put to a hopeless rout. He did this, according to the prayer of this Psalm, for his servant Jehoshaphat. And in the same way, He will come to the rescue of any or all of His chosen.

**(Ps. 83:16) Fill their face with shame, that they may seek Your name, O LORD.** Shame has often weaned people from idols and made them seek the Lord. If this was not the happy result with the Lord's enemies, it would be so with His people, who are prone to error. They would be humbled by His mercy and ashamed because of His grace. Then they would return to the earnest worship of Jehovah, who had delivered them.

**(Ps. 83:17)** When good results did not follow, the people remained fierce and obstinate, and justice was invoked to carry out the capital sentence. **Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; yes, let them be put to shame and perish.** What else could be done with them? It was better they perish than Israel be torn up. What a terrible doom to be **confounded and dismayed forever**, all their schemes and hopes defeated, their bodies and souls full of anguish without end. May our souls be delivered from such shameful perishing.

**(Ps. 83:18) That they may know that You, whose name alone is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth.** When they heard about the Lord's marvelous deeds in defeating this large confederacy, the heathen would be compelled to acknowledge Jehovah's greatness. "The fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel" (2 Chr. 20:29). The Lord is the Most High. He who is self-existent is infinitely above all; the earth is only His footstool. The godless disregard this, but at times, the Lord's wonderful works compel even the most unwilling to adore His majesty.

This soul-stirring lyric has risen from complaint to adoration. Let us in our worship always do the same. National trouble called out the nation's poet laureate, and he well described her sorrows, prayers, and hopes. Sacred literature owes much to sorrow and distress. How enriching is the hand of adversity!

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Why is Israel today a festering sore to the Arab states and can Psalm 83:5 be applicable in this situation?**

### Ps. 84:1-12

It matters little when this Psalm was written, or by whom. Its perfume is Davidic; it smells of the mountain heather and the lonely wilderness where King David lodged during his many wars. This sacred ode is one of the choicest of the collection. It has a mild radiance that entitles it to be called "The Pearl of Psalms." If the twenty-third is the most popular, the one-hundred-and-third the most joyful, the one-hundred-and-nineteenth the most deeply personal, and the fifty-first the most plaintive, this is the sweetest of the Psalms of peace.

Pilgrimages to the tabernacle were a grand feature of Jewish life. In our country, pilgrimages to the shrine of Thomas of Canterbury and our Lady of Walsingham were so frequent that it affected the entire population. Because of these pilgrimages, roads were constructed, hotels were built and maintained, and special literature was created. This may help us understand the influence of a pilgrimage on the ancient Israelites. Families journeyed together in groups that grew at each resting place. They camped in sunny glades, sang in unison along the roads, and toiled together over hills and through swamps. As they traveled, happy memories were stored, never to be forgotten. One who was barred from the holy company of pilgrims and the congregation's devout worship, would find in this Psalm an expression for their mournful spirit.

**(Ps. 84:1)** Because it is **Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts**, it is precious to Your people. Your pavilion is the center of the camp, and around it Your creatures gather and look to *You* as armies look to the tent of the king. *You* rule all the companies of Your people with such goodness that they rejoice in Your dwelling place. The bands of Your saints hail You with joyful loyalty as Jehovah of hosts.

**(Ps. 84:2) My soul longs**, it hurts, and it sorrows to meet with the saints in the house of the Lord. The desire was deep and insatiable; his soul was yearning for God; **"Yes, even faints**, as though it could not hold out but was exhausted by the delay. He had holy lovesickness; he was wasted with inward consumption because he was barred from the Lord's worship in the appointed place.

**For the courts of the LORD.** The soul of the psalmist longed to stand once again in those areas that were dedicated to holy adoration. True subjects love the courts of their king.

**My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.** It was God that he yearned for, the only living and true God, and his whole nature entered into this longing.

**(Ps. 84:3) Even the sparrow has found a home.** He envied the sparrows that lived around the house of God and picked up stray crumbs in the courts. He wished that he could visit the sacred assemblies and carry away some heavenly food.

**And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.** He also envied the swallows whose nests were built under the eaves of the priest's houses. There they found a place for their young as well as for themselves. We rejoice not only in our personal religious opportunities, but also in the great blessing of taking our children to the sanctuary. The church of God is a house for us and a nest for our little ones.

**Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.** The birds came close to the altars; no one could restrain them, nor would they want to. David wanted to come and go as freely as the birds. He repeats the blessed name, **LORD of hosts**; he finds in it a sweetness to cure his inner hunger. Probably, David was with the host, and so he emphasized this title of the Lord, which teaches that He is in the tented field as well as within the holy curtains.

**(Ps. 84:5) Whose heart is set on pilgrimage.** Those who love God's ways are blessed. When we have God's ways in our hearts, and our hearts in His ways, we are what and where we should be. Then we will enjoy divine approval.

**Ps. 84:8) O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer.** Permit me to go to *Your* house, but if not, let my cry be heard. *You* listen to the united supplications of *Your* saints; do not shut out my solitary petition, unworthy though I am.

**Give ear, O God of Jacob!** Though Jehovah of hosts, *You* are also the covenant God of solitary pleaders like Jacob. Consider my sorrowful petition. I wrestle alone with *You*, while the company of *Your* people have gone on to happier scenes. I beg *You* to bless me. I am resolved to hold *You* until *You* speak grace to my soul. The repetition of the request denotes his eagerness for a blessing. What a mercy, that if we cannot meet with the saints, we can speak to their Master!

**Selah.** A pause was needed after so passionate a cry, so earnest a prayer.

**(Ps. 84:12) O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!** This is the key to the Psalm. The worship is that of faith, and the blessedness is only for believers. No formal worshiper can enter this secret. You must know the Lord by the life of real faith, or you can have no true rejoicing in the Lord's worship, His house, His Son, or His ways. Dear reader, how is it with your soul?

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Give the spiritual meaning of the sparrow and the swallow (Ps. 84:3).**

Ps. 27:4    Matt. 8:20

**Who alone can satisfy the aspirations of the immortal soul?**

Ps. 42:1-2    Ps. 84:5

### Psalm 85:1-13

Our belief is that David penned this national hymn when the land was oppressed by the Philistines, and that in the spirit of prophecy, he foretold the peaceful years of his reign and the national rest in Solomon's time. This Psalm has an inner sense in which Jesus and His salvation are the key. The presence of Jesus the Savior reconciles earth and heaven and secures the golden age and the balmy days of universal peace.

**(Ps. 85:1) LORD, You have been favorable to Your land.** The self-existent, all-sufficient JEHOVAH is addressed by the name He used to reveal Himself to Moses when His people were in bondage (Ex. 3:14). It is wise to dwell on the aspects of the divine character that stir the sweetest memories of His love. Sweeter still is the dear name we use to begin our prayers, "Our Father." The psalmist speaks of Canaan as the Lord's land. God chose it for His people, gave it to them by covenant, conquered it by His power, and lived there in mercy. It was only proper that He would smile on His land. It is wise to plead the Lord's interest with ours, to lash our little boat close to His great ship, and to experience a sacred fellowship in the storms of life. It is *our* land that is devastated, but Jehovah, it is also *low* land. The psalmist dwells on the Lord's favor to the chosen land. God's past doings are prophetic of what He will do. Thus, the encouraging argument, **LORD, You have been favorable to Your land**, so please deal graciously with it again. Many times the foes were baffled, pestilence was stopped, famine was averted, and deliverance was granted, all because of the Lord's favor. Again that favor is invoked. This is powerful reasoning with an immutable God. "Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not" (Lam. 3:22). Know this, we never will be consumed once He has been favorable to us. From this example, let us learn how to plead our cause before God.

It is clear that Israel was not in exile, or this prayer would not have referred to **Your land** but to the nation.

**You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.** When downtrodden and oppressed by their sins, the Ever-merciful looked on them, changed their sad condition, chased away the invaders, and gave His people rest. He had done this not once, not twice, but times without number. We too have been brought into captivity of soul by backsliding, but we have not been left there. The God who brought Jacob back from Padan Aram to his father's house (Gen. 33:18) has restored us to the enjoyment of holy fellowship. Will He do it again? Let us appeal to Him with Jacob-like wrestling, imploring Him to be sovereignly gracious despite our provocations of His love. Let declining churches remember their history, and with holy confidence, let them plead the Lord to again be favorable.

**(Ps. 85:2) You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people.** Often He had done this, pausing to pardon when His sword was ready to punish. Who is a pardoning God like *You*, Jehovah? *You* are "slow to anger, and abounding in

mercy" (Ps. 103:8). Every believer in Jesus enjoys the blessing of pardoned sin. We should consider this priceless blessing the pledge of all other needful mercies. Plead it with God, "Lord, You have pardoned me. Will you let me perish for lack of grace, or fall into my enemies' hands for want of help? You will not leave Your work unfinished."

You have covered all their sin. All of it, every spot and every wrinkle, the veil of love has covered. Sin has been divinely put out of sight. Hiding it beneath the propitiatory, covering *it* with the sea of the atonement, blotting it out, and making it to cease to be, the Lord has put it so completely away that even His omniscient eye sees it no more. What a miracle! To cover the sun would be easy work compared with the covering of sin. Sin is not removed without the covering atonement, the great sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. It is most effectively put away forever by this one act. What a covering His blood offers!

**(Ps. 85:3) You have taken away all Your wrath.** When sin is removed, anger is removed. Many times God's longsuffering took from Israel the punishments that had been justly given! Many times the Lord's chastising was removed when our waywardness called for heavier strokes!

**You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.** Even when judgments were most severe, the Lord in mercy stayed His hand. In mid-volley, He restrained His thunder. When ready to destroy, He averted His face from His purpose of judgment and allowed mercy to come between. The book of Judges is full of these illustrations, and the psalmist does well to quote them while he intercedes. Is our experience not equally studded with instances in which judgment has been stayed and tenderness has ruled? What a difference between fierce anger, which is feared and deprecated here, and the Lord speaking peace, which is prophesied in verse 8. There are many changes in the Christian experience, and we must not despair when we are undergoing the drearier portion, for soon, very soon, it may be transformed into gladness.

**(Ps. 85:4) Restore us, O God of our salvation.** This was the main business. If the erring tribes would repent, they would be restored. It is not that God needs to turn His anger; it is that we need restoration. This is the hinge of the whole matter. Our trials frequently rise from our sins, and they will not go until the sins go. We need, to turn from our sins, but only God can turn us. God the Savior must put His hand to the work. This is indeed the main part of our salvation. Conversion is the dawn of salvation. To turn a heart to God is as difficult as making the world revolve on its axis, but when someone prays for conversion, there is hope. Those who turn to prayer are beginning to turn from sin. It is a blessed sight to see a nation turn to God. Lord, send Your converting grace on our lap, that we may live to see the people flocking to Your loving worship. **And cause Your anger toward us to cease.** Make an end of it. Let it no longer burn. When sinners cease to rebel, the Lord ceases to be angry with them. When they return to Him, He returns to them. He is first in reconciliation. He restores when they could never restore themselves. May all those who are now enduring the hiding of Jehovah's face earnestly seek to again be restored to the Lord.

Having offered earnest intercession for the afflicted but penitent nation, the sacred poet waits for an answer in the true spirit of faith. He pauses in joyful confidence. Then in ecstatic triumph he gives voice to his hopes in the richest form of song.

**(Ps. 85:8) I will hear what God the LORD will speak.** When we believe that God hears us, it is only natural that we should be eager to hear Him. Only from Him can come the word that speaks peace to troubled spirits. Human voices are feeble in such cases, a bandage far too narrow for the wound. But God's voice is power; He speaks, and it is done. When we hear Him, our distress is ended. Happy is the humble petitioner, who has the grace to wait patiently at the Lord's door, and wait until His love chases all sorrow far away.

**(Ps. 85:10) Mercy and truth have met together.** In answer to prayer, the delighted psalmist sees God's attributes blessing the once afflicted nation. Mercy comes with truth to fulfill God's faithful promise. The people immediately recognize Jehovah's grace and veracity; to them, He is neither a tyrant nor a deceiver.

**Righteousness and peace have kissed.** The Lord, whose just severity inflicted pain, now in pity sends peace to heal the wound. The people, now willing to forsake their sins, follow righteousness and find peace. "The war drum throbbed no longer, and the battle flags were furled." Idolatry was forsaken. Jehovah was adored.

This appears to be the immediate and primary meaning of these verses. Yet the inner sense is Christ Jesus, the reconciling Word. In Him, God's attributes unite in glad unanimity in the salvation of the guilty. They meet and embrace in a way that was inconceivable to our just fears or to our enlightened hopes. God is as true as if He had fulfilled every letter of His threats, and as righteous as if He had never spoken peace to a sinner's conscience. His love, in undiminished splendor, shines. But none of His ever-blessed characteristics is eclipsed.

**(Ps. 85:11) Truth shall spring out of the earth.** Unfulfilled promises that lie like buried seeds will spring up and yield harvests of joy. People renewed by grace will learn to be true to God and one another. They will abhor the falsehood they once loved.

**(Ps. 85:13) Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps our pathway.** God's march of right will leave a track where His people can joyfully follow. He who struck in justice will also bless in justice. In both, He will make His righteousness obvious, so as to affect the hearts and lives of all His people. These are the blessings of our Lord's first advent. The blessings of His Second Coming will be more conspicuous. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**On what basis can the Psalmist pray intensely for God's anger (Ps. 85:5) to cease?**

**Psalm 86:1-17**

**(Ps. 86:7) In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me.** Here is a pious resolve backed by a judicious reason. It is useless to cry to those who cannot or will not hear. Convince people that prayer has no effect on God, and they will have none of it. In these busy, troubled times, people cannot; afford to waste time in unavailing prayer. Our experience confirms the belief that Jehovah, the living God, really does aid those who call on Him. We do not pray because we are fascinated by prayers that prove to be mere folly and superstition. We pray because we find it a practical and effective means of obtaining help from God in the hour of need. There is no reason to pray if there is no expectation that the Lord will answer. Who would plead with the wind or find solace in supplicating the waves? The mercy seat is a mockery if there is no hearing and no answering. David, as the following verses show, believed the Lord to be the living and potent God; indeed, to be "God alone." It was on this account that he resolved in every hour of trouble to call on Him.

**(Ps. 86:11) Unite my heart to fear Your name.** Having taught me one way, give me one heart to walk therein, for too often, I feel a heart and a heart, two natures contending, two principles struggling for sovereignty. Our minds are apt to be divided between a variety of objects, like a trickling stream that wastes its force in a hundred tiny channels. Our great desire should be to have all of the energies of our life poured into one channel and have that channel directed toward the Lord alone. A person with a divided heart is weak, while the person with one object is *the* person whom God braced and inwardly knit by His uniting grace, will be powerful for good. To fear God is the beginning, the growth, and the maturity of wisdom (Prov. 9:10), and we should be undividedly given to it, heart and soul.

**(Ps. 86:13) For great is Your mercy toward me.** Personal experience is a master singer. Whatever You are to others, to me Your mercy is most notable. The psalmist claims to be singing among the loudest singers because his debt to divine mercy is among the greatest.

**And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.** From the direst death and the deepest dishonor, David had been kept by God. His enemies would have done more than send him to hell, had they been able to. His sense of sin made him feel as if the most overwhelming destruction would have been his portion, had not grace intervened. And so he speaks of deliverance from the deepest abode of lost spirits. There are some alive now who can use this language. He who pens these lines humbly confesses that he is one. Left to myself, to indulge in my passions, to rush on with my natural impetuosity, and to defy the Lord with my reckless frivolity, I was headed for the lowest abyss. For me, there was one of two alternatives: great mercy or the lowest hell. Thus, with my whole heart, I sing, **Great is Your mercy toward me, and You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.**

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

"For great is Your mercy toward me and You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol." (Ps. 86:13) **What is the ground for expecting deliverance and not spending an eternity in hell?**

Ps. 86:5 Heb. 5:7-11

**Psalm 87:1-7**

**(Ps. 87:1) His foundation is in the holy mountain.** God has chosen to found His earthly temple on the mountains. He might have selected other spots, but it was His pleasure to have His chosen live on Zion. His election made the mountains holy. His determination ordained and set them apart for His use.

The church's foundation, the mystical Jerusalem, is laid in Jehovah's eternal, immutable, and invincible decrees. He wills that the church will be. He makes all arrangements for her calling, salvation, maintenance, and perfection. All His attributes, like the mountains around Jerusalem, lend their strength to her support. The Lord has not founded His church on the sand of carnal policy or in the morass of human kingdoms, but on His power and godhead. And they are pledged for the establishment of His beloved church, which is to Him the chief of all His works. The founding of the church of God in the ancient covenant engagements of eternity is a great theme for meditation. The abrupt character of this first verse indicates long consideration on the writer's part. It leads to his bursting forth in wonder and adoration. Well might such a theme cause his heart to glow. Rome stands on her seven hills and has never lacked a poet's tongue to sing her glories. But Zion is more glorious among the eternal mountains of God. While pen can write or mouth can speak, *Your* praise will never lie buried in glorious silence.

**(Ps. 87:3) Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God!** This is true of Jerusalem, Israel's capital city. Its history, the story of the nation, is full of glorious incidents. Its use as the dwelling place of the true God and His worship was preeminently glorious. **Glorious things** were taught in her streets and seen in her temples, **Glorious things** were foretold, and Jerusalem was the type of the most glorious things of all.

Since the Lord has chosen you and delights to dwell in you, city of beauty, none can rival you. *You* are the eye of the world, the pearl, the queen of all the cities of the universe, the true "eternal city," the metropolitan, the mother of us all. The years to come will unveil your beauties to the astonished eyes of all, and the day of your splendor will come to its sevenfold noon. **Selah.** With the prospect of a converted world, and with the most implacable foes transformed into friends, it was proper for the psalmist to pause. How could he sing the glories of newborn Tyre and Ethiopia, received with open arms into union with Zion, until he had taken breath and prepared both voice and heart for so divine a song.

**(Ps. 87:4) Behold, O Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia.** These also will bow before the Lord. Philistia will renounce its ancient hate. Tyre will not be swallowed by thoughts of commerce. Distant Ethiopia will not be too far off to receive the Lord's salvation.

**(Ps. 87:6) The LORD will record, when He registers the peoples: "This one was born there."** At the great census that the Lord will take, He will number the nations and make an exact registry, whether they were descendants of Babylonians, Tyrians, or other far off heathen nations. May it be our happy lot to be numbered with the Lord's chosen, both in life and death, in the church roll below and in the church roll above. Jehovah's census of His chosen will differ greatly from ours. He will count many whom we would disown, and He will leave out many whom we would have counted. His registration is infallible. Pray for the adoption and regeneration that will secure us a place among the heavenborn. It was thought to be a great honor to have one's name written in the golden book of the Republic of Venice; kings and princes paid dearly for the honor. Yet the Book of Life confers far rarer dignity on all whose names are recorded in it

**(Ps. 87:7) All my springs are in you.** Did the poet mean that he would find all his joys in Zion, or that he would look to the Lord for all inspiration, comfort, strength, joy, life, and everything? The latter is the truest doctrine. Churches do not have such sufficiency that we can afford to look to them for such things. But the Lord who founded the church is the eternal source of all our supplies. Looking to Him, we will never fail or flag. Our experience leads us to look to the Lord by faith and say, **All my springs are in You.** The springs of my faith and all my graces, the springs of my life and all my pleasures, the springs of my activity and all its right doings, the springs of my hope and all its heavenly anticipations, all lie in You, my Lord. Without Your Spirit, I would be a dry well, a mocking cistern, destitute of power to bless myself or others. Lord, I am assured that I belong to the regenerate whose life is in You. I feel that I cannot live without You.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **What is the relationship of Zion to Israel and what will be its place in the future?**

Ps. 48:1-8    Ps. 78:67-68    Ps. 87:1-7

### **Psalm 88:1-18**

**A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.** This sad complaint does not read like a song, nor can we conceive how it could be called a song of praise or triumph. Yet perhaps it was intentionally called this to show how faith "glories in trials." If ever there was a song of sorrow and a Psalm of sadness, this is one. **The sons of Korah** had often sung jubilant odes, but they are now ordered to take charge of this mournful dirge-like hymn. Servants and singers must not be choosers. **To the Chief Musician.** He must supervise the singers and see that they do their duty well. Holy sorrow ought to be expressed with as much care as joyful praise, for nothing should be slovenly in the Lord's house.

**(Ps. 88:7) Your wrath lies heavy upon me.** It is a dreadful plight, the worst! Wrath is heavy. God's wrath is crushing beyond conception; when it presses hard, the soul is indeed oppressed. God's wrath is the very hell of hell. When it weighs on the conscience, one feels a torment that only the damned spirits can exceed. Joy or peace, or even numbness of indifference, there can be none to the person loaded with this most tremendous of burdens.

**And You have afflicted me with all Your waves.** Heman pictures God's wrath breaking over him like the waves of the sea, which swell, rage, and crash with fury on the shore. How could his frail bark hope to survive those cruel breakers, which were white like the hungry teeth of death? Seas of affliction seemed to rush on him with the force of Omnipotence. He felt oppressed and afflicted like Israel in Egypt. It appeared impossible to suffer more. He had exhausted the methods of adversity and endured all its waves. So have we imagined, and yet it is not really quite so bad. The worst case might be worse, for there are alleviations to every woe. God has other and more terrible waves that could sweep us into the infernal abyss, where hope has long since been banished.

**Selah.** There was need to rest. Above the breakers, the swimmer lifts his head and looks around, breathing until the next wave. Sorrow must have its pauses. Nights are broken into watches, and even mourning has its intervals. This sad music is a great stress on both voices and instruments. It is well to give the singers the relief of silence for a while.

**(Ps. 88:8) You have put away my acquaintances far from me.** If ever we need friends, it is in the dreary hour of depression and the weary time of bodily sickness. The sufferer complains because divine providence has removed his friends. Perhaps his disease was infection, so that he was legally separated from acquaintances. Perhaps fear kept them away from his plague-stricken house, or perhaps his good name had become so injured that they naturally avoided him. Most friends require only a small excuse for turning their backs on the afflicted. The swallows offer no apology for leaving

in winter. Yet, it is a piercing pain that arises from the desertion of dear associates; it is a wound that festers and refuses to heal.

**You have made me an abomination to them.** Because the Lord had done something to him, his friends turned away as though he had become loathsome and contaminating. He brings his complaint to the prime mover. Those who are still flattered by their companions in pleasure can little guess the wretchedness that would be their portion if they ever became poor or were slandered.

**(Ps. 88:12) Shall Your wonders be known in the dark?** If not permitted to prove Jehovah's goodness here, how could the singer do so in the land of darkness and death? Could his tongue, when turned into a clod of earth, charm the dull cold ear of death? Is not a living dog better than a dead lion; is not a living believer of more value to God's cause on earth than all the departed put together?

**And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?** What will be told of You in the regions of oblivion? Where memory and love are lost, and men are unknowing and unknown, forgetful and forgotten, what witness to divine holiness can be carried? The whole argument amounts to this: If the believer dies unblessed, how will God's honor be preserved? Who will bear witness to His truth and righteousness?

**(Ps. 88:13) But to You I have cried out, O LORD.** I have continued to pray for help, even though You have long delayed answering me. A true-born child of God may be known by his continuing cry. A hypocrite is great at a spurt, but the genuine believer holds on until the suit is won.

**(Ps. 88:14) LORD, why do You cast off my soul?** You chose me, will You reject me? Will Your elect become Your reprobates? Do You, like changeable men, obtain a divorce? Can Your beloved become *Your* cast off?

**Why do You hide Your face from me?** Will You not even look on me? Can You not afford a solitary smile? Why this severity to one who in brighter days has basked in the light of Your favor? We may ask the Lord these questions. No, we must ask Him these questions. This is not familiarity but holy boldness. If we seriously beg Him to show why He contends with us, it will help us remove the evil that provokes the Lord to jealousy. He cannot act in other than a right and gracious manner. There is a sufficient reason, in the judgment of His loving heart, for every stroke of His rod. Let us try to learn that reason and profit by it.

**(Ps. 88:18) Loved one and friend You have put far from me.** Even when they are near me, they are so unable to swim in such deep waters that they stand on the shore while I am buffeted by the billows. Alas! They shun me. The dearest lover of all is afraid of such a distracted one, and those who took counsel with me avoid me! The Lord Jesus knew the meaning of this, in all its wormwood and gall. In dreadful loneliness, He trod the wine press, and all His garments were stained with the red blood of those sour grapes. Lonely sorrow falls to the lot of many. Do not weep. Enter close communion with that dearest lover and friend, who is never far from His tested ones.

**And my acquaintances into darkness,** or, even better, "my acquaintance is darkness." I am only familiar with sadness, for all else has vanished. I am a child crying alone in the dark. Will the heavenly Father leave His child there? Then he breaks it off. And anything more from us would spoil the abruptness of the unexpected *finis (end)*.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### Show why Psalm 88:3-9 seems to be speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ps. 22:1 Ps. 88:14-18 Matt. 26:31-35, 39 Matt. 27:46 John 7:5 John 16:32 Eph. 4:9-11

### Psalm 89:1-52

We have now reached the majestic Covenant Psalm, which, according to the Jewish arrangement, closes the third book of the Psalms. It is the word of a believer pleading with God during a great national disaster. Because of Jehovah's faithfulness, the writer is urging the grand argument of covenant engagements and expecting deliverance and help.

**(Ps. 89:1) I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever.** This is a devout and commendable resolution when one is in great trouble because of the Lord's apparent departure from His covenant and promise. Whatever we observe or experience, we still should praise God for His mercies; they most certainly remain the same, whether we perceive them or not. Sense sings now and then, but faith is an eternal songster. Whether others sing or not, believers must never give up. Believers should be constant in praise because God's love cannot by any possibility have changed, even if Providence seems to frown. We are not only to believe the Lord's goodness, but also to rejoice in it forever.

**(Ps. 89:3) I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David.** This was the basis of the psalmist's confidence in God's mercy and truth. He knew that the Lord had made and confirmed a covenant of grace with David and his descendants. He condenses the original covenant, quoting God's words, which were revealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Sam. 7). Well might the psalmist write, "I have said," (v. 2) when he knew that Jehovah had said, **I have sworn.** David was the Lord's elect, and a covenant was made with him that ran along the line of his descendants until it received a final and never ending fulfillment in "the Son of David." David's house must be royal. As long as there was a scepter in Judah, David's descendants must be the only rightful dynasty. The great "King of the Jews" died with that tide above His head, which was written in the three current languages of the then known world (John 19:19, 20)

Let both reader and writer pause over these glorious lines and sing of the Lord's mercies. He avows the bonds of the covenant, and in so doing He gives a renewed pledge of His faithfulness. **I have**, says the Lord, and yet again, **I have**, as though He was eager to dwell on the theme.

We also would lovingly linger over the words of the covenant made with David, reading it carefully and with joy. "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from you body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16). After reading this, remember that the Lord has said to us by His servant Isaiah, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:3).

**(Ps. 89:8) Your faithfulness also surrounds You.** He dwells in faithfulness. It is said to be the sustenance of His only begotten Son, the express image of His person. None in all creation is as faithful as He. His angels might prove faithless if He left them, but He "will not lie to David" (verse 35) or forget His oath.

**Ps. 89:9) You rule the raging of the sea.** Always, even in the hour of the ocean's maddest fury, the Lord controls it. At the Red Sea, the foaming billows saw their God and divided in awe (Ex. 14:21).

**When its waves rise, You still them.** None can do this, and to attempt it would be madness. But the Lord's "Hush!" silences the boisterous storm. The Lord's Anointed calmed the storm over Galilee, for He is Lord of all (Mark 6:51). The great Ruler of Providence still governs the fickle wills of His people and quiets the tumults of His saints. As a mother stills her child, the Lord calms the fury of the sea, the anger of the people, the adversity of a tempest, the despair of a soul, and the rage of hell. "The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood, and the Lord sits as King forever" (Ps. 29:10).

**(Ps. 89:17) For You are the glory of their strength.** Worldly people need outward prosperity in order to lift their heads, but the saints find more than enough encouragement in God's secret love.

**(Ps. 89:27) Also I will make him My firstborn.** Among the kings, David's descendants were the favored and were indulged with the most love and paternal concern from God. But in Jesus, we see this in the highest degree, for He has preeminence in all things.

By inheritance, He has a more glorious name than any other and is **the highest of the kings of the earth**. Who can rival heaven's Firstborn? The double portion and the government belong to Him. Kings are honored when they honor Him, and those who honor Him are kings! In the millennial glory, we will see what the covenant stores up for the once despised Son of David, but even now, faith sees Him exalted as King of kings and Lord of lords. We bow before You, Heir of all things. Our will is obedient to Your will.

**(Ps. 89:28) My mercy I will keep for him forever.** The kings of David's line needed mercy, and mercy prevented their house from perishing until the Son of Mary came. He needs no mercy for Himself, but He is a representative man, and God's mercy is required for those who are in Him. This mercy is kept forever.

**And my covenant shall stand firm with him.** With Jesus, the covenant is ratified both by the blood of sacrifice and by God's oath. It cannot be canceled or altered. It is an eternal truth, resting on the veracity of One who cannot lie. What exultation fills our hearts when we see that the covenant of grace is sure to all the descendants! It stands firm with Him with whom we are indissolubly united.

**(Ps. 89:29) His seed also I will make to endure forever.** David's seed lives in the Lord Jesus, and the seed of Jesus lives in the believers. Saints are a race that neither death nor hell can kill. As long as God lives, His people must live.

**And his throne as the days of heaven.** Jesus reigns, and will reign, until the skies fall, the heavens dissolve, and the elements melt with fervent heat (2 Pet. 3:12). His throne will stand. What a blessed covenant! Some commentators talk of conditions, but we fail to see any. The promises are absolute. If any conditions can be conceived, they are disposed of in the following verses.

**(Ps. 89:30) If his sons forsake My law and do not walk in My judgments.** It was terribly possible that David's descendants might wander from the Lord, and indeed they did. What then? Was God's mercy to leave David's descendants? Far from it. The seed of the Son of David is apt to turn aside, but will they be cast away? Not a single word supports such an idea. Expositors who fear Calvinistic doctrine have no fear of adding to the word of God, or else they would not have spent time talking about "the conditions" of this absolutely unconditional covenant.

**(Ps. 89:31) If they break My statutes and do not keep My commandments.** The dreadful **if** is suggested again. If it should be so, what then? Death and rejection? No, blessed be God, no! Whether their sin is negative or positive, whether it is forsaking or profanity; whether judgments or commandments are violated, there is not a word as to final destruction, but the very reverse. Legalism will import its ifs, but the Lord slays the ifs as fast as they rise. Eternal shalls and wills make glorious havoc among the ifs and buts.

**(Ps. 89:32) Then I will punish their transgression with the rod,** not with the sword, not with death and destruction, but with a smarting, tingling, and painful rod. Saints must smart if they sin, and God will see to that. He hates sin too much not to visit it; He loves His saints too well not to chasten them. God never plays with His rod. He lays it on the right spot on His children. He visits them with it in their houses, bodies, and hearts. He makes them know that He is grieved with their ways.

He strikes home and chastens **their iniquity with stripes**. The stripes may be many or few, in proportion as the heart is influenced by them. The rod is a covenant blessing and is meant to be used. Since sin is frequent, the rod never rests long. In God's family, the rod is not spared, or the children would be spoiled.

**(Ps. 89:33) Nevertheless.** What a glorious **nevertheless! Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him**. Glorious fear-destroying sentence! This crowns the covenant with exceeding glory. Mercy may seem to depart from the Lord's chosen, but it will not utterly be taken away. Jesus still enjoys divine favor, and we are in Him. Thus, even under the most trying circumstances, the Lord's lovingkindness to each of His chosen will endure. If the covenant could be made void by our sins, it would have been void long before this. And if renewed, its tenure would not be worth an hour's purchase, if it had remained dependent on us.

God may leave His people, and they may suffer and fall. Yet He never can remove His love from them utterly and completely, for that would cast a bad reflection on His truth. This He will never, allow, for He adds, **nor allow My faithfulness to fail**. We fail in all points, but God fails in none. Faithfulness is one of God's eternal characteristics, in which He always places a great emphasis on His glory. His truth is one of His special treasures and crown jewels. He will never permit it to be tarnished in any degree. This passage sweetly assures that the heirs of glory will not be utterly cast off. We have learned this from Christ. Let those deny the safety of the saints who choose to do so. We believe in the gospel rod, not in the penal sword, for His adopted sons.

**(Ps. 89:36) His seed shall endure forever.** David's line in the person of Jesus is endless. The race of Jesus, as represented in successive generations of believers, shows no sign of failure. No power, human or Satanic, can break the Christian succession. As saints die, others will rise to fill their places, so that until the last day, the day of doom, Jesus will have His seed to serve Him.

**And his throne as the sun before Me.** In our Lord Jesus, the dynasty of David remains on the throne. Jesus has never abdicated or been banished. He reigns, and must reign, so long as the sun continues to shine on the earth. A seed and a throne are the covenant's two great promises, and they are as important to us as to our Lord Jesus. We are the seed who must endure forever, and we are protected and raised to nobility by that King whose royalties last forever.

**(Ps. 89:39) You have renounced the covenant of Your servant.** The dispensations of providence made it seem as if the sacred compact had been annulled, though indeed it was not.

**You have profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.** The king had been subject to sorrow and shame; it was as if his diadem had been taken from his head, clashed to the ground, and rolled in the mud. He was a theocratic monarch, and the Lord who gave the crown took it and treated it with contempt—at least so it seemed. In these sad days, we also may repeat the same complaint, for Jesus is not acknowledged in many of the churches, and usurpers have profaned His crown. When we hear of kings and queens set up as "heads of the church," or a priest styled as "The Vicar of Christ," or parliaments and courts legislating the church of God, we may bitterly lament that things have become so wretched. Few there are who will acknowledge the crown rights of King Jesus, for the very subject is considered out of date. "How long, O Lord?" (Rev. 6:10).

**(Ps. 89:40) You have broken down all his hedges.** He was no longer sheltered from the slanderous assaults of contemptuous tongues. The awe that guarded the royal name had ceased to separate him from the commoners. The divinity that hedged a king had departed; the royal family had been like a vineyard in an enclosure, but now the wall had been knocked down and the vineyard was unprotected. It is sorrowfully true that in many places the church's enclosures have been destroyed; the line of demarcation between the church and the world has almost vanished, and the godless fill sacred offices. Lord God, will it always be so? Will Your true vine be deserted by You? Set up the boundaries again, and keep Your church as a vineyard reserved for You.

**You have brought his strongholds to ruin.** The forts were in the enemy's possession, the kingdom's defenses were overthrown and dismantled. So, too, precious truths, which were the bulwarks of the church, have been assailed by heresy from time to time, and the citadels of sound doctrine abandoned to the foe. God, how can You permit this? As the God of truth, will You not rise and tread down falsehood?

**(Ps. 89:41) All who pass by the way plunder him.** Those who pass by pick at the vine. They do it without difficulty because the hedge is gone. Woe is the day when every petty reasoner has an argument against religion. Those in their cups are fluent with objections against the gospel. Although Jesus on the Cross is nothing to them, they pass by without asking what He has done for them. Yet, they can loiter as long as they want if there is an opportunity to drive another nail into His hands and again crucify the Lord. They will not touch Him with the finger of faith; they pick at Him with the hand of malice.

**He is a reproach to his neighbors.** David's successors had unneighborly neighbors. They were a reproach to good fellowship because they were so ready to reproach their neighbor. The Jews were greatly taunted by the surrounding Gentiles when they fell into trouble. At this time, God's people, who fully follow the Lord, are subject to a thousand bitter reproaches. Yet these reproaches are really the reproach of Christ (Heb. 11:26), and are meant for Him. Will it always be so? Will He who deserves to be universally adored be subject to general scorn? Where then is Your faithfulness to Your covenant?

**(Ps. 89:42) You have exalted the right hand of his adversaries.** You have done it, You who swore to give him help and victory. You sided with his enemies and gave them strength to gain supremacy.

**You have made all of his enemies rejoice.** They are boasting over him, glorying in his defeat, and this is done by *You*. God, how is this? Where is the covenant? Have You forgotten Your pledges and promises?

**Ps. 89:43) You have also turned back the edge of his sword.** When he goes to war, he is as unsuccessful as if his sword refused to cut. His sword broke as if it were made of lead. Weapons fail him.

**And have not sustained him in the battle.** His heart, as well as his sword, fails. He wavers. He falls. This has happened to brave men—terrible dread has unnerved them. Today, the church has few swords made of true Jerusalem metal; her sons are pliable, and her ministers yield to pressure. We need men whose edge cannot be turned, men who are firm for truth, keen against error, sharp toward sin, cutting their way into people's hearts. Courage and decision are more needed now than ever. Charity toward heresy is the fashionable vice, and indifference to all truth, under the name of liberal mindedness, is the age's crowning virtue. Lord send us men of the school of Elijah, or at least of Luther and Knox.

**(Ps. 89:44) You have made his glory cease.** The brightness of his reign and the prosperity of his house are gone. His fame is tarnished; his honor is disgraced.

**And cast his throne down to the ground.** He has lost power to govern at home or conquer abroad. This happened to kings of David's line, and, more grievous, it is happening today to the visible kingdom of the Lord Jesus. Where are the glories of Pentecost? Where is the majesty of the Reformation? Where does His kingdom come among the sons of men? Woe to us! The glory has departed and the gospel-throne of Jesus is hidden from our eyes!

**(Ps. 89:46) How long, LORD?** The appeal is to Jehovah, and the argument is the length of the affliction. Chastisement with a rod is not a lengthy matter. Thus, he appeals to God to cut short the time of tribulation.

**(Ps. 89:50) Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants.** Great trouble permitted the ungodly to mock them, and so the Lord's pity is requested. Will a father stand by and watch his children insulted? The psalmist pleads for the Lord to comfort the wretchedness and sorrow brought on His servants by the taunts and jests of their adversaries.

**How I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples.** The psalmist took the scorn of the great and the proud to heart. He felt that all the reproaches which vexed his nation were centered in him. Thus, in sacred sympathy with the people, he poured out his heart. We ought to weep with those that weep; reproach on the saints and their cause should burden us. If we hear Christ blasphemed, or see His servants insulted, and remain unmoved, we do not have the spirit of a true Israelite. Our grief at the grief of the Lord's people may be pleaded in prayer, and it will be an acceptable argument.

**(Ps. 89:52) Blessed be the LORD forevermore!** He ends where he began; he has sailed around the world and again reached the port. Let us bless God before we pray, while we pray, and when we are finished praying. He always deserves it. If we cannot understand Him, we will not distrust Him. When His ways are beyond our judgment, we will not be so foolish as to judge, but we do judge if we consider His dealings to be unkind or unfaithful. He is, He must be, He will be, forever, our blessed God. **Amen and Amen.** All our hearts say so. So be it, Lord. We wish it over and over again. May You be blessed forever.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

The covenant of God with David is the central axis round which this Psalm revolves. **Show from this Psalm how God's faithfulness to His covenant is made the prominent topic of praise and forms the ground of the closing prayer.**

Ps. 27:4 Ps. 89:2, 5, 8, 24, 33, 52 Rom. 3:3

### Psalm 90:1-17

**A Prayer of Moses the man of God.** Many attempts have been made to prove that Moses did not write this Psalm, but we remained convinced that he did. Israel's condition in the wilderness is eminently illustrated in each verse. The style, expressions, and words are so similar to the Pentateuch that the difficulties suggested are as light as air in comparison with the internal evidence that favors its Mosaic origin. Moses was mighty in word and deed, and this Psalm is one of his weighty statements. It is worthy to stand with his glorious oration recorded in Deuteronomy. Moses was a special man of God, and God's chosen man. Inspired by God, honored by God, and faithful to God, he well deserves the name **the man of God**. The Psalm is called **a prayer**. The closing petitions enter its essence, and the preceding verses are a meditation preparatory to prayer. People of God are sure to be people of prayer. This is not Moses' only prayer, but it is just a specimen of the manner in which the seer of Horeb communicated with heaven.

This is the oldest of the Psalms. It stands between two books of the Psalms as a unique composition in grandeur and in sublime antiquity. Many generations of mourners have listened to this Psalm while standing around an open grave. They have been consoled even when they have not perceived its special application to Israel in the wilderness, and so have failed to remember the far higher ground on which believers now stand.

Moses sings of man's frailness and life's shortness. He contrasts it with the eternity of God and finds earnest appeals for compassion.

**(Ps. 90:1) Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.** If we consider the entire Psalm as written for the tribes in the desert, we will see the primary meaning of each verse. Moses says that, though we wander in the howling wilderness, we find a home in You, just as our forefathers did when they came out of Ur of the Chaldees and lived in tents among the Canaanites. The Lord Jehovah, the self-existent God, shelters, protects, preserves, and cherishes His own, His saints. Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the saints dwell in God, and always have. Not in the tabernacle or in the temple do we dwell, but in God Himself.

**(Ps. 90:3) You turn man to destruction.** The human body is resolved into its elements, as if it had been crushed and ground to powder.

**And say, "Return, O children of men,"** return to the dust from which you were taken. Here, human frailty is forcibly set forth. God creates us out of the dust, and back to dust we go at the word of our Creator. God resolves and man dissolves, a word created and a word destroys. Observe how God's action is recognized: Man is not said to die because of the decree of fate or the action of inevitable law, but the Lord is made the agent of all. His hand turns and His voice speaks, and without these, we should not die, and no power on earth or hell could kill us.

**(Ps. 90:5) You carry them away like a flood.** As a flood rushes down the river bed carrying all before it, so does the Lord carry away by death the succeeding generations. As a hurricane sweeps the clouds from the sky, so time removes the children of men.

**They are like a sleep.** Before God, humans must appear as unreal as the dreams of night, the phantoms of sleep. Not only are our plans and devices like a sleep, but we ourselves. "We are such stuff as dreams are made of."

**In the morning they are like grass which grows up.** As grass is green in the morning and hay at night, so people are changed from health to corruption in a few hours. We are not cedars or oaks, only poor grass; it is vigorous in the spring but does not last through the summer. What on earth is more frail than we?

**(Ps. 90:6) In the morning it flourishes and grows up,** blooming with abounding beauty until the meadows are spread with gems. The grass has a golden hour, just as people have a day of flowering glory.

**In the evening it is cut down and withers.** The scythe ends the blossoming of the flowers of the field, and the dews of night weep their fall. This is the history of grass-sown, grown, blown, mown, gone, and the history of man is not much more. Natural decay would end both us and the grass. Few, however, experience the full result of age, for death comes with its scythe and removes our life in the midst of its verdure. How great a change in how short a time! The morning saw the blooming, and the evening sees the withering.

**(Ps. 90:7) This mortality is not accidental, nor was it inevitable in the original of our nature.** It was sin that provoked the Lord to anger. Thus, we die, **for we have been consumed by Your anger.** This is the scythe that mows and the scorching heat that withers. This was the case with the people in the wilderness, whose lives were cut short because of their waywardness. They did not fail because of natural decline but from the blast of God's well-deserved judgments. It must have been a mournful sight for Moses, to see the nation melt during the forty-year pilgrimage, until none remained that came out of Egypt. God's favor is life, but His anger is death. Grass could more readily grow in an oven than people flourish when the Lord is angry with them.

**And by Your wrath we are terrified.** A sense of divine anger confounded them; they lived as though they were doomed. This is partly true of us. Now that immortality and life are brought to light by the gospel, death has changed its aspect. To believers in Jesus, it is no longer a judicial execution. Anger and wrath are the sting of death, and in these, the believer has no share. Love and mercy now conduct us to glory by way of the grave.

It is not proper to read these words at a Christian's funeral without an explanation that shows how little they belong to believers in Jesus. We are privileged, far beyond those with whom He was not well pleased. This passage was written by the leader of legal dispensation, under circumstances of special judgment, to a people under a penal censure. To apply it to those who fall asleep in Jesus seems the height of blundering. We may learn much from it, but do not misapply it.

**(Ps. 90:8) You have set our iniquities before You.** Thus, these tears! Sin seen by God must work death. It is only by the covering blood of the atonement that life comes to any of us. When God was overthrowing the tribes in the wilderness, He had their iniquities before Him. Thus, He severely dealt with them. He could not have their iniquities before Him and not strike.

**Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.** There are no secrets before God. He unearths hidden things and exposes them to the light. There can be no more powerful luminary than God's face. Yet, in that strong light, the Lord set Israel's hidden sins.

**(Ps. 90:9) For all our days have passed away in Your wrath.** Justice shortened the days of rebellious Israel; each stopping place became a graveyard. The march was marked by the graves they left behind. Because of the penal sentence, their days were dried up, and their lives wasted away.

**(Ps. 90:10) The days of our lives are seventy years.** Moses lived longer than this, but he was an exception; in his day, life was the same duration as it is now. This is brevity itself, compared with the people of olden times. Yet it is nothing when contrasted with eternity. Life is long enough for virtue and holiness, and all too long for vice and blasphemy. Moses, here in the original, writes in a disconnected manner, as if he would establish the total insignificance of man's hurried existence. His words may be translated, "The days of our years! In them seventy years," as if to say, "The days of our years? What about them? Are they worth mentioning? The account is insignificant; their full tale is just seventy."

**(Ps. 90:12) So teach us to number our days.** Instruct us to set store by time, to mourn time past, when we worked the will of the flesh, to diligently use the time present as the accepted hour and day of salvation, to reckon the time that lies in the future as too uncertain to delay any gracious work or prayer. Counting is a child's exercise in arithmetic, but in order to properly number our days, even the best of us need the Lord's teaching. We are more anxious to count the stars than our days, and yet the latter is far more practical. By reflections on the brevity of time, people are led to give serious attention to eternal things. They become humble as they look into the grave that will soon be their bed. Passions cool in the presence of mortality, and that yields to the dictates of unerring wisdom. This is only the case when the Lord is the teacher; He alone can teach with real and lasting profit.

**(Ps. 90:13) Return, O LORD! How long?** Come again in mercy. Do not leave us to perish. Do not let our lives be both brief and bitter. *You* have said, "Return, O children of men" (v. 3). Your presence alone can reconcile us to this transient existence. Sin drives God from us, but repentance cries to the Lord to return. When people are under chastisement, they are allowed to ask, **How long?** Our fault in these times is not too great a boldness with God but too much backwardness in pleading with Him.

**(Ps. 90:16) Let Your work appear to Your servants.** See how he dwells on that word **servants**. It is as far as the Law can go, and Moses goes the full length. Jesus said, "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends" (John 15:15). If we are wise, we will make full use of our wider liberty. Moses asks for displays of divine power, and Providence conspicuously worked it, that all the people might be cheered. They could find no solace in their faulty works, but in God's work, they would find comfort.

**And Your glory to their children.** While their children were growing, they wanted to see some of the promised glory shining on them. Their children were to inherit the land that had been given by covenant (Gen. 15:18-20). Now, they sought a sign of the coming good, some morning light of the approaching noonday. How eagerly parents plead for their children! They can bear much personal affliction if they are sure that their children will know God's glory and be led to serve Him. We sow joyfully, if they can reap.

**(Ps. 90:17) And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us,** even on us who will not see Your glory in the land of Canaan. It will suffice, if God's holiness is reflected in our character, and if God's loving excellence casts a sacred beauty over all our camp. Sanctification should be the daily object of our petitions.

**And establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.** When we have withered like grass, our holy service, like gold, silver, and precious stones, will survive the fire (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

## Why is God angry in Psalm 90?

Ps. 90:7-9

**What is meant in Psalm 90:15 when it says, "Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, the years in which we have seen evil"?**

## Psalm 91:1-16

This Psalm has no title, and we have no way of learning the writer's name or the date of composition. Jewish scholars thought that when the author's name was omitted, it could be assigned to the writer of the previous Psalm. If so, this is another Psalm of Moses, the man of God. Many expressions used here are similar to those of Moses in Deuteronomy, and peculiar idioms point toward Moses as the author. The lives of Joshua and Caleb, who fully followed the Lord, make a remarkable illustration of this Psalm. As a reward for abiding in continued nearness to the Lord, they lived on among the dead, amid their graves. For these reasons, it is probable that this Psalm was written by Moses, but we are not dogmatic.

If David's pen gave us this matchless ode, we disagree with some that it commemorates the plague that devastated Jerusalem because of David's census (2 Sam. 24:10). For David to sing about seeing "the reward of the wicked" (v. 8) would be contrary to his declaration, "I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done?" (2 Sam. 24:17). And the absence of any allusion to the sacrifice on Zion could not be in any way accounted for, since David's repentance would inevitably have led him to dwell on the atoning sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood by the hyssop. In the entire collection, there is not a more cheerful Psalm. Its tone is elevated and sustained; it is faith at its best. A German physician spoke of it as the best preservative in times of cholera, and, in truth, it is a heavenly medicine against plague and pest. Those who can live its spirit will be fearless, even if London again became a quarantine hospital and the grave was gorged with carcasses.

**(Ps. 91:1) He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High.** These promised blessings are not for every believer, but only for those who live in close fellowship with God. Every child of God looks toward the inner sanctuary and the mercy seat, yet all do not dwell **in the secret place of the Most High**. They run to it at times, and enjoy occasional approaches, but they do not habitually reside in the mysterious presence. Those who through rich grace obtain unusual

and continuous fellowship with God abide in Christ and Christ abides in them. They become possessors of rare and special benefits that are missed by those who follow at a distance and grieve the Holy Spirit. Those who know the love of God in Christ Jesus come into the secret place, and only those who dwell there can say, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). To them, the veil is torn, the mercy seat is revealed, the covering cherubs are manifest, and the awful glory of the most High is apparent. These, like Simeon, have the Holy Spirit on them (Luke 2:25), and like Anna, they do not depart from the temple (Luke 2:37).

**(Ps. 91:9-10) Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge,  
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,  
No evil shall befall you,  
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling.**

Before expounding these verses, I cannot refrain from recording a personal incident that illustrates their power to sooth the heart when they are applied by the Holy Spirit. In 1854, I had scarcely been in London twelve months, when the district I labored in was visited by Asiatic cholera and my congregation suffered from its inroads. Family after family summoned me to the bedside of the sick, and almost every day I was called to visit the grave. With youthful ardor, I visited the sick and was sent for from all corners of the district, by people of all ranks and religions. I became weary in body and sick at heart. One by one, my friends fell, and I felt or imagined that I was sick like those around me. A little more work and weeping would have laid me low. I felt the burden was heavier than I could bear, and I was ready to sink. As God would have it, I was returning mournfully home from a funeral when my curiosity led me to read a paper that had been placed in a shoemaker's window on Dover Road. It did not look like a trade announcement, nor was it, for, in good bold handwriting, it bore these words, "Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling." The effect on my heart was immediate. Faith appropriated the passage as her own. I felt secure, refreshed, and covered with immortality. I continued visiting the dying in a calm and peaceful spirit. I felt no fear of evil; I suffered no harm. I gratefully acknowledged the Providence that moved the tradesman to place those verses in his window, and in memory of its marvelous power, I adore the Lord my God. The psalmist in these verses assures those who dwell in God that they will be secure. Though faith claims no merit, yet the Lord rewards it wherever He sees it. Those who make God their refuge will find Him a refuge. Those who dwell in God will find their dwelling protected. We must make the Lord our habitation, by choosing Him for our trust and rest. Then we will receive immunity from harm; no evil will personally touch us, and no blow of judgment will assail our homes. The **dwelling** in the original was just a tent, yet even that frail covering would prove sufficient shelter from all sorts of harm. It matters little if our dwelling is a gypsy's hut or a monarch's palace, as long as the soul has made the Most High its dwelling place. Get into God, and you dwell in all good, and all ill is banished. It is not because we are perfect or highly esteemed that we can hope for shelter in the evil day, but because our refuge is the Eternal God, and our faith has learned to hide under His sheltering wing.

**(Ps. 91:14)** Here, the Lord speaks to His chosen, **Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him.** Not because he deserves deliverance, but despite all his imperfections, he loves his God. Thus, not only the angels of God, but the God of the angels will come to his rescue in perilous times. When the heart is enamored with the Lord, all taken up with Him and intensely attached to Him, the Lord will recognize the sacred flame and preserve the one who carries it in his heart. It is love, love set on God, that is the distinguishing mark of those whom the Lord secures from ill.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What are the names of God used by the Psalmists to indicate the safe ground we have in Him?**

Ps. 91:1-2      Isa. 32:1

**Did Jesus use any part of this Psalm to combat Satan?**

Ps. 91:11      Luke 4:10

**How is your confidence, faith, attitude and perseverance affected knowing that angels have charge over us protecting us from all assaults; from the devastating plague to Satan's spiritual traps he has set for us?**

**Does Psalm 91:14-16 give you a better understanding of what God is doing in your life?**

### Psalm 92:1-15

**Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath day.** This admirable composition is both a Psalm and a Song. It is full of equal measures of solemnness and joy. It was intended to be sung on the day of rest.

The subject is the praise of God. Praise is Sabbath work, the joyful occupation of resting hearts. Since a true Sabbath can only be found in God, it is wise to meditate on Him on the Sabbath. The style is worthy of the theme and the day. Its inspiration is from the "fount of every blessing." David spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance.

The Sabbath was set aside for adoring the Lord in His finished work of creation. Thus, the suitability of this Psalm. Christians may take even a higher flight, for they celebrate complete redemption. No one acquainted with David's style will hesitate to credit him with the authorship of this divine hymn.

**(Ps. 92:1) It is good to give thanks to the LORD**, or Jehovah. It is good ethically, for it is the Lord's right. It is good emotionally, for it is pleasant to the heart. It is good practically, for it leads others to do the same. When duty and pleasure combine, who could be slow? Giving God thanks is a small return for the great benefits He daily gives us. He, by His Spirit, calls it a good thing, so we must not despise or neglect it. We thank people for favors, how much more should we bless the Lord when He benefits us. Devout praise is always good; it is never out of season, never superfluous. And it is especially suitable for the Sabbath. A Sabbath without thanksgiving is a Sabbath profaned.

**(Ps. 92:5) O LORD, how great are Your works!** He is lost in wonder. He utters an exclamation of amazement. How vast! How stupendous are the doings of Jehovah! The creations of the Infinite One are great in number, extent, glory, and design.

**Your thoughts are very deep.** The Lord's plans are as marvelous as His acts. His designs are as profound as His doings are vast. Creation is immeasurable, and the wisdom it displays is unsearchable.

**(Ps. 92:6) A senseless man does not know, nor does a fool understand this.** In this and the following verses, the effect of the Psalm is heightened by contrast. The shadows are thrown in to bring out the lights more prominently. What a drop from the preceding verse, from the saint to the senseless, from the worshiper to the boor, from the psalmist to the fool. Yet, the character described here is common. The senseless see nothing in nature, and if it is pointed out to them, their foolish minds will fail to comprehend it. He may be a philosopher, and yet he may be so senseless that, even from the ten thousand matchless creations around him, even from creations that wear on their surface the evidence of profound design, he will not acknowledge the existence of a Maker. The unbelieving heart, let it boast as it will, does not know. And despite all its parades of intellect, it does not understand. One must be either a saint or senseless; there is no other choice. One must be either the adoring seraph or the ungrateful swine. Far from paying respect to great thinkers who will not acknowledge the glory or the being of God, we should consider them as comparable to the beasts that perish, only vastly lower because their degrading condition is of their choosing. Oh, God, how sorrowful it is that people whom *You* have so greatly gifted and made in *Your* image should be so senseless that they neither see nor understand what *You* have made so clear. Well might an eccentric writer say, "God made man a little lower than the angels at first, and man has been trying to get lower ever since."

**(Ps. 92:7) When the wicked spring up like grass**, in abundance and apparent strength, hurrying their progress like green plants that come to perfection in a day.

**And when all the workers of iniquity flourish**, flowering in all their prime, pride, pomp, and prosperity, **it is that they may be destroyed forever.** They grow to die. They blossom to droop. They flower for a short space, to wither without end. Greatness and glory are the preludes to their overthrow. Little does their opposition to God matter; the Lord reigns on as if they had never blasphemed Him. **Destroyed forever** is a portion far too terrible for the mind to realize. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, the full terror of the wrath to come!

**(Ps. 92:10) But my horn You have exalted like a wild ox.** Believers rejoice that they will not perish. Divine aid has strengthened and permitted them to triumph over their enemies. The **wild ox** was the ancients' favorite symbol of unconquerable power, and the psalmist adopts it as his emblem. Faith delights in foreseeing the Lord's mercy, and it sings of what it will do as well as what it has done.

**(Ps. 92:15)** This mercy to the aged proves God's faithfulness. It leads them **to declare that the LORD is upright**, by their cheerful testimony to His ceaseless goodness. We do not serve a Master who will run back from His promise. Whoever else may defraud us, He never will. Every aged Christian is a letter of commendation to Jehovah's immutable fidelity.

**He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.** This is the psalmist's seal and sign. He was still building on God, and the Lord was still a firm foundation for his trust. For shelter, defense, indwelling, and foundation, God is our rock. Until now, He has been all that He said He would be, and we may be doubly sure that He will stay the same even to the end. He has tested us, but, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). He has never been unrighteous to forget our work of faith and labor of love. He is a Friend without fault and a Helper without fail. Whatever He may do with us, He is always right. His dispensations have no flaw, no, not even the most minute, for He is true and righteous. We weave the Psalm's end with its beginning and make a crown for our Beloved's head. **It is good to give thanks to the LORD ... He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.**

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

"For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands" (Ps. 92:4). **Is there any difference in meaning between the "work" and the "works" of God?**

Ps. 90:16

## What is the trait of those who cannot know or understand God's work?

Ps. 14:1 Ps. 25:14 Ps. 49:10-11 Ps. 73:22 Ps. 92:6

### Psalm 93:1-5

This Psalm is without title or author's name. Its subject is obvious, being stated in the first line. It is the Psalm of Omnipotent Sovereignty. The Lord, despite all opposition, reigns supreme. Possibly, at the time this sacred ode was written, the nation was in danger from its enemies and the hopes of God's people were encouraged by remembering that the Lord was still King. What sweeter and surer consolation could they want?

**(Ps. 93:1) The LORD reigns**, or, Jehovah reigns. Whatever opposition may arise, His throne is unmoved. He has reigned, does reign, and will reign forever and ever. Whatever turmoil and rebellion there may be under the clouds, the eternal King sits above all in supreme serenity. Everywhere, He is really Master, let His foes rage as they will. All things are ordered according to His eternal purposes; His will is done. In this verse, it seemed that the Lord appeared to vacate the throne, but then He suddenly put on His regal apparel and ascended His lofty seat. His happy people proclaimed Him with shouts of new joy, **The LORD reigns**. They whispered it in the ears of the depressed, and proclaimed it in the face of the foe. **He is clothed with majesty**, not with emblems of majesty, but with majesty itself. Everything that surrounds Him is majestic. His is not the resemblance but the reality of sovereignty. In nature, providence, and salvation, the Lord appears in all the glory of His grace, conquering enemies and subduing all things. He is seen clothed with majesty.

**(Ps. 93:3) The floods have lifted up, O LORD**. People have raged like the sea's angry waves, but their tumult has been useless. The psalmist turns to the Lord when he sees the billows foam and hears the breakers roar. He does not waste his breath talking to the waves or to the violent; like Hezekiah, he spreads the blasphemies of the wicked before the Lord (2 Kings 19:3).

**The floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves**. These repetitions are needed both for the poetry and the music, but they also suggest the frequency and the violence of wicked assaults on God's government. Sometimes people are furious with their words and raise **their voice**; at other times, they rise to acts of violence and **lift up their waves**. But the Lord has control over them in either case. The ungodly are all foam and fury, noise and bluster, during their little hour; then, the tide turns or the storm is hushed, and we hear of them no more. But the kingdom of the Eternal remains in the grandeur of its power.

**(Ps. 93:4) The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters**. Their total power is just a sound to the Lord. He can easily master it, so the psalmist contemptuously calls it a noise. When people combine, plot, and rage openly to overthrow Jesus' kingdom, the Lord thinks no more of it than so much noise on the beach. Jehovah, the self-existent and Omnipotent, does not care about the opposition of the dying, however many or mighty they may be.

**(Ps. 93:5) Holiness adorns Your house, O LORD, forever**. Truth does not change its doctrines, nor holiness its precepts; they are sure and incorruptible. God's teaching and character is unaltered. God has not permitted evil to dwell with Him, and He will not tolerate it in His house. He is eternally its enemy, and He is forever the sworn friend of holiness. The church must remain unchanged and forever holy to the Lord. Her King will preserve her, so that she remains undefiled by the foot of the intruder. Sacred to the Lord is the church of Jesus Christ, and so she will be kept forever. "Jehovah reigns," are the first words and the main doctrine of this Psalm, and holiness is the final result. A love for the great King will lead us to acceptable behavior in His royal presence. Divine sovereignty confirms that the promises are sure testimonies, and it enforces the precepts as proper and becoming in the presence of so great a Lord.

This Psalm is impressive. It is calculated to comfort the distressed, confirm the timid, and assist the devout. You who are so great and gracious a King, reign over us forever! We do not want to question or restrain Your power. We rejoice to see You exercise the rights of an absolute monarch. All power is in Your hands, and we rejoice. Hosanna! Hosanna!

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

## What are the floods of Psalm 93:3-4 emblematic of?

Ps. 46:2, 3 Ps. 89:9

### Psalm 94:1-23

The writer sees evil people in power, and he hurts under their oppression. His sense of divine sovereignty, of which he had been singing in the previous Psalm, leads him to appeal to God, the great Judge of the earth. This he does with fervency and insistence. Confident in God's existence, and assured of His personal observation, the psalmist rebukes his atheistic adversaries and proclaims triumph in God. He also interprets the severe dispensations of Providence to be an instructive chastisement, and he considers those who endure them to be blessed. This Psalm is another moving form of the old enigma, "Why do the wicked prosper?" It is an example of a good man, perplexed by the prosperity of the ungodly, comforting his heart by remembering that there is a King in heaven who overrules all things for good.

**(Ps. 94:1) O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs—O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!** This is a natural prayer when innocence is trampled and wickedness exalted. If the execution of justice is right (who can deny that it is?), then it must be proper to want it, not out of private revenge, in which case one would hardly dare appeal to God, but out of sympathy with what is right and pity for those who wrongfully suffer.

**(Ps. 94:2) Rise up, O Judge of the earth.** Ascend to Your judgment seat and be acknowledged as the ruler of all. Raise Yourself as men do when they are about to strike with all their might, for the abounding sin of humanity requires a heavy blow from Your hand.

**Render punishment to the proud.** Give them measure for measure, blow for blow. The proud look down on the gracious poor and strike them from above, as a giant might hurl blows on an adversary. In the same way, Lord, lift Yourself, and **render punishment to the proud.** Let them know that You are far higher above them than they can be above the lowest of their fellowmen. The psalmist invokes retribution. His request is precisely what patient innocence puts up with in silence, when it appeals with anguish to heaven.

**(Ps. 94:3) LORD, how long will the wicked, how long will the wicked triumph?** Will wrong rule forever? Are slavery, robbery, and tyranny never to cease? Since there is certainly a just God in heaven, armed with almighty power, surely there must be an end to the ascendancy of evil sooner or later. Innocence must one day find a defender. This **how long** is the bitter complaint of the righteous in all ages. It expresses wonder caused by that great enigma of providence, the existence and predominance of evil. The sound **how long** is akin to howling, as if it were one of the saddest complaints of misery. Many times it has been heard in the dungeons of the Inquisition, at the whipping posts of slavery, and in the prisons of oppression. In due time, God will publish His reply, but the full end is not yet.

**(Ps. 94:8) Understand, you senseless among the people.** They said that God did not see, and now the psalmist uses the same word to call on the senseless to understand. He designates them as buffoons, as swine, and as senseless, and well was it deserved. He invites them to understand or consider, if they can. They thought they were wise, the only people of wit in the world, but he calls them **senseless among the people.** The wicked are fools; the more they know, the more foolish they become. "No fool like an educated fool" is a true proverb. When a people are finished with God, they are finished with humanity and Men to the level of the ox and the donkey. Yes, they have Men beneath even them, for, "The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib" (Isa. 1:3). Instead of being humbled in the presence of scientific infidels, we ought to pity them. They look down on us, but we have far more cause to look down on them.

**And you fools, when will you be wise?** Is it not high time? You know the ways of folly; what profit have you had in them? Have you no relics of reason left, no shreds of sense? If there lingers a gleam of intelligence, pay attention to the argument and consider the questions about to be proposed.

**(Ps. 94:12) Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD.** The psalmist's mind is growing quiet. He no longer complains to God or argues with people, but he tunes his harp to softer melodies. His faith perceives that with the most afflicted believer all is well. Though he may not feel blessed while smarting under the rod of instruction, yet blessed he is. He is precious in God's sight, or the Lord would not take the trouble to instruct him, and blessings are the results of His instruction. The psalmist calls the instructed one a man in the best sense, using the Hebrew word that implies strength. He is a man, indeed, who is under the Lord's teaching and training.

**(Ps. 94:13) That You may give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit is dug for the wicked.** The chastening hand and instructive book are sanctified, so that we learn to rest in the Lord. We see that His plan is for our everlasting benefit, and so we remain quiet, waiting our time, under bitter persecutions and all the providences which try us. The Mighty Hunter is preparing the pit for the wicked. They are prowling and worrying the sheep, but they will soon be captured and destroyed. Thus, the Lord's people learn to rest in adversity and wait the leisure of their God. The wicked may not be ripe for punishment, nor punishment ready for them. Hell is a prepared place for a prepared people. As days of grace ripen saints for glory, so days of wantonness prepare sinners to rot in the corruption of eternal destruction.

**(Ps. 94:15) But judgment will return to righteousness.** The great Judge will come, the reign of righteousness will begin, the course of affairs will be turned into the right channel, and then all the godly will rejoice.

The chariot of right will be pulled in triumph through our streets, **and all the upright in heart will follow it.** A delightful hope is here expressed in beautiful poetic imagery. The world's government has been in the hands of those who have used it for base and vicious ends, but the cry of prayer will bring righteousness back to the throne. Then every upright heart will have its portion of joy.

**(Ps. 94:19) In the multitude of my anxieties within me.** When I am tossed to and fro with various reasons, distractions, questions, and forebodings, I fly to my true rest, for **Your comforts delight my soul.** From my sinful thoughts, my foolish thoughts, my vain thoughts, my sorrowful thoughts, my griefs, my cares, my conflicts, I will hasten to the Lord. He has divine **comforts**, and these not only console, but also **delight** me. Sweet are the comforts of the Holy Spirit. Who can contemplate eternal love, immutable purposes, covenant promises, finished redemption, the risen Savior, His union with His people, and the coming glory without feeling the heart leap with joy? The little world within is, like the great world without, full of confusion and strife. Yet when Jesus enters and whispers, "Peace," there is calm, a rapture of

bliss. Let us turn away from the mournful contemplation of the oppression of people and the present predominance of the wicked, and let us turn to that sanctuary of pure rest which is found in the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3).

**(Ps. 94:22)** Let the wicked gather; the psalmist is not afraid. He sweetly sings, **But the LORD has been my defense, and my God the rock of my refuge.** Firm as a rock is Jehovah's love, and it is there we go for refuge. In Him, in Him alone, is our safety. Let the world rage. We do not ask man for help, but we are content to flee to the bosom of Omnipotence.

**(Ps. 94:23)** The natural result of oppression is the destruction of the despot; before long, his iniquities crush him. Providence arranges retaliations that are as remarkable as they are just. High crimes in the end bring heavy judgments, which sweep evil from the face of the earth. God intervenes in a special manner and cuts short the careers of tyrants while they are in the midst of their crimes. The wicked are often arrested by the messengers of divine justice and caught red-handed with the evidence of guilt on them. **He has brought on them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness.** While the stolen bread is in their mouths, wrath slays them. While the ill-gotten wedge of gold is in their tent, judgment overtakes them, God conspicuously visits them and reveals His power in their overthrow.

**The LORD our God shall cut them off.** Here the matter ends. Faith reads the present in the light of the future and ends her song without a trembling note.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **Is there a vengeance stored up in God (Ps. 94:1)?**

Deut. 32:34-35 Ps. 7:6 Gal. 6:7 2 Thess. 1:6-8

### **Psalm 95:1-11**

**(Ps. 95:1) Oh come, let us sing to the LORD!** Other nations sing to their gods, so let us sing to Jehovah. We love Him, we admire Him, we reverence Him. Let us express our feelings with choice sounds, using our best faculty for its highest end. It is well to urge others to magnify the Lord, but we must be careful to set a worthy example. We must not only say, **Come.** We must add, **Let us sing.** It is feared that much religious singing is not to the Lord but to the congregation's ear. Above all, we must offer the sincerest and most fervent intent of our heart to the Lord in our song service.

**(Ps. 95:6)** The exhortation to worship is renewed and backed with a motive that is especially powerful, to old Israel and to Christians now. Both the Israel after the flesh and the Israel of faith may be described as the people of His pasture, and by both He is called "our God." **Oh come, let us worship and bow down.** The adoration is to be humble. The "joyful sound" is to be accompanied with lowliest reverence. We are to worship by bowing to show that we count ourselves as nothing in the presence of the all glorious Lord.

**(Ps. 95:7) Today, if you will hear His voice.** Dreadful if. Many will not hear, for they put off the claims of love and provoke God. **Today,** in the hour of grace, in the day of mercy, we are tested as to whether we have an ear for our Creator's voice. Nothing is said about tomorrow, "He designates a certain day" (Heb. 4:7). He presses for immediate attention. He asks instant obedience. Will we yield? The Holy Spirit says, **Today.** Will we grieve Him by delay?

**(Ps. 95:8) Do not harden your hearts.** If you will hear, also learn to fear. The sea and the land obey Him; do not prove more obstinate than they!

We cannot soften our hearts, but we can harden them, and the consequences are fatal. Today is too good a day to be profaned by hardening our hearts against our own mercies. While mercy reigns, let not obstinacy rebel.

**As in the day of trial in the wilderness.** Do not be willfully, wantonly, repeatedly, obstinately rebellious. Let the example of that unhappy generation serve as a beacon. Do not repeat the offenses that have already provoked the Lord. God remembers people's sins, especially when they are committed by the favored people, who have had frequent warnings and yet stand in defiance of terrible judgments, while in the midst of superlative mercies. Such sins write their record in marble. Reader, this verse is for you. It is for you even if you can say, "He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture." Do not turn aside the edge of this warning. You have good need to pay attention.

**(Ps. 95:9) When your fathers tested Me.** As far as they could, they tempted God to change His way and do their sinful bidding. And though He cannot be tempted by evil, and will never yield to wicked requests, their intent was the same, and their guilt was none the less. God's way is perfect. When we want Him to alter it to please us, we are guilty of tempting Him. That we do so in vain, while it magnifies the Lord's holiness, does not excuse our guilt. We are in great danger of this sin when we are in time of need, for then we are apt to fall into unbelief and demand a change in arrangements of providence, which are the transcripts of perfect holiness and infinite wisdom. Not to acquiesce to God's will is virtually to tempt Him to alter His plans to suit our imperfect views of how the universe should be *governed*. **Though they saw My work.** They tested Him again and again, throughout forty years, though each time His work was conclusive evidence of His faithfulness. Yet, nothing could convince them for long. Fickleness is bound up in the human heart; unbelief is our besetting sin. We must forever be seeing, or we waver in believing. This is no small offense, and it will bring no small punishment.

**Ps. 95:11) So I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest."** There is no rest for an unbelieving heart. If manna and miracles could not satisfy Israel, neither would they have been content with the land that flowed with milk and honey. Canaan was to be the typical resting place of God. It was here that His ark would remain and religious ordinances would be established. For forty years, the Lord had tolerated the poor manners of the generation that came out of Egypt. It was right that He would have no more of them. Was it not enough that they revolted along that marvelous wilderness march? Should He allow them to do so in the Promised Land? Jehovah would not have it. He not only said but also swore that they would not enter His rest, and that oath excluded every one of them. They all died in the wilderness. This is a solemn warning to all who leave the way of faith for paths of petulant grumbling and mistrust. The rebels of old could not enter because of unbelief. "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it" (Heb. 4:1).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **Why was God grieved with Israel for 40 years?**

Deut 12:8 Ps. 95:10

"So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest' (Ps. 95:11). The rest spoken of here for the Israelites was the promised land of Canaan that God would have given them (Deut. 12:9-10). **What is the believers' rest and how can they be denied entrance into it?**

Heb. 4:1-16

### **Ps. 96:1-13**

**(Ps. 96:1)** Mourning is over, and the time of singing has come. No dismal rites are celebrated, no human sacrifices, and no cutting with knives or outcries of lamentation are offered by deluded devotees. Joy is ascending. Singing has become the universal expression of love and the proper voice of reverent adoration. People are made new creatures, and their song is new. The names of Baal are no more on their lips (Judges 2:11), and the wanton music of Ashtoreth ceases (Judges 10:6). Foolish ditties and cruel war songs are forgotten; the song is holy, heavenly, pure, and pleasant. The psalmist speaks as if he would lead the song and be the chief musician. He invites, incites, and persuades to sacred worship, and he cries with all his heart, **Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!**

**Sing to the LORD, all the earth.** National jealousies are dead. A Jew invites the Gentiles to adore, and he joins with them. All the earth will lift up one common Psalm, as with one heart and voice to Jehovah, who visited it with His salvation. No corner of the world is to be discordant; no nation is to be silent. Jehovah made all the earth, and all the earth must sing to Him. As the sun shines on all lands, so all lands delight in the light of the Sun of Righteousness. *E Pluribus Unum*, out of many, one song shall come forth. The many languages of the sons of Adam, who were scattered at Babel (Gen. 11:9), will blend in the same song when the people are gathered at Zion. And not only people, but also the earth itself is to praise its Maker. Temporarily made subject to vanity from a sad necessity, "the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). Sea and forest, field and fountains, are to be joyful before the Lord. Is this a dream? Then dream again. Blessed are the eyes that will see the kingdom and the ears that will hear its songs. Hasten Your advent, good Lord! Speedily send out the rod of Your strength from Zion, that the nations may bow before the Lord and His Anointed.

**(Ps. 96:7) Give to the LORD glory and strength.** Recognize Jehovah's power and glory and attribute them to Him in your solemn hymns. Who is glorious but the Lord? Who is strong except our God? You great nations, who count yourselves famous and mighty, stop boasting! You monarchs, who are styled as imperial and mighty, humble yourselves in the dust before the only Potentate. Glory and strength are found nowhere except with the Lord.

**(Ps. 96:8) Bring an offering, and come into His courts.** Come with a non-blood sacrifice. Atonement for sin has been made, and it only remains to bring thank offerings. Do not let these be forgotten to Him who gives us everything. We should gladly give our grateful tithe. When meeting for public worship, we should bring a contribution to His cause, according to that ancient word, "None shall appear before Me empty" (Ex. 23:15). The time will come when, from all ranks and all nations, the Lord will receive gifts when they gather for His worship. Oh, long expected day, begin!

**(Ps. 96:10) The world also is firmly established.** Society is safe where God is king. No revolutions will shake His empire; no invasions will disturb His kingdom. An established government is essential to national prosperity. The reign of the God of truth and righteousness will promote this to the highest degree. Sin has shaken the world, but Jesus' reign will again set it on firm foundations.

**He shall judge the peoples righteously.** This is the best method to establish society on a firm basis, and it is the greatest source of joy to oppressed nations. Iniquity makes the dynasties of tyrants fall; equity causes the throne of Jesus to stand. He will impartially rule over Jew and Gentile, prince and peasant, and this will bring happiness to those who had been victims of the arbitrary wills of despots.

**(Ps. 96:13) For He is coming.** His return is near, and this is a reason for immediate rejoicing. Already we are in His presence, so let us worship Him with delight. **For He is coming to judge the earth**, to rule it with discretion, not to tax

and control it by force, but to preside as a magistrate whose business is to see justice carried out. All the world will be under the jurisdiction of this great Judge, and before His bar, everyone will be summoned. At this moment, He is on the road, and the hour of His coming draws near. His great court is proclaimed. Do you hear His trumpets? His foot is on the threshold.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **What benefit is there to Him and us when we sing to the Lord (Ps. 96:1-2)?**

1 Chr. 16:23-27    Isa. 40:1-31    Rev. 5:9-10

### **Ps. 97:1-12**

**(Ps. 97:1) The LORD reigns.** This is the watchword of the Psalm: Jehovah reigns. It is also the essence of the gospel proclamation and the foundation of the gospel kingdom. Jesus has come, and all authority has been given Him in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18). We are invited to give Him our obedient faith. Saints draw comfort from these words, but rebels object to them.

**Let the earth rejoice.** There is cause for joy. Other reigns have produced injustice, oppression, bloodshed, and terror. The infinitely gracious reign of Jehovah is the hope of humanity, and when all yield to it, the race will have paradise restored. The earth will be glad that its Maker and faithful Lord has come to His own. All humanity will be glad, for to every willing subject, Jesus brings untold blessings.

**(Ps. 97:2) Clouds and darkness surround Him.** This is how the Lord revealed Himself at Sinai (Ex. 19:16, 18). He must always surround His essential Deity when He shows Himself, or His excessive glory would destroy us (Ex. 33:20). Every revelation of God must be covered; His infinite splendor must be veiled if it is to be seen by finite beings. It is often this way with the Lord in providence. When working out plans of unmingled love, He conceals the purpose of His grace, that it may be more clearly discovered at the end. "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter" (Prov. 25:2). Around His church's history, the dark clouds of persecution hover, and at times an awful gloom settles; still, the Lord is there. Though we do not see the bright light in the clouds, it bursts forth in due season to the confusion of the adversaries of the gospel. This passage teaches much, such as the impertinence of attempting to pry into the essence of the Godhead, the vanity of all endeavors to understand the mystery of the Trinity in Unity, the arrogance of arranging the Most High before the bar of human reason, and the folly of dictating to the Eternal One on how to proceed. Wisdom veils her face and adores the mercy that conceals the divine purpose. Folly rushes in and perishes, blinded first, and then consumed by the blaze of glory.

**Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.** Absolute power is safe in the hands of Him who cannot err or act unrighteously. When the roll of decrees and the books of divine providence are opened, no eye will discern one word that should be blotted out, one syllable of error, one line of injustice, or one letter of unholiness. Only of the Lord can this be said.

**(Ps. 97:3) A fire goes before Him,** like an advance guard clearing the way. So it was at Sinai (Ex. 13:21), and so it must be. The very Being of God is power, consuming all opposition. Omnipotence is a devouring flame that **burns up His enemies round about.** God is long-suffering (Ps. 86:15), but when He comes to judge, He will make short work of the unrighteous. They will be like chaff in the fire.

Reading this verse in reference to the coming of Jesus and the descent of the Spirit, we are reminded of the tongues "as of fire" (Acts 2:3) and the power that attended the gospel, so that all opposition was speedily overcome. Even now, where the gospel is preached in faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit, it burns its own way, irresistibly destroying falsehood, superstition, unbelief, sin, indifference, and hardness of heart. In it, the Lord reigns, and because of it, let the earth rejoice.

**(Ps. 97:4) The earth sees and trembles.** When the Holy Spirit rested on His servants, their course was like a mighty storm; the truth flashed with the force and speed of a thunderbolt. Philosophers and priests, princes and people, were totally confounded and powerless to withstand it. It will be so again. Faith even now sets the world on fire and rocks the nations.

**(Ps. 97:5) The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord.** In the Pentecostal era and its subsequent age, this was seen as heathenism yielding to Jehovah Jesus' glance, and tyrannies dissolved like melted wax.

**(Ps. 97:8) Zion hears and is glad.** While the heathens are confounded, God's people triumph, for they love to see their God exalted. The day will come when the literal Zion, so long forsaken, will joy in the common salvation. It did when the apostles lived in Jerusalem, and the good days will come again.

**And the daughters of Judah rejoice.** Believers rejoice when they see false systems broken and idol gods knocked down. The Lord's judgments give unalloyed delight to those who worship the true God in spirit and in truth. In the first ages of Christianity, the believing Israel rejoiced to see Christ's kingdom victorious among the heathen. And though turned aside for a while, the daughters of Judah will rejoice in the widespread reign of Jehovah their God through the gospel of His dear Son. As the women of Judah met David with dancing, singing his victory over the Philistine (1 Sam. 18:6), so will they chant the triumphs of David's son and Lord.

**(Ps. 97:9) For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth.** We rejoice to see idols abolished and all mankind bowing at Your throne. There is only one God. There cannot be another. He is, and always must be, over all.

**(Ps. 97:10) You who love the LORD, hate evil** because He hates it. His fire consumes it, His lightnings blast it, His presence shakes it out of its place, and His glory confounds its lovers. We cannot love God without hating what He hates. We are not only to avoid evil, but we must be armed against it and bear a hearty indignation toward it.

**(Ps. 97:11) Light is sown for the righteous.** All along the path of the righteous, light is spread. Their night is almost over; their day is coming, and the morning, already advancing with rosy steps, is sowing the earth with orient pearls. The full harvest of delight is not yet ours, but it is sown; it is springing, and it will appear in fullness. This is only for those who are right before the Lord in His righteousness; for all others, the blackness is reserved.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **How does this scene in Psalm 97 compare to other similar scenes in Scripture?**

Ex. 19:16-19    Deut. 5:22    Mic. 1:3-4    Acts 2:1-4    2 Thess. 1:7-9

### **Psalm 98:1-9**

**(Ps. 98:1) Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things.** We had a new song before because the Lord was coming (Ps. 96). Now we have another new song because He has come, seen, and conquered. Jesus, our King, lived a marvelous life, died a marvelous death, rose by a marvelous resurrection, and ascended marvelously into heaven. By His divine power He has sent the Holy Spirit to do marvels, and by that sacred energy, His disciples have worked marvelous things and astonished all the earth. Idols have fallen, superstitions have withered, systems of error have fled, and empires of cruelty have perished. He deserves the highest praise. His acts prove His Deity. Jesus is Jehovah, and so we sing to Him as the Lord.

**His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.** Not with the aid of others but by His weaponless hand, His marvelous conquests have been achieved. Sin, death, and hell fell under His solitary prowess. Man's idols and errors have been overthrown by His hand alone. Jesus' victories among people are all the more wonderful because they are accomplished by means that, to all appearances, seem most inadequate. They are not due to physical but to moral power—the energy of goodness, justice, and truth—in a word, to the power of **His holy arm**. His holy influence has been the sole cause of success. Jesus never stoops to use policy or brute force. His untarnished perfections secure a real and lasting victory over all the powers of evil. And that victory will be gained as dexterously and easily as a warrior striking the adversary with his right hand and knocking him to the ground. Glory be to the Conqueror; let new songs be sung to His praise.

The salvation that Jesus has accomplished is worked out with wonderful wisdom, and so it is ascribed to **His right hand**. It meets the requirements of justice, and so we read **of His holy arm**. It is His unaided work, and so all the glory is ascribed to Him.

**(Ps. 98:2) The LORD has made known His salvation** by the coming of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, by whose power the gospel was preached among the Gentiles. The Lord is to be praised not only for effecting human salvation, but also for making it known. Humanity would never have discovered it. Not one single soul would have found the way of mercy through the Mediator, for in every case, it is divine revelation to the mind and heart. In God's light, His light is seen. He must reveal His Son, or we will be unable to discern Him.

**His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.** This word **righteousness** is the favorite word of the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul loves to dwell on the Lord's method of making people righteous and vindicating divine justice by the atoning blood. What songs should we sing, we who once belonged to a heathen race! For that blessed gospel is "the power of God to salvation" (Rom. 1:16), and "in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Rom. 1:17). This is no secret. It is clearly taught in Scripture and has been plainly preached among the nations. What was hidden in the types is **revealed** in the gospel.

**(Ps. 98:3) He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel.** Jesus came to them in the flesh, and to them the gospel was first preached. And though they counted themselves unworthy of eternal life, yet the covenant was not broken, for the true Israel was called into fellowship and still remains. The mercy that endures forever, and the fidelity that cannot forget a promise, secures for the chosen seed the salvation long ago guaranteed by the covenant of grace.

**All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.** Grace has been given, not to Abraham's physical descendants alone, but to the elect among all nations. Let the entire church of God sing a new song to Him. It was no small blessing or little miracle, that throughout all lands the gospel should be published in so short a time, with such singular success and such long lasting results. Pentecost deserves a new song as well as the Passion and the Resurrection, so let our hearts exult as we remember. Our God, our own forever blessed God, has been honored by those who once bowed before dumb idols. His salvation has not only been heard but seen among all people. It has been experienced and explained. His Son is the actual Redeemer of a multitude from all nations.

**(Ps. 98:4) Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.** John Wesley said to his people, "Sing lustily, and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep. Lift your voice with strength. Do not be more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan."

**(Ps. 98:6) With trumpets and the sound of a horn; shout joyfully. God's** worship should be heartily loud. The far-resounding trumpet and horn symbolize the power that should be put into praise.

**(Ps. 98:7) Let the sea roar, and all its fullness.** Even its thunders will not be too grand for this theme.

**The world and those who dwell in it.** The land should be in harmony with the ocean. Its mountains and plains, its cities and villages, should prolong the voice of jubilee that welcomes the Lord of all.

**(Ps. 98:9) For He is coming to judge the earth.** Quiet music, such as made the stars twinkle with soft kind eyes, suited His first coming at Bethlehem. But His Second Coming calls for trumpets, for He is a judge, and for earth's acclamations, He has put on His royal splendor. Christ's rule is nature's joy. All things bless His throne and its coming. As the dawn causes the earth to weep for joy because the sun has risen, till the dewdrops stand in her eyes, the approach of Jesus' universal reign should make all creation glad.

**With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity.** This is joy. No tyrant and weakling is He, to oppress the good or to indulge the vain. His law is good, His action right, and His government is the embodiment of justice. If ever there was a thing to rejoice in, on this poor, travailing earth, it is the coming of such a deliverer and the ascension to the universal throne of such a governor. All hail, Jesus, all hail! Our soul faints with delight at the sound of Your approaching chariots. We can only cry, "Come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### What is the theme of this Psalm?

Ps. 96:2    Ps. 98:2    Isa. 52:10    Isa. 59:16    Isa. 63:5

### Psalm 99:1-9

**(Ps. 99:1) The LORD reigns.** These are some of the most joyful words ever to leap from mortal lips. The overthrow of the reign of evil and the setting up of Jehovah's kingdom of goodness, justice, and truth is worthy to be sung about again and again. Three times, these same words have appeared in the Psalms (Pss. 93:1; 96:10; 97:1).

**Let the peoples tremble!** Let the chosen people feel a solemn yet joyful awe, which will thrill their entire being. Saints tremble with devout emotion, and sinners quiver with terror, when Jehovah's rule is fully perceived and felt. It is not a light or trifling matter; it is a truth that should stir the depth of our nature.

**He dwells between the cherubim.** In grandeur of sublime glory, yet in nearness of mediatorial condescension, Jehovah revealed Himself above the mercy seat (Ex. 25:22). There stand the likenesses of the flaming ones, who gaze on His glory (Ex. 25:19) and forever cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" (Rev. 4:8). The Lord, reigning on the throne of grace and sprinkled with atoning blood, is veiled with the covering wings of mediatorial love. This is wonderful above all other revelations.

He stirs emotion among all people, and so it is added, **Let the earth be moved!** Not merely the people, but also the entire earth should feel a movement of adoring awe when it is known that God sits on the mercy seat as universal monarch. The pomp of heaven surrounds Him, symbolized by the outstretched wings of waiting cherubs. Do not let the earth be less moved to adoration; rather, let all nations bow before His infinite majesty. Yes, let the solid earth, with reverent tremors, acknowledge His presence.

**(Ps. 99:2) The LORD is great in Zion.** In the past, the temple's sacred hill was the center of worship of the great King, the place where His grandeur was most clearly seen. His church is now His favored palace; here, His greatness is displayed, acknowledged, and adored. Here, He unveils His attributes and commands the lowliest honor. The ignorant forget Him, the wicked despise Him, the atheists oppose Him. But among His chosen, He is great beyond comparison. He is great in the esteem of the gracious, great in His acts of mercy, and really great in Himself. He is great in mercy, power, wisdom, justice, and glory.

**And He is high above all the peoples.** He towers above their highest thoughts and loftiest conceptions. Even the highest are not high to Him. But, blessed be His name, the lowliest are not despised by Him. In such a God, we rejoice, for His greatness and loftiness are exceedingly delightful in our esteem. The more He is honored and exalted in the hearts of people, the more exultant are His people. If Israel delighted because Saul was head and shoulders above the people (1 Sam. 9:2), how much more should we exult in our God and King, who is as high above us as the heavens are above the earth.

**(Ps. 99:3) Let them praise Your great and awesome name.** Let all the dwellers in Zion, and all the nations on the earth, praise the Lord, or, "thankfully acknowledge" the goodness of His divine nature, albeit there is much in it that must inspire their awe. Even under the most awesome aspect, the Lord is still to be praised. Many profess to admire the milder beams of the Sun of Righteousness, but they burn with rebellion against its more flaming radiance. This should not be. We are bound to praise an awesome God and worship Him who casts the wicked down to hell. Israel praised Him who "overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, for His mercy endures forever" (Ps. 136:15). The awesome

avenger is to be praised as well as the loving Redeemer. Against this the sympathy of man's evil heart with sin rebels. It cries out for an effeminate God, in whom pity has strangled justice. Jehovah's well-instructed servants praise Him in all the aspects of His character, whether awesome or tender. Only grace streaming from the mercy seat can work this admirable frame of mind in us.

**He is holy.** In Him is no flaw or fault, no excess or deficiency, no error or iniquity. He is totally excellent and is therefore called **holy**. In His words, thoughts, acts, and revelations, as well as in Himself, He is perfection. Come let us worship and bow before Him.

**(Ps. 99:6) Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His name.** Though not ordained to the typical priesthood, Moses was a true priest, just as Melchizedek had been before Him (Gen. 14:18). God has always had a priesthood beside and above that of the Law. The three holy men mentioned here stood in His courts and saw His holiness. Moses saw the Lord reveal His perfect Law in flaming fire (Ex. 20:18). Aaron often watched the sacred fire devour the sin offering (Lev. 4:35). Samuel witnessed the Lord's judgment on Eli's house because of Eli's ways (1 Sam. 4:17). Each stood in the gap when God's wrath fell. Because His holiness had been insulted, they acted as intercessors. They screened the nation from the great and terrible God, who would have executed judgment in Jacob. Let these men, or others like them, lead us in worship. Let us approach the Lord at the mercy seat as they did, for He is as accessible to us as He was to them. They made it their life's business to call on Him in prayer, and they brought down innumerable blessings because of it. The Lord also calls us to go up the mountain with Moses and to enter the most holy place with Aaron. Do we not hear Him call us by our names, as He did Samuel? Do we not answer, "Speak, for Your servant hears" (1 Sam. 3:10). **They called upon the LORD, and He answered them.**

**(Ps. 99:7) And the ordinance He gave them.** Personal charges were given to Moses, Aaron, and Samuel. They were true to their trust because they stood in awe of the Lord their God and worshiped Him with all their souls. They were different men; each had a special work. Yet, because each was a man of prayer, they were all preserved in their integrity, fulfilled in their office, and blessed their generation.

Lord, teach us like Moses to hold up our hand in prayer and conquer Amalek (Ex. 17:12). Teach us to be like Aaron, to wave the censer between the living and the dead, until the plague is stopped (Num. 8:19). Teach us to be like Samuel, to say to a guilty people, "Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. 12:23). If *You* will make us mighty with *You* in prayer, we will also be kept faithful before *You* in the service *You* have laid on us. Amen.

**(Ps. 99:9) For the LORD our God is holy.** This devout description is repeated and made the song's climax. Oh, for pure hearts, that we may correctly perceive and worthily praise the infinite perfection of the Triune Lord.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

God's greatness as Zion's (Israel's) King "high above all people" is where the emphasis in this Psalm lies. **Will the Lord's marvelous end time interposition for Israel be the praise of all nations?**

Isa. 60:10-12    Zech. 14:6    Rom. 11:25-33

## **Psalm 100:1-5**

**A Psalm of Thanksgiving.** This is the only Psalm with this exact inscription. It is ablaze with grateful adoration, and for this reason, it has been a great favorite with God's people. "Let us sing the Old Hundredth" is one of the everyday expressions of the Christian church, and it will be while people exist whose hearts are loyal to the Great King.

**(Ps. 100:2) Serve the LORD with gladness. Come before His presence with singing.** We come before Him, not with weeping and wailing but with Psalm and hymns, singing joyfully and devoutly as we approach God. The measured, harmonious, and hearty singing of a devout congregation is not merely decorous, but also delightful. Where praise has absorbed prayer and become the sole method of adoration, this is a proper anticipation of the worship of heaven.

**(Ps. 100:3) Know that the LORD, He is God.** Our worship must be intelligent. We ought to know whom we worship and why. "Know thyself," is a wise aphorism, yet to know God is truer wisdom. It is questionable whether people can know themselves until they know God. Jehovah is God in the fullest, most absolute, and most exclusive sense. He is God alone. To know Him in that character, and to prove our knowledge by obedience, trust, submission, zeal, and love is an attainment that only grace can bestow. Only those who practically recognize His Godhead are at all likely to offer acceptable praise.

**It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.** Shall not the creature reverence its Maker? Some live as if they made themselves; they call themselves "self-made" and adore their supposed creators. Christians recognize the origin of their being and their well-being; they take no honor for being, or for being what they are. Neither in our first nor second creation dare we put so much as a finger on the glory, for it is the sole right and property of the Almighty. To disclaim honor for ourselves is as necessary a part of true reverence as to ascribe glory to the Lord.

**(Ps. 100:5) And His truth endures to all generations.** He is no fickle being, promising and forgetting. He has entered a covenant with His people, and He will never revoke or alter what He has promised. Our parents found Him

faithful, and so will our children and their descendants forever. A changeable God would be a terror to the righteous. They would have no sure anchor, and amid a changing world they would be driven to and fro in perpetual fear of shipwreck. Our heart leaps for joy as we bow before One who has never broken His word or changed His purpose.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### How do you “Know that the Lord, He is God” (Ps. 100:3)?

Ps. 98:2    Rom. 16:25-26    Eph. 1:3-9    Eph. 2:8-9

### Psalm 101:1-8

**A Psalm of David.** This is the type of Psalm that the man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14) would compose when he was about to become the king in Israel. It is David all over, straightforward, resolute, and devout. There is no trace of policy or vacillation. The Lord has appointed him to be king, and he knows it. Thus, he purposes in all things to behave as a monarch whom the Lord has chosen. If we call this "The Psalm of Pious Resolutions," we will readily remember it. After songs of praise, a Psalm of practice not only makes variety, but is proper. We never praise the Lord better than when we do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

**(Ps. 101:1) I will sing of mercy and justice.** David extols the love and the severity, the sweet and the bitter, which the Lord had mixed into his experience. He would admire the Lord's justice and goodness. This song would lead to a godly resolution of his conduct. What we admire in our superiors, we try to imitate. Mercy and justice would temper David's administration, because he had adoringly perceived them in God's dispensations. Everything in God's dealings with us may properly become the theme of a song, and we have not properly viewed His dealings until we can sing about them. We ought to bless the Lord for the judgment with which He chastens us for our sin as well as for the mercy with which He forgives. There is as much love in the blows of His hand as in the kisses of His mouth. Instructed saints, reflecting on their lives, scarcely know what to be most grateful for—the comforts that have cheered or the afflictions that have purged.

**To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.** He resolves that, come what may, he will sing, and sing to the Lord, regardless of what others do.

**(Ps. 101:2) Oh, when will You come to me?** It is a quick prayer, but not an interruption. He feels the need of divine help and the divine presence. He wants to be instructed, sanctified, and made ready to perform his high vocation. David wanted a special and effective visitation from the Lord before he began his reign. If God is with us, we will neither err in judgment nor transgress in character, for His presence brings both wisdom and holiness. Away from God, we are away from safety. Good people are so aware of their infirmity that they cry for God's help, and they are so full of prayer that they cry at all seasons. Their desire is so intense that they cry "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

**(Ps. 101:4) A perverse heart shall depart from me.** He refers to himself and his associates. David would not be crooked in heart or employ evil characters. If he found them in his court, he would cast them away. If you begin with your heart, you begin at the fountain-head, and you are not likely to tolerate evil.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### Do you think David is trying to govern the nation in a similar way God governs the world's people?

### Psalm 102:1-28

This is a patriot's lament over his country's distress. He dresses in the sackcloth of his nation's grief and throws her dust and ashes on his head as the signs and causes of his sorrow. He has private woes and personal enemies. He is afflicted with sickness, but the misery of his people causes him a *far* more bitter anguish, which he pours out in an earnest, pathetic lamentation. He does not, however, mourn without hope. He has faith in God, and he looks for the nation's resurrection through the Lord's omnipotent favors. He walks among Jerusalem's ruins and says with a hopeful spirit, "No, Zion, you will never perish. Your sun is not set forever. Brighter days are ahead." It is impossible to determine the precise point in Israel's history when this Psalm was written. The land was often oppressed, and at any of her sad seasons, this song and prayer was natural and appropriate.

This composition may be compared to a day that begins with wind and rain and clears at noon; it then warms with the sun and continues fine, although intervening showers appear, and it finally closes with a brilliant sunset.

**(Ps. 102:1) Hear my prayer, O LORD,** or, "O Jehovah." Sincere supplicants are not content with praying for praying's sake. They want to reach the ear and heart of the great God. When we are in distress, it is a wonderful relief to acquaint others with our trouble, for then we are eased as they listen to our lamentations. But the sweetest solace of all is to have God as our sympathizing listener. He is no dream or fiction. He is an assured fact. It would be the direst of woes if we

could be indisputably convinced that God does not hear or answer. Those who could argue us into so dreary a belief would do no better service than if they had read us our death warrants. Better to die than be denied the mercy seat. It is as well to be an atheist as to believe in an unhearing, unfeeling God.

**(Ps. 102:2) In the day that I call, answer me speedily.** In these two verses, the psalmist has gathered a variety of expressions with the same meaning. He requests both an audience and an answer from the Lord. These two verses are a preface to the prayer that follows.

**(Ps. 102:3) For my days are consumed like smoke.** Grief has made life unsubstantial. I seem to be a puff of vapor that has nothing in it and will soon vanish away (James 4:14). The metaphor is well chosen. To the unhappy, life seems not merely frail, but also surrounded by much that is darkening, defiling, blinding, and depressing. Sitting in despair, the unhappy compare themselves to people wandering in a dense fog, so dried up that they are little better than puffs of smoke. When our days have neither light of joy nor fire of energy, they become smoking flax that dies out in the darkness. Then we have cause enough to appeal to the Lord not to utterly quench us.

**(Ps. 102:4) My heart is stricken,** like a plant parched by the fierce heat of a tropical sun, **and withered like grass** that dries after the scythe has cut it. The psalmist's heart was a wilted, withered flower, a burned mass of what once was verdure. His energy, beauty, freshness, and joy were gone, lost through the wasting influence of his anguish.

**(Ps. 102:11) My days are like a shadow that lengthens.** His days were only a shadow at best, but now they seem to be a lengthening shadow. A shadow has no substance. How feeble a thing must a lengthening shadow be? No expression can more forcibly state his extreme feebleness.

**And I wither away like grass.** He was like grass, blasted by a parching wind or cut down with a scythe, left to wither in the sun's burning heat. There are times when depression makes one feel like all life were gone, as if existence had become a breathing death. Heartbreak has a withering influence over our entire system. Our flesh, at its best, is but as grass, and when wounded with sharp sorrows, its beauty fades, and it becomes a shriveled, dried, unsightly thing.

**(Ps. 102:12)** The writer's mind is turned from his personal and relative troubles to the true source of all consolation; namely, the Lord himself and His gracious purpose toward His people. **But You, O LORD, shall endure forever.** I perish, but *You* will not. My nation has become almost extinct, but *You* are altogether unchanged. The original has the word *sit*, "You, Jehovah, to eternity shall sit." You reign on. Your throne is still secure even when Your chosen city lies in ruins and Your people are carried into captivity. God's sovereignty in all things is an unfailing ground for consolation. He rules and reigns, whatever happens, and therefore all is well.

**(Ps. 102:13) You will arise and have mercy on Zion.** He firmly believed and boldly prophesied that apparent inaction on God's part would turn to effective working. Others might remain sluggish, but the Lord would surely stir. Zion had been chosen, highly favored, gloriously inhabited, and wonderfully preserved, and from the memory of past mercies, it was certain that mercy would again appear.

**For the time to favor her, yes, the set time, has come.** Divine decree has appointed a season for blessing the church, and when that period has arrived, blessed she will be. There was an appointed time for the Jews in Babylon, and when the weeks were fulfilled, no bolts nor bars could imprison the Lord's ransomed. When the time came for the walls to rise stone by stone, no Tobiah or Sanballat could stop the work (Neh. 6:3), for the Lord had arisen, and who can restrain the hand of the Almighty? When God's time is come, neither the devil, nor persecutors, nor atheists can prevent Christ's kingdom from expanding. It is God's work; He must "arise." He will do it, but He has His appointed season. Meanwhile, we must, with holy anxiety and believing expectation, wait on Him.

**(Ps. 102:18) This will be written for the generation to come.** A note will be made, for there will be those who are destitute in future generations. "The poor will never cease out of the land," and it will make their eyes glad to read the story of the Lord's mercy to the needy. Registers of divine kindness ought to be made and preserved. We write the history of the calamities, wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes of nations, so how much more should we write about the lovingkindnesses of the Lord? Those who endured spiritual destitution and have been delivered cannot forget it. They are bound to tell others, and especially to instruct their children in the goodness of the Lord.

**(Ps. 102:19, 20) For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary,** or "leaned from the high place of His holiness." **From heaven the LORD viewed the earth,** looking out like an observer from a tower. What was the object of this leaning out from the battlements of heaven? Why this intent gaze on the human race? The answer is full of astounding mercy. The Lord does not look on mankind to note their royalty and to observe the doings of their nobles, but He looks **to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death.**

Spiritually, this need of grace is accomplished by sovereign grace, which delivers us by pardon from the sentence of sin. And by the sweetness of the promise, it delivers us from the deadly despair that a sense of sin had created. Well may those of us who were once the children of death praise the Lord, for we are now brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:21). In Haman's time, the Jews in captivity were condemned to death, but God found a way of escape for them, and they joyfully kept the feast of Purim as a memorial (Esther 9:18-28). Let all that have been set free from the crafty malice of the old dragon magnify the Lord of infinite compassion.

**(Ps. 102:25) Of old You laid the foundation of the earth.** Creation is not new work for God; to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth (Isa. 62:7) will not be difficult. Long before the holy city was laid in ruins, the Lord made a world out of nothing. It will be no effort for Him to raise the walls from their heaps and replace the stones in their courses. We cannot

continue our existence or give being to others. But the Lord not only is, He is also the Maker of all things. Thus, even when our affairs are at their lowest, we do not despair because the Almighty and Eternal Lord can restore us.

**And the heavens are the work of Your hands.** You not only laid Zion's foundation, but You completed its roof, as You arched the world with its blue ceiling. The highest stores of Your earthly palace will be piled on high without difficulty when You build, for You are the architect of the stars and the spheres in which they move. When great work is to be performed, it is highly reassuring to contemplate the power of Him who has undertaken its accomplishment. When our strength is exhausted, it is supremely comforting to see the unfailing energy still working on our behalf.

**(Ps. 102:26) They will perish, but You will endure.** The power that made them will dissolve them, just as Your city of love was destroyed at Your command. Yet, neither the ruined city nor the ruined earth can change You, reverse Your purpose, or diminish Your glory. You stand when all things fall.

**Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed.** Time damages all things; fashions become obsolete and pass away. The visible creation, which is like the garment of the invisible God, is growing old and wearing out (Isa. 51:6). But our great King is not so poor that He must always wear the same robes. Before long, He will fold up the worlds and put them aside as worn out garments. He will dress in new attire, making a new heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell. How readily all this will be done. **You will change them, and they will be changed.** As in the creation, so in the restoration; Omnipotence will not be hindered.

**(Ps. 102:28) The children of Your servants will continue.** Early in the Psalm, the psalmist looked to a future generation. He now speaks with confidence that this generation will arise, be preserved, and be blessed of God. Some read it as a prayer, "Let the children of Your servants continue." Either way, it is full of good cheer. We may plead the Lord's favor for our descendants and expect that the cause of God and truth will revive in future generations. Let us hope that those who succeed us will not be as stubborn, unbelieving, and wrong as we have been. If the church has been diminished and brought low by the present lukewarmness, let us ask the Lord to raise a better order of people, whose zeal and obedience will win a long prosperity. May our children be among the better generation that will continue in the Lord's way, obedient to the end.

We have now passed through the cloud. In the next Psalm, we will bask in the sunshine. This is the believer's checkered experience. Paul, in Romans 7, cries and groans, and then, in Romans 8, he rejoices and leaps for joy. From the moans of Psalm 102, we advance to the songs and dancing of Psalm 103, blessing the Lord that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Ps: 30:5).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What did the Psalmist mean when he said in Psalms 102:5 "Because of the sounds of my groaning my bones cling to my skin."**

Job 19:19-20 Ps. 22:15-17 Isa. 58:11 Isa. 66:14 Lam. 4:6-9

**What does Psalm 102:6 mean: "I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert"?**

Ps. 38:11 Ps. 42:10 Ps. 77:4 Luke 6:11 Acts 26:11

**What is the "set time" spoken of in Psalm 102:13?**

Isa. 40:2 Dan. 9:27 Dan 12:7 Luke 21:24 Rom. 11:25

**How is the imperishable and unchanging nature of God illustrated by contrasting it with the earth and the heavens in Psalms 102:24-27?**

### **Psalm 103:1-22**

**A Psalm of David.** Doubtless by David, it is his own style at its best. We attribute it to his later years, when he had a higher sense of the preciousness of pardon, because of a keener sense of sin. His clear sense of the frailty of life indicates his weaker years, as does the fullness of his grateful praise. As in the lofty Alps, where one peak rises above all others, so among the inspired Psalms there are heights of song that top the rest. Psalm 103 is the Mount Rosa of the divine chain of the mountains of praise. It glows with a ruddier light than any others. It is the apple tree among the trees of the forest, and its golden fruit has a flavor that no fruit ever carries unless it has been ripened in the full sunshine of mercy.

This Psalm is man's reply to God's blessings, his song on the mount answering his Redeemer's Sermon on the Mount. Nebuchadnezzar adored his idol with horn, flute, harp, and lyre in symphony with all kinds of music (Dan. 3:7). David, in a far greater style, awakens all the melodies of heaven and earth in honor of the only living and true God.

Our attempt at exposition begins under an impressive sense of the total impossibility of doing justice to so sublime a composition. We call on our soul and all that is within us to aid in this pleasurable task, but our soul is finite, and our mental faculty is far too little for this enterprise. There is too much in this Psalm for a thousand pens to write about. It is

one of those all comprehending Scriptures that is a Bible in itself. Alone, it might almost suffice for the church's hymn book.

**(Ps. 103:1) Bless the LORD, O my soul.** Soul music is the soul of music. The psalmist strikes the best key note when he stirs his inner soul to magnify the Lord. He soliloquizes, holds self-communion, and exhorts himself as though dullness would steal his faculties, and it will unless we diligently watch. Jehovah is worthy to be praised in that highest adoration intended by the term **bless**. "All Your works praise You, but Your saints will bless You." Our life and essential self should be engrossed in this delightful service, and everyone should arouse their hearts to the engagement. Let others stop if they can. **Bless the LORD, O my soul.** Let others complain, but you bless. Let others bless themselves and their idols, but you bless the Lord. Let others use only their tongues, but as for me I will cry, **Bless the LORD, O my soul.**

**And all that is within me, bless His holy name!** Many are our faculties, emotions, and capacities, but it is God who has given them to us, and they should join in chorus to His praise. Half-hearted, ill-conceived, and unintelligent praises are not what we should give our loving Lord. If the law of justice demanded all our heart, soul, and mind for the Creator, the law of gratitude may put in a more comprehensive claim for the homage of our whole being to the God of grace. The psalmist dwells on the holy name of God, as if His holiness were precious to him, or, because God's holiness or God's wholeness was the grand motive for giving homage to His nature in its wholeness. Babies may praise the divine goodness, but fathers in grace magnify His holiness. By **His holy name**, we understand the revealed character of God. Assuredly, those songs that are suggested, not by our fallible reasoning and imperfect observation but by unerring inspiration, should arouse all our consecrated powers.

**(Ps. 103:3) Who forgives all your iniquities.** David begins his list of blessings. He rehearses them as themes for praise. He selects a few of the choicest pearls from the treasury of divine love, threads them on the string of memory, and hangs them on the neck of gratitude. Pardoned sin is, in our experience, one of the choice blessings of grace, one of the earliest gifts of mercy, and it is necessary preparation for enjoying all that follows. Until iniquity is forgiven, healing, redemption, and satisfaction are unknown. Forgiveness is first in the order of spiritual experience, and in some respects first in value. The pardon granted is a present one, **forgives**; it is continual, **forgives**; it is divine, God gives it; it is far reaching, removes all our sins. Pardon takes in omissions as well as commissions, for both of these are inequities. It is most effective; it is as real as the healing and as the rest of the mercies with which it is placed.

**(Ps. 103:4) Who redeems your life from destruction.** By purchase and by power, the Lord redeems us from the spiritual death into which we had fallen and from the eternal death that would have been its consequence. If the death penalty of sin had not been removed, our forgiveness and healing would have been incomplete portions of salvation, fragments of little value. But the removal of the guilt and the power of sin reverses the death sentence that had been on us. Glory be to our great Substitute, who delivered us from going to the pit by giving Himself as our ransom. Redemption will always be one of the sweetest notes in the believer's grateful song.

**So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.** The endless chain of grace is complete. Sin is forgiven, its power subdued, and its penalty averted. We are honored and supplied, and our nature is renovated until we are as newborn babies in God's household. Lord, we must bless You, and we will. You withhold nothing from us, so we would not hold back from Your praise one solitary power of our nature. With all our heart, soul, and strength we praise *Your* holy name.

**(Ps. 103:9) He will not always strive with us.** He will strive sometimes, for He cannot endure His people harboring sin, but He will not chasten forever. Once they turn to Him and forsake their evil ways, He will end the quarrel. He could always find a cause for striving with us, for we always have something that is contrary to His holy mind. Yet He refrains from this, lest our spirits should fail. It will be profitable for any who are out of conscious fellowship with the Lord to ask the reason for His anger. "Show me why *You* contend with me" (Job 10:2). He is easy to plead with, and soon stops His wrath. When His children turn from their sins, He soon turns from His striving.

**(Ps. 103:11) All this mercy is on those who fear Him.** There must be a humble, hearty reverence of His authority, or we cannot taste His grace. Godly fear is one of the first products of the divine life; it is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10). It fully ensures its possessor of all the benefits of divine mercy, and it is employed to set out the whole of true religion.

**(Ps. 103:12) As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.** O glorious verse, no word even on the inspired page can excel it! Sin is removed from us by a miracle of love! What a load to move, and yet it is removed so far that the distance is incalculable. Fly as far as the wings of imagination can carry you, and if you journey east, you are further from the west at every beat of your wings. If sin is removed so far, then we may be sure that the scent, the trace, and the memory of it must be entirely gone. If this is the distance of its removal, there is no shade of fear that it will ever be brought back. Even Satan could not achieve such a task! Our sins are gone, for Jesus has carried them away. As far as the place of sunrise is removed from yonder west, where the sun sinks when its day's journey is done, so far were our sins carried by our scapegoat nineteen centuries ago. Now, if they are sought, they will not be found, for they will not be, says the Lord. Come, my soul, thoroughly wake and glorify the Lord for His richest of blessings. Hallelujah! The Lord alone can remove sin, and He has done it in a Godlike fashion, making a final sweep of all our transgressions.

**(Ps. 103:14) For He knows our frame.** He knows how we are made, for He made us. He well perceives our makeup—our build, constitution, temperament, prevailing infirmity, and most besetting temptation—for He searches our nature.

**(Ps. 103:17) But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him.** Blessed but! How vast the contrast between the fading flower and the everlasting God. How wonderful that His mercy should link our frailty with His eternity and make us everlasting. From eternity, the Lord viewed His people as objects of mercy and chose them to become partakers of His grace. The doctrine of eternal election is delightful to those who have the light to see it and the love to accept it. It is a theme for deepest thought and highest joy. **To everlasting** is equally precious. Jehovah does not change. He has mercy without end as well as without beginning. Never will those who fear Him find that either their sins or their needs have exhausted the great depth of His grace. The main question is, "Do we fear Him?" If we are lifting our eyes to heaven, the gaze of paternal love is never removed, and it never will be, world without end.

**(Ps. 103:18)** Children of the righteous, however, are not promised the Lord's mercy without stipulation. This verse completes the statement of the previous verse by adding, **to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.**

**(Ps. 103:19) The LORD has established His throne in heaven.** Thus has the sweet singer hymned the Lord's varied attributes, as seen in nature, grace, and providence. He now gathers all his energies for one final outburst of adoration, in which he would have all unite, since all are subjects of the Great King.

**(Ps. 103:20) Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength.** Finding the work of praise growing, David calls on "the firstborn sons of light" to speak the Lord's praises. And well they may, for as Milton says, "They best can tell." Dwelling nearer to the prepared throne than we as yet have permission to climb, they see in nearer vision the glory that we would adore. They are given an exceeding strength of intellect, voice, and force to use in sacred services for Him. Let them now turn all their strength into that solemn song that we would send up to the third heaven. To Him who gave angelic strength, let all angelic strengths be given. They are His angels, and they are willing to ring out His praises.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### Why is Psalm 103:10 true?

**How far are our transgressions removed from us? How does this fact affect our thinking about past sins in our life?**

Ps. 103:12

### Psalm 104:1-35

Here we have one of the loftiest and longest sustained flights of the inspired muse. This Psalm interprets the voices of nature and sweetly sings of both creation and providence. The poem contains a complete cosmos; sea and land, cloud and sunlight, plant and animal, light and darkness, and life and death are all expressive of the Lord's presence. Traces of the six days of creation are evident, and, although the creation of man, the crowning work of the sixth day, is not mentioned (Gen. 1:27), this is accounted for by the fact that man himself is the singer. Some have even discerned marks of the divine rest on the seventh day (v. 31). This, then, is a poet's version of Genesis.

But the earth's present condition is not the only subject of song. A hint is given to holier times, when we will see "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13), out of which the sinner will be "consumed" (v. 35). The spirit of ardent praise to God runs through the entire Psalm, and with it is a distinct realization of the divine Being as a personal existence, loved and trusted as well as adored.

We have no information as to the author, but the Septuagint assigns it to David, and we see no reason for crediting it to anyone else. His spirit, style, and manner of writing are obvious. If the Psalm must be ascribed to another, it must be to a mind remarkably similar to his. If so, we could only suggest David's wise son, Solomon, the poet-preacher, for His notes on natural history in Proverbs bear a striking resemblance to this. Whoever the human writer may have been, the exceeding glory and perfection of the Holy Spirit's divine authorship are plain to every spiritual mind.

#### **Division**

- After attributing blessedness to the Lord, the devout psalmist sings of the light and the firmament that were the work of the first and second days of creation, verses 1-6.
- By an easy transition, he describes the separation of the waters from the dry land, the formation of rain, brooks, and rivers, and the bringing forth of grass, herbs, and fruit on the third day, verses 7-18.
- Then the appointment of the sun and moon as guardians of day and night commands the poet's admiration, and so he sings the work of the fourth day, verses 19-23.
- Having already alluded to many varieties of living creatures, the psalmist sings about the life with which the Lord was pleased to fill air, sea, and land, verses 24-30. These forms of existence were the special product of the fifth and sixth days of creation.

• We may regard the closing verses as a Sabbath meditation, hymn, and prayer, verses 31-35.

The complete Psalm lies before us as a panorama of the universe viewed by the eye of devotion. Oh, for grace to give praise to the Lord while reading it.

**(Ps. 104:1) Bless, the LORD, O my soul!** This Psalm begins and ends like Psalm 103, and it could not do better. When the model is perfect, it deserves to be duplicated.

**You are clothed with honor and majesty.** You are not seen, but Your works are seen. They may be called Your garments, and they are full of beauty and wonders, which contributes to Your honor. Garments both conceal and reveal a person, and so do the creatures of God. In His works, the Lord is seen as worthy of honor for His skill, His goodness, and His power. He claims majesty, for He has fashioned all things in sovereignty, doing as He wills, and asking no one's permission. They must be blind indeed who do not see that nature is the work of a king. Nature is the solemn strokes of God's severer mind, terrible touches of His sterner attributes, broad lines of inscrutable mystery, and deep shadings of overwhelming power. This makes the picture of creation a problem never to be solved, except by admitting that He who drew it gives no account of His matters but rules all things according to the good pleasure of His will. His majesty is, however, always displayed to reflect honor on His entire character. He does as He wills, but He only wills what is thrice holy. The very robes of the unseen Spirit teach this, and it is ours to recognize it with humble adoration.

**(Ps.104:2) Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment.** He wraps the light about Him as a monarch puts on His robe. The conception is sublime. It makes us aware how altogether inconceivable the Lord's personal glory must be. If light is His garment, what is the blazing splendor of His essential being? We are lost in astonishment and dare not pry into the mystery, lest we become blinded by its unbearable glory.

**Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.** Here, we may choose what we will of two meanings. God's ministers or servants, He makes as swift, potent, and terrible fire. On the other hand, He makes fire, the devouring element, to be His minister, flaming forth on His errands. That this passage refers to angels is clear from Heb. 1:7. It was proper to mention them here in connection with light and the heavens, immediately after the robes and the palace of the Great King. Should not the retinue of the Lord of Hosts be mentioned as well as His chariot? It would have been a flaw in the description of the universe had the angels not been mentioned, and this is the most appropriate place for their introduction. When we think of the extraordinary powers entrusted to angelic beings, and of the mysterious glory of the seraphim and of the four living creatures (Rev. 15:7), we are led to reflect on the glory of the Master whom they serve, and again, we cry out with the psalmist, "O LORD my God, You are very great."

**(Ps. 104:5) You who laid the foundations of the earth.** The beginning of creation is described in almost the same words used by the Lord. "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4). "To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone . . . ?" (Job 38:6). The words are found in the same connection, for the Lord then says, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7).

**So that it should not be moved forever.** The language is poetical, but the fact is none the less wonderful. The earth is so placed in space that it remains as stable as if it were a fixed object. The motions of our planet occur so noiselessly and evenly that, as far as we are concerned, all things are as permanent and peaceful as if the old notion of its resting on pillars was literally true. With what delicacy has the great Artificer poised our globe! What power must there be in the hand that has caused so vast a body to know its orbit and to move so smoothly in it! What engineer can keep every part of a machine from an occasional jar or jerk, or from friction? Yet no such thing has ever occurred to our great world, even in all its complicated motions. "O LORD my God, You are very great."

**(Ps. 104:19)** The appointed rule of the great lights is now the theme for praise. The moon is first mentioned because in the Jewish day the night leads the way. **He appointed the moon for seasons.** From the waxing and waning of the moon, the year is divided into months and weeks, and by this means, the exact dates of the holy days are arranged. Thus, the lamp of night is made to be of service to the human being, and in fixing the period of religious assemblies (as it did among the Jews), it enters into connection with his noblest being. Never regard the moon's motions as the inevitable result of inanimate impersonal law but as the appointment of our God.

**(Ps. 104:20) You make darkness, and it is night.** Drawing down the blinds, He prepares our bedroom that we may sleep. If there were no darkness, we would sigh for it; rest would be more difficult if the weary day was never calmed into night. Let us see God's hand in the veiling of the sun, and let us never fear either natural or providential darkness, since both are the Lord's making.

**(Ps. 104:23) Man goes out.** It is now man's turn. The sunrise has made things ready, so he leaves his warm bed and the comforts of home to find daily food. This work is good. It keeps him out of mischief and exercises his faculties. **To his work and to his labor until the evening.** He does not go to play but to work, not to loiter but to labor. At least, this is the lot of the best part of mankind. We are made for work. We should work, and we should never grumble when we work. The hours of labor, however, should not be too long. If labor lasts for the average amount of daylight, it is certainly all that anyone should expect of another. Yet, there are poor creatures so badly paid that in twelve hours they cannot earn enough to keep themselves from hunger. Shame on those who dare impose this on helpless women and children.

**(Ps. 104:28) What You give them they gather in.** God gives, but they must gather. And they are glad that He gives, otherwise, their gathering would be in vain. We often forget that animals and birds, in their free life, work to obtain

food just as we do. Yet, it is as true with them as with us, that our Heavenly Father feeds all of us (Matt. 6:26). When we see chickens picking up the corn that the housewife has scattered from her lap, we have a perfect illustration of the way the Lord supplies the needs of all living things: He gives, and they gather.

**You open Your hand, they are filled with good.** Here is divine liberality, its open hand filling needy creatures until they want no more. Here is divine omnipotence, feeding a world by simply opening its hand. What would we do if that hand was closed? There would be no need to strike a blow, for the mere closing of that hand would produce death by famine. Let us praise the open-handed Lord, whose providence and grace satisfy our mouths with good things.

**(Ps. 104:29) You hide Your face, they are troubled.** All living things are so dependent on God's smile that a frown terrorizes them, like someone who is convulsed with anguish. This is the case in the natural world, and certainly not less in the spiritual. When the Lord hides His face, the saints are terribly perplexed.

**You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.** Breath appears to be a trifling matter, and air an unfelt substance of little importance. Yet once air is withdrawn, the body loses all vitality and crumbles to the earth, from which it was originally taken. All animals come under this law, and even the dwellers in the sea are not exempt. Thus, all nature is dependent on the will of the Eternal.

Note that death is caused by the act of God, **You take away their breath.** We are immortal until He has us die, and so are the little sparrows, for "not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will" (Matt. 10:29).

**(Ps. 104:30) You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.** The loss of their breath destroys them, and by Jehovah's breath, a new race is created. The works of the Lord are majestically simple and performed with royal ease; a breath creates, and its withdrawal destroys. The word "spirit" is instructive, for we see the Divine Spirit creating life in nature just as in the realms of grace. At the flood, the world was stripped of almost all life (Gen. 7:23), yet how quickly God's power refilled the desolate places! In winter, the earth falls into a sleep that makes it appear worn and old. Yet how quickly the Lord awakens earth with the voice of spring and puts the beauty of her youth on it. You, Lord, do all things, and so we give glory to Your name.

**(Ps. 104:31) May the LORD rejoice in His works.** He did so at the first, when "He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done" (Gen. 2:2). "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). He still does rejoice in a measure, where beauty and purity in nature survive the Fall, and He will rejoice more fully when the earth is renovated and the trail of the serpent is cleansed from the globe. This verse is written in the most glowing manner. The poet finds his heart gladdened by looking at the works of the Lord. He feels that the Creator must have felt unspeakable delight in exercising so much wisdom, goodness, and power.

**(Ps. 104:34) May my meditation be sweet to Him.** May it be sweet both to Him and to me. I will be delighted to survey His work and think of Him, and He will graciously accept my notes of praise. Meditation is the soul of religion, the tree of life in the garden of holiness, a refreshing fruit to the soul. It is good for us, and so it is good toward God. Our best meditations are due the Most High and are the most acceptable to Him. Thus, both for our good and for the Lord's honor, we should be occupied with meditation that dwells on the Lord. It should be meditation sweet to Him. Lack of it causes fellowship to be lost and much happiness to be missed.

**I will be glad in the LORD.** To the meditative mind, every thought of God is full of joy. Each one of the divine attributes is a spring of delight, now that we are reconciled to God in Christ Jesus.

**(Ps. 104:35) May sinners be consumed from the earth, and the wicked be no more.** They are the only blot on creation:

Every prospect pleases,  
And only man is vile.

In holy indignation, the psalmist would rid the world of beings so worthless as not to love their gracious Creator, so blind as to rebel against their Benefactor. He only asks for what holy people look forward to as the end of history. The day is desired when there will not remain a single traitor or rebel in all of God's kingdom. The Christian way of putting it will be to ask that grace may turn sinners into saints and win the wicked to the ways of truth.

**Bless the LORD, O my soul!** Here is the end of the matter. Whatever sinners may do, may my soul stand to Your colors and be true to Your calling. Their silence must not silence me but make me redouble Your praise to make up for their failures. Nor can I accomplish the work alone; others must help. Saints, **Praise the LORD!** Let your hearts cry HALLELUJAH, for that is the word in the Hebrew. Heavenly word! Let it close the Psalm. What more remains to be said or written? HALLELUJAH! **Praise the LORD!**

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What is the theme of this Psalm?**

Ps. 104:1

**What is God covered with?**

Ps. 104:1-2    1 Tim. 6:16

This Psalm speaks of the great honor and majesty of the Lord who created and cares for the natural world. **What messages are there for man in this Psalm?**

Ps. 104:14, 15, 23, 24, 27, 28, 35

### **Psalm 105:1-45**

This historical Psalm was evidently composed by King David. The first fifteen verses were used as a hymn when the ark was carried from Obed-Edom's house (1 Chr. 16:7). On that day, David gave this Psalm to Asaph and his brothers to use in thanking the Lord. This Psalm was suitable for the occasion, for it describes the movements of the Lord's people and His care over them because of the covenant, of which the ark was a symbol. Our last Psalm sang the opening chapters of Genesis; this one takes up the closing chapters and leads us into Exodus and Numbers.

We are now among the longer Psalms, as at other times we have been among the shorter ones. These varying lengths of the sacred poems should teach us not to make any rule about brevity or length in either prayer or praise. Short petitions and individual verses of hymns are often best for public worship, but there are seasons when a night of wrestling, or an entire day of Psalm singing, will not be long enough.

The Spirit is always free in His operations and is not to be confined within conventional rules. "The wind blows where it wishes" (John 3:8). One time it rushes in short and rapid sweeps, and another time it continues to refresh the earth hour after hour with its reviving breath.

#### **Division**

- The first verses are full of joyful praise and call on the people to extol Jehovah, verses 1-7.
- Then the earliest days of the infant nation are described, verses 8-15.
- Going into Egypt is then considered, verses 16-23.
- Coming out of Egypt with the Lord's outstretched arm follows, verses 24-38.
- Last is the journey through the wilderness and the entrance into Canaan, verses 39-45.

**(Ps. 105:1) Make known His deeds among the peoples,** or, among the nations. Let the heathen hear of our God, that they may forsake their idols and learn to worship Him. The removal of the ark was a proper occasion to proclaim aloud the glories of the Great King and to publish to all the greatness of His doings. His work had a history connected with the nations, which was well for them to remember with reverence. The rest of the Psalm is a sermon, and the first verses constitute the text.

**(Ps. 105:3) Glory in His holy name.** Jehovah is wholly glorious, and every deed of His will bear even strictest scrutiny. His name is holy, His law is holy, His government is holy, His influence is holy. In all this, we may boast. No one can deny our right to do so.

**(Ps. 105:4) Seek the LORD and His strength.** We all need strength, so let us look to the strong One for it. We all need infinite power to carry us safely to our eternal resting place, so let us look to the Almighty Jehovah for it.

**(Ps. 105:8) He remembers His covenant forever.** This is the basis of all His dealings with His people. He entered the covenant with them in their father Abraham, and to this covenant He remained faithful. The exhortation to remember (v. 5) receives great force from the fact that God has remembered. If the Lord remembers His promise, we should not forget the wonderful way He keeps it. It should be a subject of deepest joy that the Lord never has been, or never will be, unmindful of His covenant engagements. Oh, that we were as mindful of them as He is!

**Ps. 105:9) The covenant which He made with Abraham.** When the sacrificial victims were divided and the burning lamp passed between the pieces (Gen. 15:17), the Lord made, or ratified, the covenant with the patriarch. This was a solemn deed performed with blood and with the cut pieces of the sacrifice. It points to the greater covenant, which in Christ Jesus is signed, sealed, ratified, and will stand forever and ever.

**(Ps. 105:14) He permitted no one to do them wrong.** People cannot do us wrong unless He permits it. Even the greatest must have His permission before they can lay a finger on His people. The wicked would devour us if they could, but they cannot cheat us out of even a penny without divine permission.

**Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes.** Pharaoh (Ex. 12:29) and Abimelech (Gen. 21:25) must be made to respect the strangers who had come to sojourn in their land. The greatest kings are second rate compared to God and His chosen servants.

**(Ps. 105:15) Saying, "Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm."** Abraham and his descendants were a generation of priests anointed to present sacrifice to the Most High God. Since the oracles were committed to them, they were also the prophets of mankind. They were kings too—a royal priesthood. Thus, they had received a threefold anointing. Their holy offices surrounded them with a sacredness that made it a sacrilege to harm them. The Lord was pleased to impress on Canaan's wild tribes a respectful awe of the holy strangers who lived among them, so that they did not come near them to do them ill. The words in this verse may not have been actually spoken, but the awe that fell on the nations is poetically described. God will not have those harmed who have been set apart to Him. He calls them His own, **My anointed**. He declares that He has **anointed** them to be prophets, priests, and kings to Him.

Yet, again, He claims them as His prophets, saying **Do My prophets no harm**. Through the many years in which the three great fathers lived in Canaan, no one was able to injure them. They were unable to defend themselves by force, but the eternal God was their refuge. At this present time, the remnant according to the election of grace cannot be destroyed, or so much as touched, without divine consent. Against the church of Christ, the gates of Hades shall not prevail (Matt. 16:18). In all this, we see reasons for giving thanks to the Lord and for proclaiming His name according to the exhortation of the first verse of this Psalm.

This ends the portion that was sung at the moving of the ark. Its properness to be used for such a purpose is apparent. The ark was the symbol both of the covenant and of God's mystic dwelling with Israel, which was its glory and defense. None could touch the Lord's special ones, for the Lord was among them, flaming in majesty between the Cherubims.

**(Ps. 105:16-23)** The presence of God remained with His chosen ones while they sojourned in Canaan, and it did not desert them when they were called to Egypt. They did not go by choice but by divine direction. Thus, the Lord prepared their way and prospered them until He saw fit to lead them again to the land of promise.

**(Ps. 105:16) Moreover He called for a famine in the land.** He had only to call for it as one calls for his servant, and it came at once. We ought to be grateful that He does not often call that terrible servant, so lean, gaunt, and grim, so pitiless to women and children, so bitter to strong men, who utterly fail before it. **He destroyed all the provision of bread.** Our feeble life cannot stand without its staff; if bread fails us, we fail. As a cripple with a broken staff falls to the ground, so do we when bread is no longer there to sustain us. It is as easy for God to make a famine as to break a staff. He could make that famine universal, so that all countries would be in identical circumstances. Then the human race would indeed fall, and its staff would be broken forever. Yet, there is this sweet comfort in the matter: The Lord has wise ends to serve, even through famine. He meant for His people to go to Egypt, and the scarcity of food was His method of leading them there, for they heard that there was grain in Egypt (Gen. 42:2).

**(Ps. 105:17) He sent a man before them—Joseph.** Joseph was the advance guard and pioneer for the clan. His brothers had sold him (Gen. 37:27), but God had sent him. Where the hand of the wicked is visible, the hand of God may be invisibly at work, overruling their malice. No one was more of a man, or more qualified to lead, than Joseph. An interpreter of dreams was needed, and his brothers said, "Look, this dreamer is coming!" (Gen. 37:19).

**(Ps. 105:19) Until the time that his word came to pass.** God has His times, and His children must wait till His **until** is fulfilled. Joseph was tried, as in a furnace, until the Lord's assaying work was finished. The chief butler's word was nothing (Gen. 40:23). Joseph had to wait for God's word.

Meanwhile, **the word of the LORD tested him.** He believed the promise, but his faith was severely tested. A delayed blessing tests people; it proves whether their faith is the precious kind, which can endure fire. Of many a choice promise, we may say with Daniel, "The message was true, but the appointed time was long" (Dan. 10:1). If the vision is late, it is good to wait with patience. There is a testing word and a delivering word, and we must endure one until the other comes. We can readily imagine how meekly Joseph endured his afflictions and with what great fortitude he looked forward to clearing his slandered character. It will be even better if, under similar trials, we are able to imitate him and come out of the furnace as thoroughly purified and as well prepared to bear the harder ordeal of honor and power.

**(Ps. 105:23) And Jacob dwelt in the land of Ham.** Shem the blessed came to lodge with Ham the accursed (Gen. 7:13). The dove was in the vulture's nest. God willed it for a time, and so it was safe and right. Still, it was only a journey, not a settlement. The fairest Goshen in Egypt was not the covenant blessing (Gen. 47:28), and the Lord did not want His people to think it was. Even to us, "earth is our lodge," but only our lodge, for heaven is our home. Even when we are housed the best, we should remember that we have no continuing city here. It is bad news if we are doomed to reside in Egypt forever, for all its treasures are not worthy to be compared with the reproach of Christ (Heb. 11:26).

The song is about the removal of the Lord's people, and it was a proper accompaniment to lifting the ark as the priests carried it into the city of David, where the Lord had appointed its resting place.

**(Ps. 105:24) He increased His people greatly.** In Goshen, they rapidly increased. This worried the Egyptians, and they tried to slow the growth by oppression.

But the Lord continued to bless them, **and made them stronger than their enemies.** Both in strength and numbers they threatened to become the more powerful race. This growth was not impeded by tyrannical measures; the reverse occurred. This is an early example of what has since become a proverb in the church, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Ex. 1:12). It is useless to contend either with God or His people.

**(Ps. 105:25) He turned their heart to hate His people.** It was God's goodness to Israel that caused the ill will of the Egyptian court toward them. The Lord made use of this feeling to give His people discomfort, to make them want to leave the land they had come to love. This far, but no further, did the Lord turn the Egyptians' hearts. God cannot in any sense be the author of sin, so as to be morally responsible for its existence. Yet, it often happens, through the inherent evil in human nature, that the Lord's acts arouse ill feelings with the ungodly. Is the sun to be blamed because it softens wax and hardens clay? Is the orb of day to be accused of creating the foul odors that are drawn by its warmth from the bogs? Only in a certain sense does the sun cause the reek of the garbage heap. Had it been a flower bed, the beams would have helped produce fragrance. The evil is in people. The honor of turning evil to good is with the Lord.

Hatred is often allied with craftiness, and so the Egyptians began **to deal craftily with His servants.** They treated them fraudulently. They reduced them to bondage by their demands (Ex. 1:10, 11). They secretly planned the

destruction of their male children, and at length openly approved that cruel measure (Ex. 1:16). All this was with the view of slowing their increase, lest in time of war they should side with invaders. Surely the depths of Satanic policy were reached here, but vain was the craftiness of man against the chosen.

**(Ps. 105:26) He sent Moses His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen.** When the oppression was at the worst, Moses came. For the second time, we have the expression, **He sent**. He who sent Joseph also sent Moses and his eloquent brother (Ex. 4:14)

**(Ps. 105:37) And there was none feeble among His tribes.** This is a great wonder. The number of their army was very great, and yet there was not one in the hospital, not one carried in an ambulance or limping in the rear. Poverty and oppression had not made them feeble. Jehovah Rophi had healed them; they carried no disease. None felt the exhaustion that slavery produces. When God calls His people to a journey, He prepares them. During the pilgrimage of life, our strength will be equal to our day. See the contrast between Egypt and Israel—in Egypt, one dead in every house, and among the Israelites, not so much as one person limping.

**(Ps. 105:39) He spread a cloud for a covering.** Never were a people so favored. What would desert travelers give for such a canopy? The sun could not scorch them with its burning rays; the camp was screened like a king in his pavilion.

**(Ps. 105:42) For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant.** This is the secret reason for all this grace. Always on the heart of the Most High are the covenant and He for whose sake it was made. He remembered His people, because He remembered His covenant. He could not violate that gracious compact, for it was sacred to Him, **His holy promise**. A holy God must keep His promise holy. In our case, the Lord's eye is on His beloved Son and His engagements with Him on our behalf. This is the source and wellhead of those innumerable favors that enrich us in all our wanderings through the wilderness of this life.

**(Ps. 105:43) He brought out His people with joy, His chosen ones with gladness.** He led them up from the wilderness, rejoicing over them himself and making them rejoice. They were His people, His chosen. He rejoiced, and He showered His favors on them, that they might rejoice in Him as their God.

**(Ps. 105:44) He gave them the lands of the Gentiles.** He drove the Canaanites out and allotted their lands to the tribes. They were called to fight, but the Lord worked so wonderfully that the conquest did not result from their bow or spear—the Lord gave them the land.

**And they inherited the labor of the nations.** They lived in houses that they had not built, and they gathered fruit from vines and olives they had not planted. They were not settled in a desert that needed to be reclaimed but in a land fertile to a proverb and cultivated carefully by its inhabitants. Like Adam, they were placed in a garden. This entrance to the goodly land was properly celebrated when the ark was moved to Zion (2 Sam. 6:14, 15).

**(Ps. 105:45) That they might observe His statutes and keep His laws.** This was the practical plan. The chosen nation was to be the conservator of truth, the example of morality, and the pattern of devotion. Everything was ordered so as to place them in advantageous circumstances for fulfilling this trust. Theirs was a high calling and a glorious election. It involved great responsibilities, but it was a distinguished blessing, one for which the nation was bound to give thanks.

Most justly did the music close with the jubilant but solemn shouts of HALLELUJAH! **Praise the LORD!** If this history did not make Israel praise God, what history would?

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Use the references below to bring out the meaning of Psalm 105:4.**

Ps. 24:3-6      Ps. 27:7-10

**How is the truth of Psalm 105:24-25 brought out today in reference to Israel?**

Ex. 4:21      Ex. 7:3      Ex. 9:16      Job 5:13      Prov. 16:4

### **Psalm 106:1-48**

This Psalm begins and ends with Hallelujah—"Praise the LORD!" The space between these two descriptions of praise is filled with the mournful details of Israel's sin and God's extraordinary patience. When sin and grace are the themes, we do well to bless the Lord both at the beginning and the end of our meditations. This sacred song is one of many whose subject is the historical part of the Old Testament. Surely, this should be a sufficient rebuke to those who do not hold the historical Scriptures in high regard. It ill becomes a child of God to think lightly of what the Holy Spirit so frequently uses for our instruction. What other Scriptures did David have besides those same histories that are so deprecated? Yet, he esteemed them beyond his necessary food and made them his songs in the house of his pilgrimage.

Israel's history is written in part to show human sin, just as the preceding Psalm was composed to magnify divine goodness. This is "A National Confession," and it includes an acknowledgment of Israel's transgressions in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan. These devout petitions for forgiveness are suitable for use by all succeeding generations, especially during times of national captivity. The Psalm was probably written by David. At any rate, its first and last two

verses are found in the sacred song that David delivered to Asaph when he brought up the ark of the Lord (1 Chr. 16:34-36).

While we are studying this holy Psalm, let us see ourselves in the Lord's ancient people and regret our provocations of the Most High. At the same time, let us admire and adore His infinite patience. And may the Holy Spirit sanctify it to the promotion of humility and gratitude.

### Division

- Praise and prayer are blended in the introduction, verses 1-5.

Then comes the story of the nation's sins, which continues until the closing prayer and praise of the last two verses.

While making confession, the psalmist acknowledges:

- Their sins committed in Egypt and at the Red Sea, verses 6-12
- Lusting in the wilderness, verses 13-15
- Envy of Moses and Aaron, verses 16-18
- Worshiping the golden calf, verses 19-23
- Despising the promised land, verses 24-27
- Iniquity with Baal of Peor, verses 28-30
- Iniquity at the waters of Meribah, verses 32, 33
- Then he acknowledges the failure of Israel when settled in Canaan, and their consequent chastisements, verses 34-

44.

- He describes the quick compassion that came to their relief when they were brought low, verses 44-46.
- The Psalm closes with prayer and a doxology, verses 47, 48.

**(Ps. 106:1) Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!** To us needy creatures, God's goodness is the first attribute that causes praise, and that praise takes the form of gratitude. We praise the Lord when we give thanks for what we have received from His goodness.

**(Ps. 106:4, 6) Remember me, O LORD. . . We have sinned with our fathers.** This begins a long confession. Confession of sin is the fastest way to secure an answer to the prayer of verse 4. With His salvation, God visits the soul that acknowledges its need of the Savior.

**(Ps. 106:12) Then they believed His words.** That is to say, they believed the promise when they saw it fulfilled, but not until then. This is mentioned not to their credit but to their shame. Those who do not believe the Lord's word until they see it performed are not believers. Who would not believe when the fact stares them in the face? The Egyptians would have done as much as this.

**They sang His praise.** How could they do otherwise? Their song was excellent, and it is a type of the song of heaven, Yet, sweet as it was, it was short. When it ended, they started complaining. **They sang His praise**, but "they soon forgot His works." Between Israel singing and Israel sinning there was scarce a step. Their song was good while it lasted, but it was no sooner begun than over.

**(Ps. 106:14)** Obviously, they greatly vexed **and tested God in the desert.** They were absolutely dependent on Him and were daily fed by His direct provision. Yet, they had the presumption to provoke God. They wanted Him to change the plans of His wisdom, supply their sensual appetites, and work miracles to meet their wicked unbelief. This the Lord would not do, but they went as far as they could in trying to induce Him to do it. They failed, not because of any goodness in them but because God "cannot be tempted" (James 1:13). Temptation has no power over Him. He yields not to man's threats or promises.

**(Ps. 106:15) And He gave them their request.** Prayer may be answered in anger and denied in love. When God gives people their requests, it is not proof that they are the objects of divine favor. Everything depends on what that request is. **But sent leanness into their soul.**

**(Ps. 106:16) When they envied Moses in the camp.** They owed Moses everything because he was the Lord's chosen instrument, but they grudged him the authority. Some were more openly rebellious and became leaders of the mutiny. Yet the spirit of dissatisfaction was general, and therefore the entire nation was charged with it. Who can hope to escape envy when even the meekest are subject to it? This envy was unreasonable, for Moses was the one who worked the hardest and had the most to bear. They should have sympathized with him; envy was ridiculous.

**And Aaron the saint of the LORD.** Divine choice set Aaron apart to be holy to the Lord. Yet, instead of thanking God because He had favored them with a high priest, whose intercession would present their prayers to God, they objected to the divine election. They quarreled with the man who was to offer sacrifices for them.

**(Ps. 106:17) The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan, and covered the faction of Abiram.** Korah is not mentioned, for mercy was extended to his household, even though he perished. The earth could no longer hold the weight of these rebels and ingrates (Num. 16:31-32; Deut. 11:6). God's patience was exhausted when they began to assail His servants, Moses and Aaron. His children are precious to Him, and he that touches them touches the apple of His eye (Deut. 32:10). Moses had opened the sea for their deliverance, and now that they provoked Him, the earth opens for their destruction. It was time for the nakedness of their sin to be covered, time for the earth to open its mouth and devour those who opened their mouths against the Lord and His servants.

**(Ps. 106:18) A fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.** The Levites who were with Korah perished by fire (Num. 16:35), a most fitting death for those who intruded into the priesthood and offered strange fire. God has more than one arrow in His quiver; the fire can consume those whom the earthquake spares. These terrible things; in righteousness are mentioned to show the obstinacy of the people in continuing to rebel against the Lord. Terror was as lost on them as mercies had been. They could neither be pulled nor driven.

**(Ps. 106:21-22) They forgot God their Savior.** Remembering the calf involved forgetting God. He had commanded them not to make an image (Ex. 20:4), and in daring to disobey, they forgot His commands. It is clear that they forgot the nature and character of Jehovah, or they would never have likened Him to a grass eating animal. Some people hope to keep both their sins and their God. Actually, those who sin are already so far departed from the Lord that He has forgotten them.

**Who had done great things in Egypt.** God in Egypt had overcome all the idols. Yet they so forgot Him that they compared Him to their idols. Can an ox work miracles? Can a golden calf cast plagues on Israel's enemies? After having seen what the true God could really achieve, they were stupid to set up this wretched mockery of a deity.

**Wondrous works in the land of Ham, awesome things by the Red Sea.** They saw several ranges of miracles, for the Lord did not restrain evidence of His eternal power and Godhead, Yet they were not content worshiping Him in His appointed way. They wanted a *Directory* of their own invention, an elaborate ritual fashioned after Egypt, a manifest object of worship to assist them in adoring Jehovah. This was enough to provoke the Lord. And it did! How much He is angered every day in our land, no tongue can tell.

**(Ps. 106:23) Therefore He said that He would destroy them.** The threats of destruction came at last. For the first wilderness sin, He chastened them, sending leanness into their soul (v. 15); for the second sin, He weeded out the offenders, and the flame burned up the wicked (Num. 16:35); for the third sin, He threatened to destroy them (Ex. 32:10); for the fourth sin, He lifted up His hand and almost came to blows (v. 26); for the fifth sin, He struck them (Ezek. 22:31). The punishment increased with their perseverance in sin. This should warn those who continue in iniquity. God uses words before He comes to blows. **He said that He would destroy them,** and His words are not to be trifled with. He means them, and He has the power to make them good.

**Had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach.** Like a brave warrior, who defends the wall when there is a breach and destruction is rushing in, Moses stopped the avenging justice with his prayers (Ex. 32:11). Moses had great power with God. He was an eminent type of our Lord, who is called, "My Elect One in whom My soul delights!" (Isa. 42:1). As the Elect Redeemer interposed between the Lord and a sinful world, Moses stood between the Lord and His offending people. Moses' story is full of interest and instruction. It magnifies the goodness of the Lord, who permitted Himself to be turned from the fierceness of His anger.

With disinterested affection and generous renunciation of privileges, the great lawgiver interceded with the Lord **to turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them.** Look at the power of a righteous person's intercession. Mighty as Israel's sin was to provoke vengeance, prayer was mightier in turning it away. How diligently ought we to plead with the Lord for this guilty world and, especially, for His own backsliding people! Who would not use this powerful agency for so gracious an end. The Lord still answers prayer.

**(Ps. 106:25) And did not heed the voice of the LORD.** Making a din with their voices, they refused the attention of their best friend. Complainers are bad hearers.

**(Ps. 106:26-27) Therefore He raised His hand in an oath against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness.** He vowed in His wrath that they would not enter His rest (Heb. 3:18). He commenced His judgment, and they began to die. Let God lift His hand against someone, and their day has come. They fell terribly, whom Jehovah overthrows.

**(Ps. 106:29) Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds, and the plague broke out among them.** Their open licentiousness and avowed idolatry were too gross to be winked at. This time, the offenses clamored for judgment, and the judgment came at once. Twenty-four thousand people died of a sudden disease, which threatened the entire camp (Num. 25:9).

**(Ps. 106:32) They angered Him also at the waters of strife.** Will they never be finished? The scene changes, but the sin continues. They had mutinied about water, when prayer would have turned the desert into a standing pool.

And they do it again. This made the sin a double, yes, a sevenfold, offense, and it caused the Lord's anger to be more intense.

**So that it went ill with Moses on account of them.** An exhausted Moses began to grow angry on account of them; he was utterly hopeless that they would improve. Can we wonder at it, for he was man and not God? After putting up with them for forty years, the meek man's temper gave way. He called them rebels and showed unhallowed anger. Thus, he was not permitted to enter the land that he wanted to inherit. He saw the good country from the top of Pisgah, but entrance was denied him (Deut. 34:4), and so it went ill with him. It was their sin that angered him, but he had to bear the consequences of his actions. It may be that others are more guilty than ourselves; however, we should always remember that this does not screen us. Every person must carry his own burden.

**(Ps. 106:33) Because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he spoke rashly with his lips.** This seems a small sin when compared to other sins. But this was the sin of Moses, the Lord's chosen servant, who had seen and known so much of the Lord. It could not be ignored. Moses did not speak blasphemously, or falsely, only rashly. This is a serious fault in a lawgiver, especially in one who speaks for God. This passage is, to our mind, one of the most terrible in the

Bible. Truly, we serve a jealous God. We must not think that He is a hard and austere master. But, because we serve such a Lord, we must be jealous of ourselves and watch that we live more carefully and speak more advisedly.

**(Ps. 106:34) They did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them.** They were commissioned to act as executioners on races condemned for unnatural crimes. Yet through laziness, cowardice, or sinful complacency, they sheathed the sword too soon, much to their danger. It is a great evil with believers that they are not zealous for the total destruction of all sin within and without. We make peace alliances where we ought to proclaim war. We plead our temperaments, our previous habits, our circumstances, or some other evil excuse as an apology for being content with partial sanctification, if indeed it is sanctification at all. We are slow to rebuke sin in others and we spare respectable sins that, like Agag, walk with mincing steps (1 Sam. 15:1-21). The measure for our destruction of sin is not to be based on our inclinations, or on the habit of others, but on the Lord's command. We have no warrant for dealing leniently with any sin.

**(Ps. 106:35) But they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works.** It was not the wilderness that caused Israel's sins, for they were just as disobedient in the land of promise. They found evil company and delighted in it; they made friends with those whom they should have destroyed. Having enough faults of their own, they were ready to attend the filthy Canaanites' school and further educate themselves in the arts of iniquity. It was certain that they could learn no good from people whom the Lord had condemned to total destruction. Few would wish to go to death row for learning, yet Israel sat at the feet of accursed Canaan and became proficient in every abomination. This, too, is a grievous but common error among believers. They court worldly company and copy the world's fashions. Yet, it is their calling to bear witness against these things. None can tell what evil has come from the folly of conformity with the world.

**(Ps. 106:40-41) Therefore the wrath of the LORD was kindled against His people, so that He abhorred His own inheritance.** Even then, He did not break His covenant or cast off His offending people, but He felt the deepest indignation and looked on them with abhorrence. The feeling described is that of a husband who still loves his guilty wife. Yet, when he thinks of her lewdness, his nature rises in righteous anger, so that the sight of her afflicts his soul. How far divine wrath can burn against those whom He loves is hard to say, but certainly Israel pushed it to the extreme.

**And He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles.** This was the manifestation of His abhorrence. He gave them a taste of the result of sin. They spared the Gentiles, mixed with them, imitated them, and soon smarted from them, for hordes of invaders were let loose to spoil their pleasure. People make rods for their own backs. Their inventions become their punishments.

**And those who hated them ruled over them.** Who could wonder? Sin never creates true love. They joined the Gentiles in wickedness, and they did not win their hearts but provoked their contempt. If we mix with people of the world, they will soon become our masters and our tyrants, and we cannot want worse.

**(Ps. 106:44) Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry.** Despite their provoking rebellions and how enormously detestable they were, the Lord heard their prayer and pitied them. This is wonderful! One might have thought that the Lord would have shut out their prayer, seeing they had shut their ears against His admonitions. But He had a father's heart. Their sorrows touched Him. The sound of their cries overcame His heart, and He looked on them with compassion. His fiercest wrath toward His people is only a temporary flame, but His love burns forever like the light of His immortality.

**(Ps. 106:45) And for their sake He remembered His covenant.** The covenant is the sure foundation of mercy, and when the whole fabric of outward grace, which is manifested in the saints, lies in ruins, this is the fundamental basis of love, and it is never moved. On it, the Lord builds a new structure of grace. Covenant mercy is as sure as the throne of God.

**(Ps. 106:48) Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting!** Has not His mercy endured forever? Should not His praise be of the same duration? Jehovah, the God of Israel, has blessed His people. Should they not also bless Him? **And let all the people say, "Amen!"** They have all been spared by His grace. Let them all join in adoration with a loud, unanimous voice. What a thunder of praise this would be! Should a nation magnify Him? Yes! And if all the nations, past and present, unite in solemn acclaim, it would still fall far short of what He deserves. Oh, for the happy day when all flesh will see the glory of God (John 11:40) and proclaim His praise. **Praise the LORD, or "Hallelujah!"**

Praise the Lord, as he who writes this feeble exposition now does with all his heart.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### List the shortcomings of Israel mentioned in verses 7-39 of this chapter.

Regardless of Israel's past rebellion and perversity Israel was "the chosen", "the nation" and "thine inheritance". **How did Moses use these promises when he pleaded for Israel after they made the golden calf?**

Ex. 32:10 Num. 14:19 Deut. 9:29

**What does it mean to stand before God "in the breach" (Ps. 106:23)?**

Num. 25:11 Lev. 26:40-42 Ps. 78:38 Isa. 59:16-17 Ezek. 13:5 Ezek. 32:10

After all this the people “despised the pleasant land” and “did not believe His word” (Ps. 106:24). **What was God’s reaction to this rebellion?**

Ps. 106:32, 40-48

### **Psalm 107:1-43**

This is a choice song for the Lord's redeemed (verse 2). Although it celebrates providential deliverance and may be sung by anyone whose life has been preserved in danger, it primarily magnifies the Lord for the spiritual blessings of which temporal favors are types and shadows. The theme is "thanksgiving" and the motives for it.

• The psalmist begins by dedicating his poem to the redeemed who have been gathered from captivity, verses 1-3.

He then likens their history to that of:

• Travelers lost in the desert, verses 4-9

• Prisoners in iron bondage, verses 10-16

• Sick people, verses 17-22

• Mariners tossed in a tempest, verse 23-32

• In the closing verses, God's judgment on the rebellious and mercies to His afflicted people are the song's theme, verses 33-42.

• The Psalm closes with a summary that declares those who study the Lord's works and ways will be sure to see and to praise His goodness, verse 43.

**(Ps. 107:1) Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!** It is all we can give Him, and the least we can give, so let us diligently give Him thanksgiving. The psalmist is earnest in the exhortation, for he interjects **Oh** to intensify his words. Let us always be thoroughly fervent in the Lord's praises, both with our lips and lives, by thanksgiving and thanks-living.

**(Ps. 107:2) Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy.** What gratitude can suffice for a deliverance from power of sin, death, and hell? In heaven, there is no sweeter hymn than, "You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by *Your* blood" (Rev. 5:9).

**(Ps. 107:3) And gathered out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.** What a glorious Shepherd who gathers the blood-bought flock from the remotest regions! He guides them through countless perils and, at last, makes them to lie down in the green pastures of Paradise. Some wander one way and some another; they have all left Immanuel's land and strayed as far as they could. Great is the grace and the power that collects them into one flock. With one heart and one voice, let the redeemed praise the Lord, who gathers them into one.

**(Ps. 107:7) And He led them forth by the right way.** There are many wrong ways, but only one right way, and none can lead us but God. When the Lord is the leader, the way is right; we never need question that. He conducted the lost ones out of the desert's pathless maze. He found the way, made the way, and enabled the faint and hungry to walk in it.

**That they might go to a city for a dwelling place.** The end was worthy of the way. He did not lead them from one desert to another; He gave the weary wanderers a dwelling place of rest. They found no city to live in, but He readily found one. What *we* can do and what *God* can do are very different.

**(Ps. 107:9) For He satisfies the longing soul.** This is the summary of the lost traveler's experience. Those who have been rescued from perishing in a howling wilderness, in a natural sense, should bless the Lord who rescued and refreshed them. The spiritual sense, however, is richer in instruction. The Lord makes us long, and then He completely satisfies us. This longing leads to solitude, separation, thirst, faintness, and despair. All this leads to prayer, faith, divine guidance, satisfying the soul's thirst, and rest. The Lord's good hand is seen in the entire process and in the divine results.

**(Ps. 107:10) Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.** The cell is dark, and the fear of execution casts a dense gloom over the prison. This is the cruelty of man to man, that tens of thousands have been held in places only fit to be tombs—unhealthy, suffocating, filthy sepulchers—where they have become sick and died of broken hearts. Meanwhile, the dread of sudden death was the most hideous part of the punishment. Prisoners have felt as if the chill shade of death froze them to the marrow. A soul under conviction of sin is forcibly symbolized by this condition. People in that state cannot see the promises that would yield them comfort. They sit in the inactivity of despair. They fear the approach of judgment and are as distressed as if they were at the door of death.

**Bound in affliction and irons.** Many prisoners have been doubly bound in heart and hand. Or, the text may mean that affliction becomes an iron band, or that the iron chains caused them great affliction. None know these things but those who have felt them. We would prize our liberty more if we knew from actual experience what manacles and chains mean. In a spiritual sense, affliction frequently attends conviction of sin. This double grief causes a double bondage. Iron enters the soul. The poor captives cannot stir because of their bonds, they cannot rise to hope because of their grief, and have no power because of their despair. Misery is the companion of all who are locked up. You who are made free by Christ Jesus, remember those who are in bonds.

**(Ps. 107:11) Because they rebelled against the words of God.** This was the general reason for bondage among God's ancient people. They were given to their adversaries because they were not loyal to their Lord. God's words are not to be trifled with, and those who venture in such rebellion will come into bondage.

**(Ps. 107:14) He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death.** The Lord in providence takes prisoners from their cells and invites them to breathe sweet fresh air again. Then He takes off their fetters and gives liberty to their aching limbs. He also frees His people from care and trouble and especially from the misery and slavery of sin. This He does with His own hand, for in the experience of all the saints it is certified that there is no jail delivery unless by the Judge Himself.

**(Ps. 107:16) For He has broken the gates of bronze, and cut the bars of iron in two.** This verse belongs with the preceding one, for it sums up the mercy experienced by captives. The Lord breaks the strongest gates and bars, when the time comes to free His people. Spiritually, the Lord Jesus has broken the most powerful bonds and made us free indeed. Bronze and iron are as kindling before the flame of Jesus' love. The gates of hell will not prevail against us; neither will the bars of the grave detain us. Those who have experienced His redeeming power must and will praise the Lord for the wonders of His grace displayed on our behalf.

**(Ps. 107:17) Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted.** Many sicknesses are the direct result of foolish acts. Thoughtless and lustful people fill their bodies with diseases of the worst kind through drunkenness, gluttony, and the indulgence of other passions. Sin is at the bottom of all sorrow, but some sorrows are the immediate results of wickedness. By transgression, people afflict themselves, and they are fools for their pains. Even worse, when they are in affliction, they are still fools. "Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his foolishness will not depart from him" (Prov. 27:22). From one transgression, they go to many iniquities, and while under the rod, they add sin to sin. Sadly, even the Lord's people often play the fool in this sad manner.

**(Ps. 107:18) Their soul abhorred all manner of food. And they drew near to the gates of death.** From lack of food, and by the destructive power of their malady, they gradually slide until they lie at the gates of death. A physician's skill cannot stop their downward progress. They cannot eat, so there is no support given to the system. As the disease rages, their little strength is spent in pain and misery. This is the way with souls afflicted with a sense of sin. They find no comfort in the choicest promises but turn with loathing from the gospel, so that they gradually decay into the grave of despair. The mercy is that, though near the gates of death, they are not yet inside the sepulcher.

**(Ps. 107:20) He sent His word and healed them. And delivered them from their destruction.** They escape, though many deadly dangers had surrounded them. The word of the Lord has great delivering power. He has only to speak and the armies of death flee in an instant. Sin-sick souls should remember the power of the Word and be much occupied with hearing it and meditating on it.

Spiritually considered, these verses describe a sin-sick soul, foolish but aware of guilt. Such a soul refuses comfort from any and every quarter, and a lethargy of despair utterly paralyzes it. To its apprehension, nothing remains but utter destruction. The gates of death stand open, and the soul appears to be hurrying that way. In the bitterness of grief, the soul is then driven to the Lord, and Christ, the eternal Word, comes with healing power to it, even in its direst extreme, saving to the uttermost.

**(Ps. 107:24) They see the works of the LORD. And His wonders in the deep.** All believers do not have the same deep experience, but to do business for Him, the Lord sends some of His saints to the sea of soul trouble. There they see, as others do not, the wonders of divine grace. Sailing over the deeps of inner depravity, the waste waters of poverty, the billows of persecution, or the rough waves of trials, they need God above all others, and they find Him.

**(Ps. 107:25) For He commands.** His word is enough. He wills it, and a tempest rages. **And raises the stormy wind.** It seemed to be asleep, but it knows its Master's command and is immediately blowing in all its fury.

**(Ps. 107:26) They mount up to the heavens. But it is only for a moment, for soon they go down again to the depths in the sea's trough. Their soul melts because of trouble.** Weary, wet, discouraged, and hopeless of escape, their heart is turned to water. They seem to have no manhood left.

Those who have been in the spiritual deep, in one of the great storms that occasionally agitates the soul, know what this verse means. In these spiritual hurricanes, presumption alternates with despair, indifference with agony! No heart is left for anything; courage is gone, and hope is almost dead. Such an experience is as real as the tossing of a literal storm and far more painful. Some of us have weathered many an internal hurricane and have indeed seen the Lord's wonderful works.

**(Ps. 107:27) They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man.** The violent motion of the vessel prevents them from their staying on their legs, and fear drives out all power to use their brains. They look intoxicated.

**And are at their wits' end.** What more can they do? They have used every expedient known to navigation, but the ship is so strained and beaten that they do not know how to keep her afloat.

Here, too, the log of the spiritual mariner agrees with that of the ocean sailor. We have staggered frightfully! We could stand to nothing and hold by nothing. We did not know what to do and could have done nothing had we known. We were distracted and felt as if destruction would be better than our horrible state of suspense. As for wit and wisdom, they were clean washed out of us.

**(Ps. 107:28) Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble.** Though at wits' end, they had wit enough to pray. Their heart was melted, and it ran in cries for help.

This was well and ended well, for it is written, **He brings them out of their distresses.** Prayer is good in a storm. We may pray when staggering, reeling, and at our wits' end. God will hear us in the thunder and answer us out of the storm. He brought distresses on the mariners, and they did well to turn to Him for relief. They did not look in vain.

**(Ps. 107:29) He calms the storm.** He reveals His power in the sudden and wonderful transformation that occurs at His bidding. He commanded the storm and now He ordains the calm. God is in all natural phenomena, and we do well to recognize His working.

**(Ps. 107:33) He turns rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground.** When the Lord deals with rebellious people, He may take their most assured blessings; their rivers and perennial springs can be taken by a word from the Lord. After long droughts in hot climates, streams of water utterly fail and even springs stop flowing. This occurs when great convulsions of the earth's surface have occurred. In providence, this physical catastrophe finds its counterpart when business stops yielding a profit, when sources of wealth fail, when health and strength are taken, when friendly aid is withdrawn, or when comfortable associations are broken up. In soul matters, prosperous ministries may become dry, delightful meditations may cease to benefit us, and fruitful religious exercises may lose the refreshing grace they previously yielded. Since:

It is God who lifts our comforts high,  
Or sinks them in the grave,

it behooves us to walk before Him with reverent gratitude, and so live that it will not be imperative on Him to afflict us.

**(Ps. 107:37) And sow fields and plant vineyards, that they may yield a fruitful harvest.** People work when God works. His blessing encourages the sower, cheers the planter, and rewards the laborer. When the heavens give the needed rain, not only necessities but also luxuries are enjoyed, wine as well as corn. Divine visits bring great spiritual riches; they foster works of faith, labors of love, and cause every good fruit to abound for our comfort and to God's praise. When God sends the blessing, it does not supersede but encourages and develops human exertion. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

**(Ps. 107:42) The righteous see it and rejoice.** Divine providence brings joy to God's true people. They see the Lord's hand in all things and delight to study His justice and grace.

**And all iniquity stops its mouth.** What can iniquity say? God's providence is so conclusive in its arguments that there is no replying or questioning. The impudence of ungodliness cannot be quiet for long, but when God's judgments are abroad, it holds its tongue.

**(Ps. 107:43) Whoever is wise will observe these things, and they will understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.** Those who notice providence will never be long without a Providence to notice. It is wise to observe what the Lord does, for He is wonderful in counsel. He has given us eyes to see, and it is foolish to close them when there is so much to observe. Yet, we must observe wisely, otherwise we may confuse ourselves and others with hasty reflections about the Lord's dealings. In a thousand ways, the Lord's lovingkindness is shown, and if we prudently watch, we will come to a better understanding of it. Understanding the delightful attribute of lovingkindness is an attainment that is as pleasant as it is profitable. Proficient scholars in this art will be the sweetest singers of Jehovah's glory.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### **What are the redeemed of the Lord to be saying (Ps. 107:2)?**

Ps. 107:1, 15

#### **What is said of those who can see the Lord's hand in all events ?**

Ps. 107:42-43      Hos. 6:3

#### **Ps. 108:1-13**

**A Song. A Psalm of David.** It is to be sung jubilantly as a national hymn, or solemnly as a sacred Psalm. We cannot find it in our heart to dismiss this Psalm by merely referring the reader to Psalms 57:7-11 or 60:5-12, although those two portions of Scripture are almost identical to these verses. Most commentators have done so, and we are not so presumptuous as to dispute their wisdom. Yet, we believe these words would not have been repeated without a reason. And that reason could never be answered if every hearer said, "We had that before, no need to meditate on it again." The Holy Spirit is not so short of expressions that He needs to repeat Himself, and the repetition is not merely to fill the book. There must be some purpose in arranging the two previous divine statements in a new connection; whether we can discover that intent is another matter. It is at least ours to attempt to do so, and we may expect divine assistance.

We have before us "The Warrior's Morning Song," for here he adores God and strengthens his heart before entering the day's conflicts. As an old Prussian officer invoked the aid of "his Majesty's August Ally" in prayer, David appeals to God and sets up his banner in Jehovah's name.

**(Psalm 108:1-5 Overview)** These five verses are found almost verbatim in Psalm 57:7-11. There are some minor alterations, but the difference lies in the position of the verses. In Psalm 57, notes of praise grow out of prayer, but here, the psalmist immediately begins to sing and praise. Afterward, he prays in a remarkably confident manner; he seems to seize the blessing rather than plead for it. Sometimes we must climb to praise on the ladder of prayer, and at other times, we must bless God for the past, in order to be able in faith to plead for the present and the future. By the aid of God's Spirit, we can pray to praise, or praise until we reach a proper frame for prayer. In Psalm 57, the words are a song in the cave of Adullam, the result of faith that is beginning its battles with malicious, domestic enemies. Here, the words express continued resolve and praise of a man who has weathered many campaigns, overcome all home conflicts, and is looking forward to many conquests. This passage serves as a fine close for one Psalm and makes an equally worthy opening for another.

**(Ps. 108:1) O God, my heart is steadfast.** Though many wars disturb me and many cares toss me to and fro, I am settled in one mind and cannot be driven from it. My heart has taken hold and abides in one resolve. Your grace has overcome the fickleness of nature, and I am now in a resolute and determined frame of mind. **I will sing and give** praise.

**(Ps. 108:7) God has spoken in His holiness.** The Lord had made large promises to David, and these were guaranteed by His holiness. Divine attributes were pledged to give the son of Jesse great blessings; there was no fear that the covenant God would go back on His pledge.

**I will rejoice.** When God speaks, we rejoice. Divine revelation is a joy. If the Lord wanted to destroy us, He would not have spoken in His holiness. What God said is reason to rejoice, and He declared "the sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:3) and promised to establish David's descendants on the throne. David greatly rejoiced after the Lord had spoken through Nathan (1 Chr. 17:15), He sat before the Lord in a wonder of joy (1 Chr. 17:27).

Then David acted vigorously against his enemies (1 Chr. 18:1), just as in this Psalm, he vows, **I will divide Shechem.** Home conquests come first. Foes must be dislodged from Israel's territory and the land properly settled and managed.

**And measure out the Valley of Succoth.** Land on both sides of the Jordan must be put in order and secured against wandering marauders. Some rejoicing leads to inaction, but a lively faith grounded on God's promises does not. David prays as if he already had the blessing and could share it; this comes from heartily singing to the Lord, his helper. David acts like a man whose prayers are not only a part of his life, but a vital portion of his actions.

**(Ps. 108:8) Gilead is Mine.** Thankful hearts dwell on the gifts the Lord has given. They find it easy to mention each gift individually. **Manasseh is Mine.** I already have it. It is the sign and assurance that the remainder of the promised heritage will come in due time. If we gratefully acknowledge what we have, we will be in better heart for obtaining what we have not received. He who gives us Gilead and Manasseh will not fail to put the rest of the promised territory into our hands.

**Ephraim also is the helmet for My head.** This tribe furnished David with more than twenty thousand mighty men. The faithful loyalty of this band was proof that the rest of the tribe was with him, and so he regarded them as the helmet of the state, the guard of his royal crown.

**Judah is My lawgiver.** There he seated the government and chief courts of justice. Only Judah could lawfully govern "until Shiloh comes," divine decree fixed the legal power in that state (Gen. 49:10). There is no lawgiver but our Lord, who came out of Judah; whenever Rome, or Canterbury, or any other power attempts to establish laws and ordinances for the church, we have but one reply, **Judah is My lawgiver.** The royal psalmist rejoiced because his land had been cleansed of intruders and a regular government established. In all this, David found encouragement to plead for victory over his foreign foes. Today, we plead with the Lord, that as Christ's holy gospel has been set up and maintained in one nation, so also in other lands the power of His scepter of grace will be acknowledged, until all the earth will bow before Him and the Edom of Antichrist will be crushed beneath His feet.

**(Ps. 108:9) Moab is My washpot.** This nation, not friendly to the Israelites, was viewed as a detested rival. David subdued them, and they became subject to his throne. He claims victory by faith, regards his powerful enemy with contempt, and was not disappointed, for "the Moabites became David's servants, and brought tribute" (2 Sam. 8:2). As people are refreshed by washing their feet after a long journey, vanquished difficulties refresh us, and we use Moab for a washpot.

**Over Edom I will cast My shoe.** It will be the floor on which a bather throws his shoe. It will lie underfoot, subject to his will. Edom was proud, but David throws his sandal at it. Its capital was high, but he casts his slipper over it. It was strong, but he hurls his shoe at it, as at the battle's pawn. He had not captured its rock fortresses, but the Lord was with him, and he knew that he would. Under the Almighty's leadership, David felt so secure in conquering Edom that he looked on it as a slave, over which he could rejoice with immunity. We should never fear those who are defending the wrong side. God is not with them, so their wisdom is folly, their strength is weakness, and their glory is shame. We think too much of God's foes and speak of them with too much respect. **Over Philistia I will triumph.** David had done so in his youth, and he is sure of doing it again. We read, "David attacked the Philistines and subdued them" (2 Sam. 8:1), just as he had subdued Edom and filled it with his garrisons. The enemies we battled in our youth are still alive, and we will

have more brushes with them before we die. Blessed be God, we are by no means dismayed at this prospect, for this time we expect to readily triumph.

**(Ps. 108:10)** Faith leads to a realization of the promise. Thus, this practical question, **Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom?**

**(Ps. 108:11)** **Is it not You, O God, who cast us off?** This is great faith that trusts the Lord even when He seems to have cast us off. Some can barely trust Him when He pampers them, yet David relied on Him when Israel seemed under a cloud and the Lord had hidden His face. Oh, for more of this real and living faith! The casting off will not last long when faith gloriously holds on.

**And You, O God, who did not go out with our armies?** Can You forever forsake Your own and leave Your people to be overthrown by Your enemies? The sweet singer is sure that Edom will be captured, because he cannot, will not, believe that God will avoid going with the armies of His chosen people. When we ask, "Who will be the means by which we obtain a promised blessing?" we need not be discouraged if we perceive no secondary agent, for we may then fall back on the great Promisor and believe that He will keep His word. If no one else will lead us into Edom, the Lord, if He has promised, will do it. Or, if there must be visible instruments, He will use our armies, weak as they are. There is no need to create a new agency, for God can strengthen our present armies and enable them to do all that is needed. All that is wanted for the conquest of a world is that the Lord goes forth with the forces we already have. He can bring us into the strong city, even with our weak weapons.

**(Ps. 108:13)** **Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemies.** God's help will inspire us to help ourselves. Faith is not cowardly or lazy; it knows that God is with us, and so it is valiant. God will walk on the enemies of faith, and faith will rise to walk on them in His name. When praise and prayer precede the battle, we will see heroic deeds and decisive victories. Our secret support is **through God**, and from that source, we draw courage, wisdom, and strength. **We will do valiantly.** This is the public outflow of that secret source. Our inner and spiritual faith is proven with outward and courageous deeds.

**For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.** They will fall before Him, and as they lie prostrate, He and all the hosts of His people will march over them. This is a prophecy. It was fulfilled to David, but it remains true to the Son of David and to all who are on His side. The church will yet praise God with all her heart. Then, with songs and hosannas, she will advance to the great battle. The church's foes will be overthrown and crushed by God's power, and the Lord's glory will be above all the earth. Oh Lord, send it in our time.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What was David's mood before he sang and praised God?**

Ps. 108:1

**What was David's state of mind when he went out to war against his enemies?**

Ps. 108:12-13

### **Psalm 109:1-31**

**To the Chief Musician.** This Psalm is intended to be sung in the temple service, yet it is not easy to imagine an entire nation singing it. Under this dispensation, it is difficult to infuse this Psalm with a sense of the gospel or with any sense compatible to the Christian spirit. So, one would think that the Jews must have found it hard to chant this strong language without a feeling of revenge, which would not be a fitting attitude for God's people to take in worship before His throne. Arousing revenge would never be the object of divine worship in any period under the Law or under the gospel. At the outset, therefore, the meaning of this Psalm, a Psalm certainly meant to be taken before the throne of God in worship, is a difficult question, and only a childlike spirit can answer it.

**A Psalm of David.** This Psalm is not the ravings of a malicious hater or the discharge of a hot, revengeful spirit. David would not kill those who sought his blood, and he frequently forgave those who treated him shamefully (2 Sam. 19:22). These words, therefore, cannot be read in a bitter, revengeful sense, for that would be foreign to the son of Jesse. This prayer—for evil to strike—was penned by one who was courageous in battle yet who was a tenderhearted man of music. This Psalm is addressed to God, and so it cannot possibly be mere angry cursing.

Unless it can be proved that the religion of the old dispensation was totally hard, gloomy, and draconian, and that David was a malicious, vindictive spirit, it cannot be conceived that this Psalm contains what one author has called, "a pitiless hate, a refined and insatiable malignity." We cannot give a place to this suggestion, no, not even for an hour. But what else can we make of this strong language? This is one of the difficult places in Scripture, a passage that the soul trembles to read. Yet it is a Psalm to God, given by inspiration, and so it is not ours to sit in judgment but to listen to what the Lord would say through it.

Peter says that this Psalm refers to Judas (Acts 1:20). Thus, to attribute its bitter denunciations to our Lord in the hour of His sufferings is more than we dare to do. This is not consistent with the silent Lamb of God, who did not open

His mouth when he was being led to death (Isa. 53:7). It may seem very pious to put such words into His mouth, as some do, but we hope it is holiness that prevents us from doing it.

### Division

- David humbly pleads with God to be delivered from his remorseless and falsehearted enemies, verses 1-6.
- Filled with prophetic furor, he pronounces judgment on his foes, verses 6-20.
- He returns to fellowship with God, in prayer and praise, verses 21-31.

The central portion of the Psalm, in which the difficulty lies, must not be considered as the psalmist's personal wish but as his prophetic denunciation, as he emphatically describes the "son of perdition." We would all pray for the conversion of our worst enemy, and so would David. Yet, viewing the Lord's adversaries as incorrigible, we cannot wish them well. Quite the contrary, we want their overthrow and destruction. Even the gentlest persons burn with indignation when they hear about crafty plots to ruin the innocent, cruel oppression of helpless orphans, barbarities, and gratuitous ingratitude to good and kind people. A curse on the perpetrators of atrocities may not be less virtuous than a blessing on the righteous. We wish all mankind well. And for that reason, we sometimes blaze with indignation against the inhuman wretches by whom every law that protects our fellow creatures is trampled and every dictate of humanity is set at naught.

**(Ps. 109:1) Do not keep silent.** My enemies speak, so will You please speak. Break Your solemn silence; silence those who slander me. This is the cry of a man whose confidence in God is deep and whose fellowship with Him is close and bold. He asks only the Lord to speak. A word from God is all a believer needs.

**(Ps. 109:4) In return for my love they are my accusers. But I give myself to prayer.** He did nothing but pray. He became prayer as they became malice. This was his answer to his enemies. He appealed about their injustice to the Judge who must do right. Bravery alone can teach one to leave the slanderers unanswered and carry the case to the Lord. "Men cannot help but reverence the courage that walks amid slanders unanswered." "He stands as a gallant chief unheeding shot or shell."

**(Ps. 109:5) Thus they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.** Evil for good is devil-like. This is Satan's line of action, and his children follow it greedily. It is cruel, and it cuts to the quick. Revenge that pays in its own coin has a natural justice, but what can be said of the worthlessness that pays to goodness the opposite of what it has a right to expect? Our Lord endured this treatment all His days, and His members still endure it.

We see the harmless and innocent man on his knees pouring out his lamentation. We observe him rising from the mercy seat, inspired with prophetic energy, pouring on his foes the warnings of their doom. We hear him speaking like a stern judge, or like an angel of doom robed in vengeance, or like the sword of justice bared for execution. He is not speaking so much for himself as for all the slandered and downtrodden. He feels that he is their representative asking for justice. His soul is stinging with cruel wrongs, so he makes no limit on his demands. To pity malice would be malice to humanity; to screen the crafty seekers of blood would be cruelty to the oppressed. Love, truth, and pity lift their wounds to heaven and implore vengeance on the enemies of the innocent and oppressed. Those who make goodness a crime and innocence a motive for hate deserve no mercy from the great Preserver of people. Vengeance is God's prerogative (Rom. 12:19). It would be a boundless calamity if evil went unpunished forever. It is an unspeakable blessing that the Lord will repay the wicked and the cruel. There are times and seasons when a good person ought to pray for that blessing. When the Judge of all threatens to punish cruelty and treachery, virtue assents and consents. Amen. So let it be, says every just person.

**(Ps. 109:6) Set a wicked man over him.** What worse punishment could a man have? The proud cannot stand the proud, nor can the oppressor endure another oppressor's reign. The righteous, in their patience, find the rule of the wicked a difficult bondage. Those who are full of resentful passions and haughty aspirations are slaves when their own kind have a hand of the whip.

**And let an accuser stand at his right hand.** Should not like come to like? Should not the father of lies stand near his children? Who is a better right hand friend for an adversary of the righteous than the great adversary himself? The curse is awful, but it is only natural that it should come to pass. Those who serve Satan may expect to have his company, his assistance, his temptations, and, at last, his doom.

**(Ps. 109:7) When he is judged, let him be found guilty.** He judged and condemned others in the vilest manner, and he did not even allow the innocent to go free, so it would be a great shame if he were allowed to go free. Who would want Nero or Caligula to be cleared if they were charged with cruelty? When Shylock goes to court, who wishes him well?

**And let his prayer become sin.** It is sin already; thus, let it be so treated. To the injured, it seems terrible that a black-hearted villain should pretend to pray. Naturally, they beg that the villain may not be heard but that his pleadings will be regarded as an addition to his guilt. He has devoured the widow's house, and yet he prays. He has put Naboth to death by false accusation and has taken possession of his vineyard, and then he presents prayers to the Almighty (1 Kings 21:1-19)

**(Ps. 109:16) Because he did not remember to show mercy,** the Judge of all will have a strong memory of his sins. He had forgotten how to show mercy. He was without common humanity. He lacked compassion and was only worthy to be dealt with by the bare rule of justice.

**But persecuted the poor and needy man.** He looked on the poor and needy as a nuisance. He ground their faces in the dirt, oppressed them through unjust wages, and treated them as the mire of the streets. Should he not be punished and laid low? All who know him are indignant at his brutalities, and they will glory to see him overthrown.

**That he might even slay the broken in heart.** He had malice toward those who were already sorrowful, whom it was beyond malignancy to attack. Yet, no grief aroused his sympathy, and no poverty ever moved him to relent. He would kill the heart-broken and rob their orphans of their estate. To him, groans were music, tears were wine, and drops of blood were precious rubies. Would anyone spare such a monster? Will it not serve humanity if we wish him to be gone, gone to God's throne to receive his reward? If he will turn and repent, fine. But if not, such a tree should be felled and thrown into the fire. As men justly kill mad dogs, we lawfully wish that cruel oppressors of the poor were removed from their place, made an example of, and made to suffer for their barbarities.

**(Ps. 109:21) But You, O God the Lord, deal with me for Your name's sake.** David eagerly turns from his enemies to God! He sets the great **You** in opposition to all the adversaries, and his heart is immediately at rest. The words are indistinct, and our version does not translate them precisely, yet in a remarkable manner, they hit the sense and the obscurity that hangs over this sentence.

**Deal with me.** What will God do? Why, whatever He thinks is proper. David leaves himself in the Lord's hands, dictating nothing. He is perfectly content to do this as long as God undertakes for him. His plea is not based on merit but on **Your name's sake**. Saints have always felt this to be their mightiest plea. God has performed His greatest deeds of grace for the honor of His name, and His people know that this is their most potent argument. What the Lord guards with sacred jealousy, we should reverence and fully rely on.

**Because Your mercy is good, deliver me,** not because I am good but because Your mercy is good. God's mercy is the star that the Lord's people turn to when they are tossed with tempests and not comforted. The special bounty and goodness of mercy has a charm for weary hearts. When people have no mercy, they will find it in God. When others want to devour them, they look to God to deliver them. His name and His mercy are two firm grounds for hope; happy are those who know how to rest in them.

**(Ps. 109:22) For I am poor and needy.** David does not press his riches or merits but his poverty and needs. This is gospel supplication, which only the Spirit of God can indite on the heart. This lowliness does not have the supposed vengeful spirit of the preceding verses. There must be some interpretation that would make them suitable to a lowly-minded man of God.

**And my heart is wounded within me.** The Lord always has tender concern for the brokenhearted. Undeserved cruelty, corruption, and slander from remorseless enemies had pierced David's soul. Thus he pleads this sad condition as a reason for God's help. It is time for a friend to step in when the adversary cuts deep. The case is desperate without divine aid; now is the Lord's time.

**(Ps. 109:26) Help me, O LORD my God!** Laying hold of Jehovah by appropriating the word *my*, David implores God's aid to help him carry the heavy load and to enable him to rise to the occasion, He has described his weakness and the strength and fury of the foe. Using these two arguments, he urges his appeal with double force. This is a rich, short, and suitable prayer for believers who are in peril, difficulty, or sorrow.

**Oh, save me according to Your mercy.** As Your mercy is, so let *Your* salvation be. The measure is great, for God's mercy is without bound. When humanity has no mercy, it is comforting to fall on God's mercy. Justice to the wicked is often mercy to the righteous. And because God is merciful, He will save His people by overthrowing their adversaries.

**(Ps. 109:27) That they may know that this is Your hand.** Stupid as they are, let the mercy shown to me be so conspicuous that they will be forced to see the Lord's hand in it. The ungodly will not see God's hand in anything if they can help it, and when they see good people delivered into their power, they become more confirmed than ever in their atheism. But, in good time, God will arise, punish their malice, and rescue the object of their spite. Then they will be compelled to say, like the Egyptian magicians, "This is the finger of God" (Ex. 8:19).

**That You, LORD, have done it.** There will be no mistaking the author of this thorough vindication, this complete turning of the tables.

**(Ps. 109:28) Let them curse, but You bless. When they arise, let them be ashamed. But let Your servant rejoice,** not merely as one protected and rescued but also as God's servant, in whom His master's goodness and glory are displayed when he is saved from his foes. It should be our greatest joy when the Lord is honored in our experience. Mercy should not make us rejoice so much as the glory that is brought to Him who so graciously bestows it.

**(Ps. 109:31) For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor.** God will not be absent when His people are on trial. He will hold a brief for them, stand in court as their advocate, and plead on their behalf. How different this is from the ungodly, who have Satan at their right hand (v. 6).

**To save him from those who condemn him.** The court was only a formality. The malicious had made up their minds, and they judged him guilty. Their hate condemned him, and they pronounced damnation on their victim. But what difference did it make? The great King was in court, and their sentence was turned against them. Nothing more sweetly sustain a slandered believer than the firm conviction that God is near all who are wronged, and that He is sure to work out their salvation.

Oh Lord, save us from the severe trial slander. Deal in Your righteousness with those who spitefully assail the characters of holy people. Cause all who are hurting from slander and reproach to come forth unsullied from the affliction, just as Your only begotten Son did. Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**How might we interpret Psalm 109 so as to remove the vindictive element?**

**In what respect does this Psalm fall short of the Christian ideal?**

**Could Psalm 109:1-5 not only be speaking of David but Jesus as well?**

Ps. 35:7, 12 Ps. 38:20

### **Psalm 110:1-7**

The subject is **The Priest-King**. None of Israel's kings united these two offices, though some tried. Although David performed certain acts that appeared priestly, he was no priest, for he was from the tribe of Judah, "of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:14). He was too devout to thrust himself into the office of priest. The Priest-King is David's Lord, a mysterious person typified by Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18). He is looked for by the Jews as the Messiah, and He is none other than "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1). Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. This Psalm describes the appointment of the kingly priest, his followers, his battles, and his victory.

**(Ps. 110:1) The LORD said to my Lord**—Jehovah said to my Adonai. David, in spirit, heard Jehovah's solemn voice speaking to the Messiah from eternity past. What wonderful fellowship there has been between the Father and the Son! From this secret and intimate fellowship springs the covenant of grace and its wonderful arrangements. All the great acts of grace are brought into actual being by the word of God. Had He not spoken, there would be no manifestation of Deity. "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). From eternity past, there was mysterious fellowship between the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, concerning His people and the great contest on their behalf between Himself and the powers of evil. How condescending is Jehovah to permit a mortal ear to hear and a human pen to record His secret conversations with His co-equal Son! We should treasure this revelation, which is made public for the refreshing of His people. Lord, what is man that You should impart Your secrets to him?

Though David was a firm believer in the Unity of the Godhead, he spiritually discerns the two persons, distinguishes between them, and perceives that he has a special interest in the second, for he calls Him, "My Lord." This was an anticipation of Thomas's exclamation, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). It expresses the psalmist's reverence, obedience, belief, and joy in Christ. It is well to have clear views of the mutual relationship of the blessed Trinity. The knowledge of these truths is essential for our comfort and growth in grace. There is a clear distinction in the divine persons, since one speaks to another; yet the Godhead is One.

**Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.** Away from the shame and suffering of His earthly life, Jehovah calls the Adonai, our Lord, to the repose and honors of His celestial seat. His work is done, and He may sit. It is well done, and He may sit at His right hand. It will have great results, and He may therefore quietly wait to see the complete victory, which is certain to follow. The glorious Jehovah addresses the Christ as our Savior, for He said, ". . . to my Lord." Jesus is placed in the seat of power, dominion, and dignity. He sits there by divine appointment, while Jehovah fights for Him; He sits as our representative because of the Father's ordinance and call. This mediator kingdom will last until, "He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:24-26).

**(Ps. 110:2) Rule in the midst of Your enemies!** Jesus, it appears from this text, is not inactive at Jehovah's right hand. The text proves the lasting nature of His kingdom, in and from Zion and among His friends and foes. We look for the clearer sign of His almighty power in the latter days, but even in these waiting times, we rejoice that all authority has been given Him in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18).

**(Ps. 110:3) Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.** As a consequence of sending the rod of strength—the power of the gospel—converts will come in great numbers. Given to Him from of old, they are His people. When His power is revealed, they will happily hasten to His service, appearing spontaneously at the gospel call, like dew appears in the morning. This metaphor is expanded: As the dew has a sparkling beauty, these willing armies of converts have a holy excellence and charm; as the dew is the lively emblem of freshness, these converts are full of vivacity and youthful vigor.

**(Ps. 110:4) The LORD has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."** We have now reached the heart of the Psalm, which is also the center and soul of our faith. Our Lord Jesus is The Priest-King by Jehovah's ancient oath. "Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest" (Heb. 5:5), but He was ordained from of old, for **You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**

**The LORD has sworn.** It must be a solemn and a sure matter that leads the Eternal to swear and to settle the decree forever. To make assurance a thousand times sure, **will not relent** is added. Jesus is sworn to be His people's priest forever and ever. His commission is sealed by the immutable Jehovah's unchanging oath. If His priesthood could be revoked and His authority removed, it would be the end of all hope and life for the people that He loves. But this sure rock is the basis of our security; God's oath establishes our glorious Lord both in His priesthood and on His throne. It is the Lord who constituted Him a priest forever. He has done it by oath, never to relent, and it will stand throughout all ages. Thus, our security in Him is beyond all question.

This declaration is in the present tense, which is the Lord's only time. **You are**, "the One who is and who was and who is to come" (Rev. 11:17), **a priest forever**. The order of Melchizedek's priesthood was the most ancient and primitive, the most free from ritual and ceremony, the most natural and simple, and the most honorable. This ancient patriarch, the father of his people, ruled and taught them. He held both scepter and censer, reigned in righteousness, and offered sacrifice before the Lord. There has never been another like him. God would have no king-priest but His Son. Melchizedek's office was exceptional, for no one preceded or succeeded him. He mysteriously appears on the page of history; no pedigree is given, no date of birth, and no mention of death. He blesses Abraham, receives the tithe, and then vanishes from the scene with honors that show that he was greater than the founder of the chosen nation (Gen. 14:18-20). He is seen only once, but that is sufficient. Aaron and his descendants came and went, and their imperfect sacrifice continued for generations because it had no finality and could never make the people perfect.

Our Lord Jesus, like Melchizedek, stands as a divinely ordained priest, not as a priest by fleshly birth like Aaron's sons. He does not mention father, mother, or descendants as His right to the sacred office. He stands on His personal merits. Since no man came before Him in His work, none can follow. His order begins and ends in Him, and in Him it is eternal. The King-Priest has been here and left His blessing on the believing descendants. Now He sits in glory in His complete character, atoning for us by the merit of His blood and exercising all power on our behalf.

**(Ps. 110:5-7) The Lord is at Your right hand;  
He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.  
He shall judge among the nations,  
He shall fill the places with dead bodies,  
He shall execute the heads of many countries.  
He shall drink of the brook by the wayside;  
Therefore He shall lift up the head.**

We understand the last verses of this Psalm to refer to The Priest-King's future victories. He will not wait forever, but He will come to end the weary war with His victorious presence. Jesus will personally lead the final charge; His right hand and His holy arm will give Him the victory.

**(Ps. 110:5) The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.** As He comes to the field of action, the infinite Jehovah comes with Him as the strength of His right hand. Eternal power attends the coming of the Lord, and earthly power dies as though struck with a sword. In the last days, all the kingdoms of the earth's will be overcome by the kingdom of heaven, and those who dare oppose will meet with swift and overwhelming ruin. What are kings when they oppose the Son of God? A single stroke will destroy them. When the angel of the *Lord* struck Herod, there was no need of a second blow, for "he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:23). Concerning the last days, we read, "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war" (Rev. 19:11). "Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15, 16).

**(Ps. 110:6) He shall judge among the nations.** All nations will feel His power, and they will either joyfully yield or be crushed.

**He shall fill the places with dead bodies.** In the terrible battles of His gospel, all opponents will fall until the battlefield is heaped with the slain. This need not be literally understood; it is a poetical description of the overthrow of all rebellious powers and the defeat of all unholy principles. Yet, if kings oppose the Lord with weapons of war, the result would be an overwhelming defeat and the destruction of their forces. Read this in connection with the prophecy in Rev. 19:17-21. Terrible things in righteousness will be seen before this world's history ends.

**(Ps. 110:7) He shall drink of the brook by the wayside. Therefore He shall lift up the head.** His head will be lifted high in victory, and His people, in Him, will also be lifted. When He passed this way before, He was burdened, and hard work was laid on Him. But in His Second Coming, He will win an easy victory. He was the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3), but when He comes a second time, His head will be lifted in triumph. Let His saints rejoice. "Lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near" (Luke 21:28). In the last days, we look for terrible conflicts and a final victory. Jesus has tolerated our rebellious race for a long time, but He will end the warfare of long-suffering with blows of justice. God has fought with people's sins for their good, but He will not always strive with them by His Spirit (Gen. 6:3). He will cease from the struggle of long-suffering love and begin a battle that will soon end in the final destruction of His adversaries. Oh, King-Priest, we, who in a minor way are king-priests, are full of gladness that You

reign even now and that you will soon come to vindicate Your cause and establish Your empire forever. "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### Show in the New Testament where this Psalm is referred to and to whom does it apply?

Matt. 22:41-46    Matt. 26:64    Mark 12:35-37    Luke 20:41-44    Acts 2:33-35    Acts 7:55-56    Rom. 8:34  
1 Cor. 15:24-28    Eph. 1:20-22    Phil. 2:9-11    Heb. 1:3, 13    Heb. 8:1    Heb. 10:12, 13

### Psalm 111:1-10

This Psalm has no title. It is an alphabetical hymn of praise. The subject is the works of the Lord in creation, providence, and grace. Israel's sweet singer dwells on the idea that God should be known by His people. This knowledge, when turned into practical holiness, is true wisdom and the reason for lasting adoration. Many are ignorant of what their Creator has done, and they are foolish in heart and silent as to the praises of God. This evil can only be removed by remembering God's works and diligently studying them. The Psalm is meant to wake us up! It may be called "The Psalm of God's Works." It is intended to inspire us to the work of praise.

**(Ps. 111:1) Praise the LORD**, or Hallelujah! Adore Jehovah, for He works gloriously! Do it now, do it always, do it heartily, do it unanimously, and do it eternally. If others refuse, take care that you always have a song for your God. Put away all doubts, questions, grumblings, and rebellions. Praise Jehovah with your lips and in your life.

**I will praise the LORD with my whole heart.** The sweet singer sings because his heart is on fire. Whether others will follow him or not, he will begin and continue for a long time. What we preach, we should practice. The best way to enforce an exhortation is to set an example, but it must be a good example. David brought nothing less than his heart, love, zeal, skill, and enthusiasm. Jehovah, the one and undivided God, cannot be acceptably praised with a divided heart; to do so would dishonor Him. Even though all of our heart is too little for His glory, there can be no reason why it should not be fully lifted up for His praise. All His works are worthy of praise, and all our nature should adore Him.

**(Ps. 111:2) The works of the LORD are great.** In design, size, number, and excellence, all the works of the LORD are great. Even God's little things are great. Each production of His power or deed of His wisdom appears great to the wise in heart.

**Studied by all who have pleasure in them.** Those who love their Maker delight in His handiwork. They perceive that there is more to them than appears on the surface. They exercise their minds to study and understand. The devout naturalist ransacks nature, the serious history student pries into hidden facts and dark stories, and the believer digs the mines of Scripture and finds grains of golden truth. God's works are worthy of our research; they yield instruction and pleasure, are wonderfully blended, and grow greater after investigation. Human works are noble from a distance; God's works are great when sought out. Delitzsch reads the passage, "Worthy of being sought after in all their purposes." This is a great truth, for all that God makes or does is equal to the work. God's hidden wisdom is the most marvelous part of His work, and those who do not look below the surface miss the best part. His works are great and cannot be seen at one time. Each must be carefully looked at. This seeking is essential; it educates our faculties and strengthens our spiritual eyes to see the light of divine glory. It is well that all things cannot be seen at a glance, for the search into their mysteries is as useful as the knowledge. The history of the Lord's dealings with His people is a good subject for the meditation of reverent minds, who find them a sweet solace and a never failing delight.

**(Ps. 111:3) His work is honorable and glorious.** His one special work, the salvation of His people, is here distinguished from His many other works. This reflects honor and glory on Him. It is the theme of highest praise, and it compels those who understand and experience it to give all honor and glory to the Lord. Its conception, its sure foundation, its gracious purpose, its wise arrangement, its gift of Jesus as Redeemer, its redemption by the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification, and everything else that makes up the glorious total contributes to the infinite honor of Him who devised and carried out this astounding salvation. No other work can be compared to it. It honors both the Savior and the saved. It brings glory to God, and it brings us to glory. "There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to help you" (Deut. 33:26), and there is no salvation like the salvation He has worked for His people.

**And His righteousness endures forever** In the work of grace, righteousness is not forgotten or deprived of its glory. It is honored in the eyes of the intelligent universe. The bearing of guilt by our great Substitute proved that the Lord would not forget His righteousness. No future strain on His justice can equal what it has already sustained in the bruising of His dear Son. It, assuredly, will endure forever. God's righteousness can never be suspected of failure, for all that it requires is already performed. Its demands are satisfied by our Lord's double deed in enduring the vengeance and being perfectly obedient to the Law. Caprice does not enter our Lord's government, for the rectitude of it is, and must be, forever beyond question. In no deed of God can unrighteousness be found. This is the glory of His work, and its adversaries cannot contradict it. Let believers praise Him forever and never fear to speak of that honorable and glorious work.

**(Ps. 111:4) He has made His wonderful works to be remembered.** He meant them to remain in His people's memory, and they do, partly because they are memorable and partly because He has recorded them by the pen of

inspiration and also written them on the hearts of His people by the Holy Spirit. The Mosaic Law, the Exodus, the wilderness sojourn, and other historic memorabilia were constantly brought to the people's minds. By this, their children were instructed in the wonders that God worked.

God's deeds are not to be admired for an hour and then forgotten; they are to be perpetual and instructive signs to all coming generations. They are designed to confirm His people's faith in divine love and to make them know that **the LORD is gracious and full of compassion**. They need not fear to trust His grace for the future, for they remember the past. Grace is as conspicuous as righteousness in the great work of God. A fullness of tender love is seen in all that He has done. He treats His people with great consideration for their weakness and infirmity, having the same pity as a parent with a child. Should we not praise Him for this? A silver thread of loving-kindness runs through the fabric of God's work of salvation and providence, and never once in the whole piece is it left out. Let His saints' memories bear witness to this with grateful joy.

**(Ps. 111:7) The works of His hands are verity and justice.** Truth and justice are conspicuous in all that Jehovah does. Nothing like fraud or crooked policy is ever seen in His proceedings. He acts faithfully and righteously toward His people and with justice and impartiality to all humanity. This should lead us to praise Him, since it is most advantageous to live under a sovereign whose laws, decrees, acts, and deeds are the essence of truth and justice.

**All His precepts are sure.** All that He has appointed or decreed will surely stand. The precepts that He has proclaimed will be found worthy of our obedience, for they are founded in justice for our lasting good. God is no fickle despot, commanding one thing today and another tomorrow. His commands remain absolutely unaltered, their necessity equally unquestionable, their excellence permanently proven, and their rewards eternally secure.

**(Ps. 111:10) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.** This is the first principle, but it is also the primary and leading attainment. In Scripture, the word **beginning** sometimes means primary, and true religion is the primary element and fruit of wisdom. To know God, so as to walk right before Him, is the greatest of all the applied sciences. Holy reverence of God leads us to praise Him. This is the point the Psalm makes, and it is a wise act on the part of a creature toward the Creator.

**A good understanding have all those who do His commandments.** Obedience to God proves that our judgment is sound. Why should He not be obeyed? Does not reason claim obedience to the Lord of all? Only someone void of understanding will justify rebellion against the holy God. Practical godliness is the test of wisdom. People may know and be orthodox, they may talk and be eloquent, they may speculate and be profound, but the best proof of intelligence is found in actually doing the Lord's will. The first part of the Psalm taught the doctrine of God's nature and character by describing His works. The second part supplies the practical lesson by inferring that to worship and obey Him is true wisdom. We joyfully acknowledge that this is true.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### What is God praised for in this Psalm?

"Holy and reverend is His name" (Ps. 111:9). God commands our respect and expects it from us. **Since we are made in the image of God do we need to be respected by our fellow men also?**

### Show how Psalm 111:10 ties in with the previous nine verses?

Job 28:28    Prov. 1:7    Prov. 9:10

### Psalm 112:1-10

The subject of this poem is the blessedness of the righteous. It has the same relation to the preceding Psalm that the moon has to the sun; the first declares God's glory, the second speaks of the reflection of divine brightness in people born from above. God is praised for the display of His glory as seen in His people, just as in the preceding Psalm, He was magnified for His personal acts. Psalm 111 speaks of the great Father, and Psalm 112 describes His children renewed in His image. This Psalm cannot be viewed as extolling people, for it begins with "Praise the LORD!" It is intended to give God all the honor of His grace as it is manifested in the sons of God.

**(Ps. 112:1) Blessed is the man who fears the LORD.** "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10). This man has begun to be wise; wisdom has brought him present happiness and secured great eternal joy. Jehovah is so great that He is to be feared and held in reverence by all. Yet He is so infinitely good that the fear is sweetened into parental love and becomes a delightful emotion, which by no means engenders bondage. Slavish fear is accursed, but godly fear leads to delight in God's service and is infinitely blessed. Jehovah is to be praised, both for inspiring people with godly fear and for the blessedness they enjoy as a result of it. We ought to bless God for blessing anyone, and especially for setting the seal of His approval on the godly. His favor toward the God-fearing displays His character and encourages gracious feelings in others; therefore, let Him be praised.

**The generation of the upright will be blessed.** The sincere, devout, and righteous are kept under God's blessing from generation to generation. The godly may be persecuted, but they will not be forsaken. Human curses cannot deprive them of God's blessing. The words of Balaam are true, "He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it" (Num. 23:20). Their children are under heaven's special care and, as a rule, they will inherit the divine blessing.

**(Ps. 112:3) And His righteousness endures forever.** Godly character stands the test of examinations, overcomes the temptations of wealth, survives the assaults of slander, outlives the afflictions of time, and endures the trial of the last great day. The righteousness of a true saint endures forever. It springs from and reflects God's righteousness. As long as the Lord is righteous, His people's righteousness will be maintained by His grace. They will hold to the way and grow stronger. There is also another righteousness that belongs to the Lord's chosen; it is the imputed, everlasting righteousness of the Lord Jesus. It belongs to the Son of God, who is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:6).

**(Ps. 112:4) Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness.** If darkness is caused by depression, the Holy Spirit will give comfort. If there is financial loss or personal bereavement, Christ's presence will give solace. If there is cruelty and malignity, the Lord's sympathy will give support. It is as ordinary for the righteous to be comforted as it is for the day to dawn. Wait for the light, and it will surely come. If our heavenly Father, in our last hours, puts us to bed in the dark, it will be morning when we awake.

**He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.** This is spoken of God (Ps. 111:4), and now the same words are used for His servant. Thus, we are taught that when God makes a person upright, He makes that person like Himself. We are at best humble copies of the great original. Yet we are copies, and because we are copies we praise the Lord, who has created us anew in Christ Jesus. The upright are **gracious, and full of compassion.** They are not sour and irritable; they are courteous to friends, kind to the needy, forgiving to the erring, and sincere about the good of all. They are **full of compassion.** They tenderly feel for others, pity them, and assist them in their trouble. They do not need to be driven to benevolence but are full of humanity. It is their joy to sympathize with the sorrowing. They are also **righteous.** In all transactions, they obey the dictates of right, and none can say that they defraud their neighbors. Their justice is tempered with compassion and seasoned with graciousness.

**(Ps. 112:10) The wicked will see it and be grieved; he will gnash his teeth and melt away; the desire of the wicked shall perish.** This final verse forcibly contrasts the righteous and the ungodly. It makes the blessedness of the godly appear all the more remarkable. Usually, we see Ebal (Deut. 27:13) and Gerizim (Deut. 27:12), the curse and the blessing, set against each other. **The wicked will see it and be grieved.** The ungodly, to their condemnation, will first see the example of the saints, and then they will finally see the happiness of the godly. This will increase their eternal misery, for the child of wrath will be forced to witness the blessing of the righteous, and the scene will make them gnaw at their hearts. They will fret, fume, lament, and grow angry, but they will be unable to prevent it, for God's blessing is sure and effective.

**He will gnash his teeth.** Full of wrath and envy, he would grind the righteous between his teeth. But he cannot, so he gnashes his teeth.

**And melt away.** The heat of passion will melt him like wax. The sun of God's providence will dissolve him like snow, and finally, divine fire will consume him as the fat of rams. How horrible is a life that, like the snail's, melts as it proceeds, leaving a slimy trail! Those who grieve at goodness deserve to be wasted by such abominable sorrow.

**The desire of the wicked shall perish.** He will not achieve his purpose. He will die disappointed. Through wickedness, he hoped to accomplish his purpose, but that wickedness will be his defeat. The righteous will endure forever, and their memory will always be green. The ungodly and their names will rot from the face of the earth. He desired to be the founder of a family, and to be remembered as great, but he will pass away, and his name will die. The gulf that separates the righteous from the wicked is wide (Luke 16:26) and the portions the Lord deals each of them is different. We need grace to be the Lord's blessed! This will make us praise Him with all our hearts.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Show how this Psalm brings to mind that God is a "rewarder of His faithful people."**

**How do the wicked react when they see the blessing upon the righteous?**

Ps. 112:10

### **Psalm 113:1-9**

This Psalm is pure praise. It contains little that requires exposition. The best help in comprehending this sacred hymn is a warm heart full of admiring adoration to the Most High. Its subject is God's greatness and condescending goodness in lifting the needy from their paltry condition. It should be sung by the church during revival. This Psalm begins the Hallel, or Hallelujah, sung at solemn feasts. We call it "The Commencement of the Hallel." Dr. Edersheim says that the Talmud dwells on the special suitability of the Hallel to the Passover. It not only records God's goodness toward Israel but also their deliverance from Egypt. Appropriately, it opens with "Praise, O servants of the LORD," for you

are no longer Pharaoh's servants. Its allusions to the poor in the dust and to the needy on the ash heap are in keeping with Israel in Egypt, as is the reference to the birth of children where they were least expected.

### Division

- An exhortation to praise God for His excellence, verses 1-5
- An exhortation to praise God for His mercy, verses 6-9

**(Ps. 113:1) Praise the LORD**, or Hallelujah, praise to JAH Jehovah. Praise is an essential offering at all the solemn feasts of God's people. Prayer is the myrrh, praise is the frankincense, and both must be presented to the Lord. How can we pray for future mercy if we do not bless God for His past love? The Lord has worked all good things for us, so let us adore Him. All other praise is excluded, for the entire devotion of the soul must be given to Jehovah.

**Ps. 113:2) Blessed be the name of the LORD.** While praising Him aloud, the people were to bless Him in the silence of their hearts, wishing glory to His name, success to His cause, and triumph to His truth. By mentioning **the name**, the psalmist teaches us to bless all the attributes of the Most High, which are, as it were, the letters of His name. He teaches us not to quarrel with His justice or to slavishly dread His power but to accept Him as revealed in the inspired word and by His acts. We must not give the Lord a new name or invent a new nature for Him; that would be to set up a false god. Every time we think of the God of Scripture, we should bless Him. His august name should never be pronounced without joyful reverence.

When the Lord says, "From this time forth I will bless you," we ought to reply, **Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth. And forevermore**, eternally! The psalmist could not have intended that divine praise would cease at some future date. **Forevermore** signifies endless duration.

**(Ps. 113:5) Who is like the LORD our God?** This challenge will never be answered. None can be compared with Him. Israel's God is without parallel. Our God in covenant stands alone. None are like Him. Even those He has made like Himself are not like Him, for many of His divine attributes are incommunicable and inimitable. None of the metaphors and figures in Scripture give us a complete idea of Him. His full resemblance is conveyed by nothing in earth or heaven. Only in Jesus is the Godhead seen, for He unhesitatingly declared, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

**Who dwells on high.** In the height of His dwelling, none can be like Him. His throne, His character, His person, His being, and everything about Him is lofty and infinitely majestic. None can be compared to Him. His serene mind dwells in the most elevated condition. He is never dishonored, nor does He ever yield the pure holiness and absolute perfection of His character. His saints are said to dwell on high, and in this, they are the reflection of His glory. As for Him, the height of His dwelling place surpasses thought, and He rises far above the most exalted of His glorified people.

**(Ps. 113:6) Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth?** He dwells so high that to observe heavenly things He must humble Himself. He must come down to view the skies and bow to see what angels do. What must His condescension be? He observes the humblest of His servants on earth and makes them sing for joy, like Mary, when she said, "He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant" (Luke 1:48). Wonderful are Isaiah's words, "For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15). Heathen philosophers could not believe that the great God observed the small events of human history. They pictured Him as abiding in serene indifference to all the needs and woes of His creatures. "For their rock is not like our Rock" (Deut. 32:31). We have a God who is high above all gods, yet He is our Father, knowing what we need before we ask Him. He is our Shepherd, who supplies our needs. He is our Guardian, who counts the hairs of our heads. He is our tender and considerate Friend, who sympathizes in all our griefs. Truly, our condescending God should be praised wherever He is known.

**(Ps. 113:7) He raises the poor out of the dust.** This is an example of His gracious condescension of love. He frequently lifts the lowest out of poverty and humiliation and places them in positions of power and honor. His good Spirit is continually visiting the downtrodden, "to give them beauty for ashes" (Isa. 61:3), and to elevate the hearts of mourners until they shout for joy. This uplifting grace is attributed directly to the divine hand. Those who have experienced this will not doubt that it is the Lord alone who brings His people up from the dust of sorrow and death. When no hand but His can help, He interposes and the work is done. It is worth being cast down to be so divinely raised.

**(Ps. 113:9) He grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children.** Believers in the Lord Jesus must at times have mourned their lamentable barrenness. They have appeared to be dry trees yielding no fruit, yet when visited by the Holy Spirit, they are suddenly like Aaron's rod that budded, blossomed, and yielded ripe almonds (Num. 17:8). When our barren heart has entertained the Savior, graces have multiplied, as if many children had been born, and we have exceedingly rejoiced before the Lord.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

We who are needy have been lifted to the throne seated with princes (Ps. 113:8). **Where have we been lifted from?**

Ps. 113:7

## **Psalm 114:1-8**

This sublime "Song of the Exodus" is one and indivisible. True poetry reaches its climax here. No human mind has ever equaled or excelled the grandeur of this Psalm. God is spoken of as leading His people from Egypt to Canaan and causing the whole earth to be moved at His coming. Things inanimate are represented as imitating the actions of living creatures when the Lord passes by. They are apostrophized and questioned with marvelous force of language until one seems to look on the actual scene. The God of Jacob is exalted as having command over rivers, seas, and mountains. He causes all nature to pay homage and tribute to His glorious majesty.

**(Ps. 114:1) When Israel went out of Egypt.** The song begins with a burst. The poetic fury could not be restrained; it leaps over all bounds. The soul that is elevated and filled with a sense of divine glory cannot wait to write a preface but immediately springs to its theme. Israel emphatically came out of Egypt, from a population where they had been scattered, from under the yoke of bondage, and from under the personal grasp of a king who had made them national slaves. Israel came out with a high hand and a stretched-out arm, defying the empire's power and making Egypt hurt with anguish. The chosen nation was, as it were, born out of its midst.

**The house of Jacob from a people of strange language.** They went to Egypt as a single family, **the house of Jacob**. Though they multiplied greatly, they were so united that God considered them a unit, correctly referred to as **the house of Jacob**. They were one in willingness to leave Goshen. As numerous as they were, not an individual stayed behind. Unanimity is a pleasing sign of the divine presence and one of its sweetest fruits. A major problem in Egypt was the language difference. The Israelites appear to have regarded the Egyptians as stammerers and babblers, since they could not understand them, and they considered the Egyptians barbarians because they would no doubt often beat them when they did not comprehend their orders. The language of foreign taskmasters is never music to an exile. How sweet it is to Christians who, after being compelled to listen to the filthy conversation of the wicked, finally dwell with their own people!

**(Ps. 114:3) The sea saw it and fled; Jordan turned back.** We may by faith unite our new birth and our departure from the world into the promised inheritance. God, who led us out of the Egypt of our bondage under sin, will conduct us through the Jordan of death and out of our wilderness wanderings in this tried and changing life. It is one and the same deliverance; the beginning guarantees the end.

**(Ps. 114:4) The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like lambs.** "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed" (Isa. 54:10). Mountains of sin and hills of trouble move when the Lord comes to lead His people to their eternal Canaan. Never fear, let your faith say to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and "it will be done" (Matt. 21:21).

**(Ps. 114:5) What ails you, O sea? Were you terribly afraid? Did your heart dry up? What ails you, O sea, that you fled?** You were a neighbor to Pharaoh's power but you never feared his army. Stormy winds could never divide you. But when the way of the Lord was in your great waters, you were frightened and became a fugitive from Him.

**O Jordan, that you turned back?** What ails you, rapidly descending river? *Your* fountains have not dried up, neither has a chasm opened to swallow you! The approach of Israel and her God sufficed to make you retrace your steps. What ails our enemies that they flee when the Lord is on our side? What ails hell, that it is utterly routed when Jesus lifts a standard against it? "And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men" (Matt. 28:4).

**(Ps. 114:6) O mountains, that you skipped like rams? O little hills, like lambs?** What ails you that you were so moved? There is only one answer: God's majesty made you leap. A gracious mind will chide human nature for its strange insensibility when the sea and the river and the mountains and the hills are all sensitive to God's presence. Man is endowed with reason and intelligence, yet he is unmoved at what the material creation observes with fear. God has come nearer to us than He did to Sinai or Jordan, for He has assumed our nature. Yet, the masses of mankind are neither driven back from their sins nor moved in the paths of obedience.

**(Ps. 114:8) Who turned the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a fountain of waters.** Our deliverance from the yoke of sin is strikingly typified in Israel leaving Egypt, and so also is the victory of our Lord over the powers of death and hell typified in their leaving Egypt. Thus, the Exodus should be earnestly remembered by Christians. Did not Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration speak to our Lord of "the exodus" that He would shortly accomplish at Jerusalem? Is it not written of the hosts above that they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3)? Do we not expect another coming of the Lord, when "the first heaven and first earth" have "passed away" and there is no more sea (Rev. 21:1)? We join with the singers around the Passover table and make their Hallel ours. We too have been led out of bondage and guided through a desert where the Lord supplied our needs with heavenly manna and water from the Rock of ages. Praise the Lord.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **How do the seas, rivers and mountains react to the commands of God?**

Ps. 114:7

## Psalm 115:1-18

Psalm 114 recounts the past wonders that God worked for His honor, and in this Psalm, He is again asked to glorify Himself. The Gentiles were presuming on the absence of miracles. They denied past miracles and insulted God's people with the question, "So where is their God?" It grieved the godly that Jehovah was dishonored, so, treating their own condition of reproach as unworthy of notice, they asked the Lord to vindicate His name. The psalmist is evidently indignant that the worshipers of foolish idols were able to put such a taunting question to the people who worshiped the only living and true God. Venting his indignation in sarcasm, on the images and their makers, he exhorts the house of Israel to trust in God and bless His name. Since those who are dead and gone can no longer sing Psalms to the Lord among the children of men, he exhorts the living faithful to take care that God is not robbed of praise. He closes with a rejoicing Hallelujah. Should not the living extol the living God?

**Division** For the better exposition of it, this Psalm may be divided into five parts:

- A plea that God will vindicate His honor, verses 1, 2
- A contemptuous description of the false gods and their worshipers, verses 3-8
- An exhortation to the faithful to trust in God and to expect great blessings from Him, verses 9-15
- An explanation of God's relationship to their present condition, verse 16
- A reminder that not the dead but the living must continually praise God here below, verses 17-18

**(Ps. 115:1)** It is well to remember that this Psalm, sung at Passover, is related to the deliverance from Egypt. The burden seems to be a prayer that the living God, who had been glorious at the Red Sea and the Jordan, would again display the wonders of His power for His name's sake. **Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to Your name give glory.** The people wanted relief from the contemptuous insults of idolaters. Their goal was that Jehovah would not be the object of Gentile insults. The sad part was that God was no longer feared by their adversaries. When Israel first marched into Canaan, terror seized their enemies because of Jehovah, the mighty God (Josh. 5:1). Now the Amorites had shaken off that fear because no recent display of miraculous power had occurred. Israel cried to God to bare His arm, as when He broke Rahab in pieces (Ps. 89:10) and wounded the great monster (Ezek. 29:3).

This prayer is tinged with an awareness of unworthiness. Because of their unfaithfulness, they dared not ask for a blessing but fell back to an old argument: the Lord's honor. This was the argument Moses used with great success when he pleaded, "Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people" (Ex. 32:11-12). Joshua used the same argument, "What will You do for Your great name?" (Josh 7:9). Let us use this prayer when no other plea is available due to our sense of sin. The Lord is always jealous of His honor. He will work for His name's sake when no other motive will move Him.

The repetition of the words **Not unto us** indicates a serious desire to renounce any glory that they might have proudly appropriated. It also emphasizes their wish that God would magnify His name at any cost to them. They loathed the idea of seeking their own glory, rejecting the thought with utmost detestation. Again and again, they disclaimed any self-glorifying motive in their supplication.

**(Ps. 115:2) Why should the Gentiles say, "So where is their God?"** Why should the nations be allowed to contemptuously question the existence, mercy, and faithfulness of Jehovah? They are always ready to blaspheme, and we should pray that they will not be given a reason to, either from the course of providence or the decline of the church. When they see that the godly are downtrodden while they live at ease and act as persecutors, they speak as if they had triumphed over God, or as if He has left the field of action and deserted His saints. When the prayers and tears of the godly seem unanswered, when their miseries are increased rather than alleviated, then the wicked increase their taunts. They argue that their wretched irreligion is better than the faith of Christians, because, for the present, their condition is preferable to that of the afflicted saints. The sting of the trials of God's chosen is when they see the Lord's veracity questioned and God's name profaned because of their sufferings. If something good would result from this, they would endure it with patience, but they are unable to perceive any desirable results. With holy anxiety, they ask, "Why should the Gentiles be allowed to speak like this?"

**(Ps. 115:3) But our God is in heaven**— where He should be, above the reach of mortal sneers, overhearing the vain clattering of people, but looking down with silent scorn on the Babel makers. Supreme above all opposing powers, the Lord reigns on a high, on a lifted throne. Bewildering in essence, He rises above the loftiest thoughts of the wise. Absolute in will and infinite in power, He is superior to the limitations of earth and time. This God is **our God**. We are not ashamed to acknowledge Him, even though He may not work miracles at the beck and call of every vainglorious boaster who challenges Him. Once, they told His Son to come down from the Cross, and then they would believe (Luke 23:35, 36). Now, they would have God come down from heaven to convince them. But other matters occupy His august mind besides convincing people who willfully shut their eyes to the superabundant evidence of His divine power and Godhead. If our God is not seen, heard, or worshiped under any outward symbol, He is none the less real and true. He is where His adversaries can never be—in the heavens, where He stretches His scepter and rules with boundless power.

**He does whatever He pleases.** Until this moment, all His decrees have been fulfilled and His eternal purposes have been accomplished. He has not been asleep or oblivious of people's affairs. He has worked, and worked effectively, and no one has been able to stop or hinder Him. He does **whatever He pleases**, however distasteful it is to His enemies. The Lord accomplishes His good pleasure without difficulty. Even when His adversaries raved and raged, they were still compelled to carry out His plans. Proud Pharaoh, even when most defiant, was still clay on the potter's wheel. We may well endure the jeering question, "Where is your God?" If so, we are perfectly sure that His providence is undisturbed, His throne unshaken, and His purposes unchanged. What He has done, He will still do. His counsel will stand, and He will do His pleasure. At the end of the great drama of human history, the omnipotence of God and His immutability and His faithfulness will be more than vindicated, to the eternal confusion of His adversaries.

**(Ps. 115:4) Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.** Our God is a Spirit, and His hands made the heavens and the earth. Well may we worship Him. We need not be disturbed at the sneering question of those who are so insane that they refuse to adore the living God and bow before the images they carved. There is an application to this for today. The god of modern thought is the creation of the thinker himself, evolved out of his consciousness or fashioned according to his notion of what a god should be. It is evident that such a being is not God. It is impossible that there should be a God at all except the God of revelation. A god who can be fashioned by our thoughts is no more a god than an image manufactured or produced by our hands. The true God must, of necessity, be His own revealer. It is clearly impossible that a being who can be invented and comprehended by man could be the infinite and incomprehensible God. Idols are blinded reason and diseased thought, the product of muddled brains, and they will come to nothing.

**(Ps. 115:18) But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and forevermore.** The spiritually dead cannot praise God, but the life in us requires that we do. The ungodly may remain silent, but we will lift our voices to Jehovah's praise. Even though, for a time, He works no miracle and we see no special intervention of His power, yet on the strength of what He has done in ages past, we will continue to praise His name "until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away" (Song 4:6). Then, once more, He will shine as the sun to brighten His children's faces. Right now, this moment is auspicious for beginning a life of praise, since today He invites us to hear His voice of mercy. **From this time forth** is the suggestion of wisdom, for this duty should not be delayed. It is the dictate of gratitude, for there are urgent reasons for prompt thankfulness. Once we begin to praise God, we have entered an endless service. Even eternity cannot exhaust the reasons why God should be glorified.

**Praise the LORD!** Hallelujah! Though the dead cannot and the wicked will not and the careless do not, we will shout "Hallelujah" forever and ever. Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **Comment on Psalm 115:8.**

#### **Who are those whom God blesses in this Psalm?**

Ps. 115:12-13

### **Psalm 116:1-19**

This is a continuation of the Paschal Hallel and must in some measure be interpreted in connection with leaving Egypt. It is a personal song. The Passover reminds the believing soul of slavery and deliverance, and so he speaks with gratitude and praise to the Lord.

**(Ps. 116:1) I love the LORD.** This is a blessed declaration, one that every believer should be able to repeat without hesitation. It was required under the Law but was never produced in the heart except by God's grace and gospel on principles. It is a great thing to say, **I love the LORD**, for the sweetest of all graces and the surest evidences of salvation is love. It is great goodness on God's part to condescend to be loved by such poor creatures as we. It is sure proof that He has been at work in our heart when we can say, "Lord, *You* know all things; *You* know that I love *You*" (John 21:17).

**Because He has heard my voice and my supplications.** The psalmist not only knows that he loves God, but he also knows why. When love can be justified with a reason, it is deep, strong, and lasting. They say that love is blind, but when we love God, our affection has its eyes open and can be sustained with the most rigid logic. We have reason, superabundant reason, for loving the Lord. Here, principle and passion, and reason and emotion, go together to make an admirable state of mind. David's reason for his love was that God's love heard his prayers.

**(Ps. 116:3) The psalmist described his condition when he prayed, The pains of death surrounded me.** As hunters surround a deer with dogs and men, David was enclosed in a ring of deadly grief. The bands of sorrow, weakness, and terror, with which death is accustomed to bind people before it drags them to their long captivity, surrounded him.

Nor were these things in a distant circle; they were close to home. **The pangs of Sheol laid hold of me.** The tormenting horrors of the lost had found, seized, grasped, searched, and held him. The pangs of Sheol belong to death, for such terrors are connected with the grave. They were so close that they fixed their teeth in him as hounds seize their prey.

**I found trouble and sorrow.** Trouble was around me and sorrow within me. His griefs were double, and as he searched they increased. One rejoices when finding a treasure, but what is the anguish of one who finds a vein of trouble and sorrow? Trouble looked for the psalmist, and it found him. When he became a seeker, he found no relief, only double distress.

**(Ps. 116:4) Then I called upon the name of the LORD.** Prayer is never out of season, and he prayed **then**, when things were at their worst. When the good man could not run to God, he called Him. In an extreme state, his faith came to the front. It was useless to call on man, and it may have seemed almost as useless to appeal to the Lord. Yet he did so with all his soul. He invoked all the attributes of Jehovah's sacred name. Thus, he proved the truth of his confidence. Some of us can remember special times of trial, and we can now say, **Then I called upon the name of the LORD.**

**(Ps. 116:6) The LORD preserves the simple.** Those who have a great deal of astuteness may take care of themselves. Those who have no worldly skill, diplomacy, or shrewdness, but who simply trust God and do the right thing, may be assured that God's care is over them. The worldly-wise will be caught in their craftiness. But those who walk in integrity, with single-minded truthfulness before God, will be protected against the wiles of the enemy and be empowered to outlive their foes. The saints are like defenseless sheep in the midst of wolves. Yet there are more sheep than wolves in the world, and it is highly probable that the sheep will feed in safety when not a single wolf is left. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

**(Ps. 116:13) I will take up the cup of salvation. I will take** is a strange answer to the question, "What shall I render?" But it is the wisest reply that could be given:

The best return for one like me,  
So wretched and so poor,  
Is from His gifts to draw a plea  
And ask Him still for more.

To **take up the cup of salvation** was an act of worship, accompanied with other forms of adoration. Thus the psalmist said that he would **call upon the name of the LORD.**

He means that he will express blessings, thanksgivings, and prayers, and then drink the cup which the Lord has filled with His saving grace. What a cup this is! On the table of infinite love, the cup full of blessing stands; it is ours by faith to take. With joyful hearts, let us laud and magnify the gracious One, who has filled it so that we may drink and be refreshed. We can do this figuratively at the sacramental table. We can do it spiritually every time we grasp the golden chalice of the covenant, realize the fullness of blessing that it contains, and by faith receive its divine contents into our souls. Beloved reader, pause here and take a long and deep drink from the cup that Jesus filled, and then with devout hearts, worship God.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? (Ps. 116:12) **What form of service would be most appropriate?**

Ps. 116:13-19

### **Psalm 117:1-2**

This Psalm, though little in letter, is exceedingly large in spirit. Bursting beyond race or nationality, it calls on all humanity to praise the Lord. In all probability, it was frequently used as a brief hymn for almost any occasion, especially when the time for worship was short. Perhaps it was sung at the beginning or the close of other Psalms, much as we use the doxology. Short and sweet, it would have served to open or conclude a service. The divine Spirit that moves in Psalm 119 condenses His comments into two short verses here, but the same infinite fullness is present and perceptible.

**(Ps. 117:1) Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!** This is an exhortation to the Gentiles to glorify Jehovah, and it is clear proof that the Old Testament spirit differed widely from the narrow and contracted national bigotry that diseased the Jews of our Lord's day. The Gentiles could not be expected to join Jehovah's praise unless they were partakers of the benefits that Israel enjoyed. This Psalm suggested to Israel that God's grace and mercy were not confined to one nation but would be extended to all, as Moses had prophesied when he said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people" (Deut. 32:43). The Gentiles were to be His people. He would call them a people that were not a people and call her beloved that was not beloved (1 Pet. 2:10).

**(Ps. 117:2) For His merciful kindness is great toward us.** Not only is He great in love toward the Jewish people, but also toward the entire human family. The Lord is kind to us as His creatures and merciful to us as sinners, and thus His merciful kindness to us as sinful creatures. This mercy has been powerful. God's mighty grace prevailed just as the floodwaters prevailed over the earth. Breaking every barrier, His love has flowed to all segments of humanity in Christ

Jesus. God has shown the highest degree of mercy mixed with kindness. We all join in grateful acknowledgment and in praise that is due Him.

**And the truth of the LORD endures forever.** He has kept His covenant promise that in Abraham's descendants "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 18:18). And He will eternally keep every promise of that covenant to all who trust in Him. This should produce constant and grateful praise.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Comment on this shortest chapter of Scripture located near the Bible's center.**

### **Psalm 118:1-29**

"When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD: 'For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel.' Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid" (Ezra 3:10, 11). Because these words in Ezra are the first and last sentences of this Psalm, we believe that the people sung this sublime song and that the use of this composition on these occasions was ordained by David, whom we believe was its author. The next step makes us think that David is the subject, for it is clear that the writer is speaking about himself, although not necessarily confined to personal experience. The psalmist had a prophetic view of our Lord Jesus, as frequent quotations in the New Testament prove beyond all question. Not every line and sentence, however, refers to the Messiah. To do that would require great ingenuity, and ingenious interpretations are seldom true. Certain expositors have twisted verse 17, "I shall not die, but live," to make it applicable to our Lord. He actually died, however, and His glory is that He died, so we cannot do such violence to Scripture.

The Psalm seems to describe David, who was appointed by divine choice to a high and honorable office in Israel. This elect champion found himself rejected by friends and citizens and at the same time violently opposed by his enemies. With faith in God, he battles for his appointed place, and in due time, he obtains it in such a way as to greatly display the Lord's power and goodness. He then goes to the Lord's house to offer sacrifice and to express gratitude for divine intervention. All the people bless him and wish him abundant prosperity. This heroic person, whom we believe is David, broadly typifies our Lord, but not to the extent that in all the minutiae of His struggles and prayers we are to hunt for parallels.

**(Ps. 118:10) All nations surrounded me.** The Psalm's hero had no earthly friends he could rely on; he was surrounded by innumerable enemies, hemmed in by adversaries, and scarce could escape from the nations that surrounded him. As if by common consent, all sorts of people were against him. Yet, he was more than a match for them because he was trusting in the name of the Lord.

Therefore, he joyfully accepts the battle, grasps the victory, and cries, **But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them**, or, "cut them in pieces." They planned to destroy him, but he was sure of destroying them. They wanted to blot out his name, but he expected to make not only his name but also **the name of the LORD** more illustrious in human hearts. It takes great faith to be calm in battle, especially when that battle grows hot, but our hero was as calm as if no fight was raging.

**(Ps. 118:12)** What wonders have been worked in the Lord's name! It is the battle cry of faith from which adversaries flee. "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" bring instant terror to the foe (Judges 7:18). **The name of the LORD** is the only weapon that will never fail in battle. Those who know how to use it can chase a thousand. Unfortunately, we too often work and fight in our own names, and the enemy scornfully enquires, "Who are you?" Never venture into the presence of the foe without being armed with this impenetrable armor. If we knew this name better and trusted it more, our lives would be fruitful and sublime.

**(Ps. 118:13) But the LORD helped me, a blessed but.** This is the saving clause. Other helpers were unable to chase the angry nations, much less destroy those noxious swarms, but when the Lord came to the rescue, the hero was strong enough to defeat all adversaries. Many can sweetly repeat, in the retrospect of past trials, these delightful words, **but the LORD helped me**. I was assailed by innumerable doubts and fears, **but the LORD helped me**. My natural unbelief was terribly inflamed by Satan's insinuations, **but the LORD helped me**. Multiplied trials were made more intense by cruel assaults, and I did not know what to do, **but the LORD helped me**. When we land on Jordan's shore, this will be one of our songs, "Flesh and heart were failing me, my soul's adversaries surrounded me in the swellings of Jordan, **but the LORD helped me**. Glory to His name."

**(ps. 118:15) The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous.** They sympathized in their leader's delight and lived in their tents in peace. They rejoiced that someone had been raised who, in the name of the Lord, would protect them from all adversaries. The families of believers are happy and should take pains to give that happiness a voice in family devotion. The dwelling place of the saved should be the temple of praise. It is only righteous that the righteous should praise the righteous God, who is their righteousness. The struggling hero knew that the voice of

woe and lamentation had been heard in the tents of his adversaries, for they had suffered severe defeat at his hands. He was delighted by the memory that the nation for whom he had struggled would rejoice at the deliverance that God had worked. That hero of heroes, the conquering Savior, gives abundant reasons for incessant song to all the families of His people, now that He has ascended on high and has led captivity captive (Eph. 4:7). Let no one in our households be silent! If we have salvation, let us have joy; if we have joy, let us give it a voice to magnify the Lord.

**(Ps. 118:18) The LORD has chastened me severely.** This is faith's version of the passage, "You pushed me violently" (v. 13). The attacks of the enemy are the chastisements of God. The devil tormented Job, but in reality, the sorrows of the patriarch were chastisements from the Lord. "Chastening, Jah has chastened me," says our poet; the Lord had severely struck to make him know the full weight of His rod. The Lord frequently appears to save His heaviest blows for His most beloved ones; if one affliction is more painful than another, it falls on those whom He most distinguishes in His service. The gardener prunes the best roses with utmost care. Chastisement is sent to keep successful saints humble, to make them tender toward others, and to enable them to bear the high honors that their heavenly Friend puts on them.

**But He has not given me over to death.** This verse, like verse 13, concludes with a blessed **but**, and that constitutes a saving clause.

**(Ps. 118:19) Open to me the gates of righteousness.** The grateful champion reaches the temple and asks for admission. It is as if he could only approach the hallowed shrine with divine permission. God's temple is for the righteous to enter and to offer the sacrifices of righteousness; thus, the gates are called **the gates of righteousness**. Righteous deeds were done within its walls; righteous teachings sound within its courts.

**(Ps. 118:20) This is the gate of the LORD, through which the righteous shall enter.** The psalmist so loved the house of God that he even admired the gate; he paused under its arch to express affection. He loved it because it was **the gate of the LORD** and the gate of righteousness.

Our Lord is that gate, and through Him, as the new and living Way, all the righteous delight to approach. Whenever we praise the Lord, we must come by this gate. Acceptable praise never climbs the wall or enters by another way, but it comes to God in Christ Jesus. "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Blessed, forever blessed, is this wonderful gate of the person of our Lord.

**(Ps. 118:21) I will praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my salvation.** He praises God by mentioning His favor, weaving his song out of the experience of divine goodness. In these words, he gives the reason for his praise, which was that his prayer had been answered; he had received deliverance. Fondly, he dwells on God's personal intervention! **You have answered me.** Heartily, he attributes the victory over his enemies to God. He sees God to be the whole of it, **You have answered me, and have become my salvation.** Answered prayers bring God close. Realized salvation enables us to discern God's immediate presence. Considering the extreme distress through which the worshiper had passed, it is not surprising that he feels his heart to be full of gratitude for the great salvation that God had worked. Entering the temple, he lifts his voice in thankful praise for personal, great, and necessary favors.

**(Ps. 118:22) The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.** The people magnified God for bringing His chosen servant to the honorable office. A wise king and valiant leader are a stone on which to build the national fabric. David had been rejected by those in authority, but God placed him in a position of high honor and great usefulness, making him the nation's chief cornerstone. In the case of many others whose early years have been spent in conflict, the Lord has been pleased to accomplish His divine purposes in a similar way. Yet to none is this so applicable as to the Lord Jesus, for He is the living stone, the tried stone, elect, precious, whom God appointed from of old (1 Pet. 2:4-6). The Jewish builders—scribe, priest, Pharisee, and Herodian—rejected Him with disdain. They could see no excellence in Him to build on; He did not fit their ideal of a national church. He was a stone from another quarry, not after their mind or taste. They discarded Him with contempt. Peter said, "This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone" (Acts 4:11). They considered Him nothing, though He is Lord of all. In raising Him from the dead, the Lord God exalted Him to be the head of His church, the pinnacle of her glory and beauty. Since then, He has become "the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the far-off seas" (Ps. 65:5). Jesus Christ has joined the two walls of Jew and Gentile into one stately temple; He is the cornerstone, making both one. This is a delightful subject for contemplation.

Jesus has preeminence in all things. He is the principal stone of the house of God. It is our custom to set the cornerstone of a public building in place with great ceremony and to place in that stone precious things that have been selected as a memorial of the occasion. That cornerstone is thus looked on as honorable, and joyful memories are associated with it. All this is, in an emphatic sense, true of our blessed Lord, "the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" (Gen. 49:24). God set Him where He is and hid in Him all the precious things of the eternal covenant. There He will remain forever, the foundation of all our hopes, the glory of all our joys, and the uniting bond of all our fellowship. "He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22). Through Him the church is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:21). Even so, the builders rejected Him. To this day, the professional gospel teachers are apt to fly to any and every new philosophy rather than maintain the simple gospel, which is the essence of Christ. Yet, Christ holds His true position among His people, and the foolish builders will see, to their total confusion, that His truth will be exalted. Those who

reject the chosen stone will stumble against Him to their own hurt (1 Pet. 2:8). His Second Advent will soon come; He will fall on them from the heights of heaven and grind them to powder.

**(Ps. 118:23) This was the LORD's doing.** The exalted position of Christ in His church is not the work of man and does not depend on any builders or ministers. God has worked our Lord Jesus' exaltation. Considering the opposition from the wisdom, power, and authority of this world, it is evident that if Christ's kingdom is established and maintained here it must be by supernatural power, even in the smallest detail. Every grain of true faith in this world is a divine creation; every hour the true church subsists is a prolonged miracle. It is not the goodness of human nature, or the force of reasoning, that exalts Christ and builds the church; it is a power from above. This staggers the adversaries, for they cannot understand what baffles them. Of the Holy Spirit, they know nothing.

**It is marvelous in our eyes.** We actually see it! It is not just in our thoughts, hopes, and prayers; the astonishing work is before our eyes. Jesus reigns. His power is felt. Faith sees our great Master far above all principality, power, might, dominion (Eph. 1:21), and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in the world that is to come. Faith sees this, and it marvels. It never ceases to amaze us as we see God, by means of weakness, defeating power with the simplicity of His word and baffling the craft of men, and by the invisible influence of His Spirit exalting His Son in human hearts, despite the teeth of open and determined opposition. It is indeed **marvelous in our eyes**, as all God's works are if we study them. The Hebrew passage reads, "It is wonderfully done." Not only is the exalting of Jesus of Nazareth wonderful but the way that it is brought about is also marvelous. "It is wonderfully done." The more we study the history of Christ and His church, the more fully we agree with this declaration.

**(Ps. 118:26) Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!** The champion had done everything **in the name of the LORD**. In that name, he had routed adversaries, risen to the throne, and entered the temple to pay his vows. We know who comes in the name of the Lord. In the psalmist's days, He was The Coming One, and He is still The Coming One, though He has already come. We are ready with our hosannas, both for His first and second coming. Our souls thankfully adore and bless Him with "joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8). "Prayer also will be made for Him continually, and daily He shall be praised" (Ps. 72:15). For His sake, everyone who comes to us in the name of the Lord is blessed, and we welcome them to our hearts and homes. But beyond all others, we welcome Him when He feasts with us. Oh, sacred bliss, a foretaste of heaven!

**(Ps. 118:27) God is the LORD, and He has given us light**, or "God is Jehovah," the only living and true God. There is no other God! The words may be translated, "Mighty is Jehovah." Only God's power could have brought such light and joy from the work of our Champion and King. We have received light, and so we know that the rejected stone is the head of the corner. This light has led us to enlist under the banner of the once despised Nazarene, who is now the Prince of the kings of the earth. With the light of knowledge has come the light of joy; "He has delivered us from the powers of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). Our knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ did not come from the light of nature or reason, neither did it arise from the sparks we kindled, nor did we receive it from men. The mighty God alone has shown it to us. He made a day to shine on us like the sun, and He made our faces to shine in the light of that day (v. 24). To Him is all the honor of our enlightenment. Let us magnify the great "Father of lights (James 1:17), from whom our present blessedness has descended.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What do the words of Psalm 118:19 mean: "Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the LORD"?**

Neh. 8:14-18 Isa. 26:1-5

**Who is the "stone" in Psalm 118:22 whom the builders rejected and what has become of it?**

Gen. 49:24 Isa. 28:16 Zech. 3:9 Zech. 4:6-7 Matt. 21:42 Acts 4:11 Eph. 2:20 1 Pet. 2:6-7

**What is the "day" spoken of in Psalm 118:24 that the "LORD has made"?**

Isa. 25:8-9 Rev. 1:10

### **Psalm 119:1-176**

There is no title to this Psalm, nor is any author's name mentioned. It is "The Longest Psalm," and this is a sufficiently distinctive name. It equals in bulk twenty-two Psalms of the Songs of Degrees. And it is not just long, but it equally excels in breadth of thought, depth of meaning, and height of fervor. It is like the celestial foursquare city, the height and the width are equal (Rev. 21:16).

The one theme is the word of the Lord. The psalmist sets his subject in many lights and treats it in various ways. Yet, in each verse, he seldom omits mentioning the word of the Lord under one of its many names. And even if the name is not there, the subject is heartily pursued in every stanza. He who wrote this wonderful song was saturated with the Scripture.

These first eight verses are a contemplation of the blessings that come from keeping the Lord's statutes. The subject is treated in a worshipful manner rather than an academic style. Heart fellowship with God is enjoyed through a love of the word, which is God's way of communing with the soul by His Holy Spirit. Prayer, praise, and all sorts of devotional acts and feelings gleam through the verses like sunlight through an olive grove. You are not only instructed but also influenced and helped to express holy emotion.

**(Ps. 119:1) Blessed.** The psalmist is so delighted with God's word that he considers being conformed to it the height of blessing. He has gazed on the beauties of the perfect law as if this verse were the sum and outcome of all his emotions. He exclaims, "Blessed is the man whose life is the practical transcript of God's will." True religion is not cold and dry; it has exclamations and delights. We not only judge the keeping of God's Law to be wise and proper, but we also are warmly delighted by its holiness. We cry in adoring wonder, **Blessed are the undefiled.** Eagerly wanting to be undefiled, we wish for no greater happiness than to be perfectly holy. It may be that the writer labored under a sense of his own faults and envied the blessedness of those whose walk had been more pure and clean. Contemplating the perfect law of the Lord was enough to make him mourn his imperfections and cry for the blessings of an undefiled walk.

Those whose lives are undefiled are blessed. They could never have reached this point if a thousand blessings had not already been bestowed. By nature, we are defiled and out of the way. We must be washed in the atoning blood to remove defilement and to be converted by the power of the Holy Spirit, or we will not turn to the way of peace and be undefiled. Nor is this all, for the continuing power of grace is needed to keep believers in the right way and to preserve them from pollution. All the blessings of the covenant must have been poured on those who from day to day have perfect holiness in the fear of the *Lord*. Their way is the evidence of being the blessed of the Lord.

**(Ps. 119:2) Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!** Those who keep the Lord's testimonies are sure to seek Him. If His word is precious, we may be sure that He is more precious. Personal dealings with a personal God is the longing of all who have allowed the word of the Lord to have its full effect on them. If we once really know the power of the gospel, we must seek the God of the gospel. "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him" (Job 23:3), will be our heart's cry. See the growth these sentences show: first, in the way; then, walking in it; then, finding and keeping the treasure of truth; and, to crown all, seeking the Lord of the way Himself. Note also that the further a soul advances in grace the more spiritual and divine are its longings. The outward walk and the treasured testimonies do not make the gracious soul content. It reaches out after God, and when it in a measure finds Him, the soul still yearns and seeks for more of Him.

Seeking God signifies a desire to fellowship with Him more closely, to follow Him more fully, to enter a perfect union with His mind and will, to promote His glory, and to realize completely all that He is to holy hearts. Blessed people already have God, and for this reason they seek Him. This may seem like a contradiction, but it is only a paradox.

God is not truly sought by the cold researches of the brain. We must seek Him with the heart. Love reveals itself to love. God manifests His heart to the hearts of His people. It is foolish to attempt to comprehend God by reason. We must apprehend Him with affection. And, if the Lord is to be sought by us, the heart must not be divided by many objects. God is One, and we will not know Him until our heart is one. A broken heart need not be distressed at this, for no heart is so whole in seeking God as a heart that is broken, so broken that every fragment sighs and cries after the great Father's face. It is the divided heart that the doctrine of this text censures. And, strange to say, in scriptural phraseology, a heart may be divided and not broken, and it may be broken and not divided. Yet, again, it may be broken and be whole, yet it can never be whole until it is broken. When our whole heart seeks the holy God in Christ Jesus, it has come to Him of whom it is written, "And as many as touched Him were made well" (Mark 6:56).

What the psalmist admires in this verse, he claims in verse 10, "With my whole heart I have sought You." It is good when admiration of a virtue leads to attaining it. Those who do not believe in the blessedness of seeking the Lord will not likely pursue it, but those who call another person blessed, because of the grace seen in that person, are on the way to gaining the same grace. If those who **seek** the Lord are blessed, what will be said of those who actually dwell with Him and know that He is theirs?

**(Ps. 119:5) Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!** Divine commands should direct us in the subject of our prayers. By ourselves, we cannot keep God's statutes as He would keep them, yet we long to do so. What resort have we but prayer? We must ask the Lord to work in us, or we will never work out His commandments. This verse is a sigh of regret because the psalmist feels that he has not kept the precepts diligently. It is a cry of weakness, appealing for help to One who can aid him. It is a request of bewilderment from one who has lost the way and seeks direction. It is a petition of faith from one who loves God and trusts in Him for grace.

Our ways are by nature opposed to the way of God. They must be turned by the Lord in another direction, or they will lead us to destruction. God can and will direct the mind without violating our free agency, and He will do so in answer to prayer. In fact, He has already begun the work in those who are heartily praying after the fashion of this verse. It is for present holiness that desire arises in the heart. Oh, that it were so now with me! But future persevering holiness is also meant, for David longed for grace to keep the Lord's statutes forever.

The sigh of the text is really a prayer, though it does not exactly take that form. Desires and longings are the essence of supplication, and it little matters what shape they take. **Oh, that** is as acceptable a prayer as "Our Father."

We would hardly have expected a prayer for direction; rather, we would have looked for a petition to enable. Can we not direct ourselves? If we cannot row, we can steer. The psalmist confesses that without grace he felt unable, even for the smallest duty. He longed for the Lord both to influence his will and to strengthen his hands. We want a rod to point the way as much as a staff to support us in it.

**(Ps. 119:6) Then I would not be ashamed.** He had known shame, and here he rejoices in the prospect of being freed from it. Sin brings shame, and when sin is gone the reason for being ashamed is banished. What a deliverance this is! For to some, death is preferable to shame.

Many suffer from excessive diffidence, and this verse offers a cure. An abiding sense of duty will make us bold; we will be afraid to be afraid. When the fear of God has taken full possession of our minds, no shame in the presence of other people will hinder us. When we are on the king's highway, engaged in royal business, we need not ask anyone's permission. It would dishonor a king for a subject to be ashamed of his colors and his service. No such shame will crimson the cheeks of Christians if they have due reverence for the Lord their God. There is nothing to be ashamed of in a holy life. People may be ashamed of pride, wealth, or even children, but they will never be ashamed of having regarded the will of the Lord their God.

To a poor sinner, buried in despair, it may seem unlikely that he would ever be delivered from shame. He blushes, is confounded, and feels that he will never again lift his face. But read these words, **then I would not be ashamed.** David is not dreaming, not picturing an impossible case. Be assured, dear friend, that the Holy Spirit can renew in you the image of God, so that you will look up without fear. Oh, for sanctification to direct us in God's way! Then we would have boldness toward God and His people, and we will no longer blush with confusion.

**(Ps. 119:7) I will praise You.** He counts God alone as worthy of praise. From the sorrow and shame of sin, he measures his obligations to the Lord, who would teach him the art of living. **With uprightness of heart.** His heart would be upright if the Lord would teach him, and then it would praise its teacher. There is false and pretended praise, and this the Lord abhors. But there is no music like that which comes from a pure soul standing in integrity. Heart praise is required, and an upright heart is sure to bless the Lord because grateful adoration is a part of its uprightness. People cannot be right unless they are upright toward God, and this involves giving Him due praise.

**(Ps. 119:9) How can a young man cleanse his way?** How will he become and remain practically holy? He is young and full of hot passion, poor in knowledge and inexperienced. How can he get right and keep right? Never was there a more important question! Never was there a better time to ask than at the start of life. This is not an easy task. The prudent person wants to choose a clean way. He wants to be clean in that way, to cleanse it from any future foulness, and to end by showing a clear course from the first step to the last. Unfortunately, his way is already unclean from the sin that he committed; he has a natural tendency to sin. This is the difficulty: beginning right, being able to know and choose the right, and continuing in the right until perfection is ultimately reached. This is difficult for adults, so how can a youth accomplish it? The way, or life, has to be cleansed from youthful sins and kept clear of the sins that temptation places in the way. This is the work. This is the difficulty.

No higher ambition can lie before a youth, none to which he is called by so sure a calling. Yet, no greater difficulty can be found. Let him not, however, shrink from the glorious enterprise of living a pure and gracious life. Let him inquire how obstacles may be overcome. Let him not think that he knows the road to easy victory, or dream that he can be kept by his own wisdom. He will do well to ask with the psalmist, **How can a young man cleanse his way?** Let him become a practical disciple of the holy God, who alone can teach how to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, a trinity of defilers that have spoiled many a hopeful life. He is young and unaccustomed to the road, so let him not be ashamed to ask often of the way of Him who is ready and able to instruct.

**(Ps. 119:11)** When the godly ask God for a favor, they should carefully use every means to obtain it. The psalmist asks to be preserved from wandering, and here he shows us the holy precaution taken to prevent his falling. **Your word I have hidden in my heart.** His heart would be kept by the word because he kept the word in his heart. All that he had written and all that had been revealed by the voice of God, without exception, he had stored in his affections as a treasure to be preserved in a chest or as a choice seed to be buried in fruitful soil. What soil is more fruitful than a renewed heart that is seeking the Lord? The word was God's, and so it was precious to God's servant. He did not wear a text over his heart like a charm; he hid it in his heart for a rule.

**That I might not sin against You.** This was the object. Here is the best thing. **Your word,** hidden in the best place, **in my heart,** for the best purpose, **that I might not sin against You.**

**(Ps. 119:12)** Let each of us say, **Teach me Your statutes.** This is a sweet prayer for everyday use. It is a step above the prayer of verse 10, "Oh, let me not wander," just as that was a rise beyond verse 8, "Oh, do not forsake me utterly!" It finds its answer in verses 98-100, "You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies . . ." But the answer did not come until **Teach me** had been repeated two more times (verses 33, 66). This, I beg you to read. Even after the third plea (verse 66), the prayer occurs again in so many words, in verses 124, 139, and the same longing again comes near the close of the Psalm, at verse 171, "My lips shall utter praise, for You teach me Your statutes."

**(Ps. 119:17-24)** In this section, the trials of the way appear to be on the psalmist's mind, and he prays for help. In the previous eight verses, he prayed as a youth, but here he pleads as a servant and a pilgrim, a stranger in enemy country. His appeal is to God, and his prayer is direct and personal. He speaks to the Lord as a friend.

**(Ps. 119:25-32)** Here, it seems to me, the psalmist is in trouble, mourning his bondage to the earthly things that have a hold on his mind. His soul clings to the dust, melts with heaviness, and cries for release from its spiritual prison. In these verses, we see the influence of the divine word on a heart that laments its downward tendencies and is filled with mourning because of its deprived surroundings. The word of the Lord arouses prayer, verses 25-29, confirms choice, verse 30, and inspires renewed resolve, verse 32. In all trials, mental or physical, this is the surest source of help.

This portion has D for its alphabetical letter. It sings of Depression in the spirit of Devotion, Determination, and Dependence.

**(Ps. 119:33-40)** A sense of dependence and a consciousness of extreme need pervades this section, which is made up entirely of prayer and plea. The previous eight verses trembled with a sense of sin, quivering with a childlike sense of weakness and folly. This caused the man of God to cry for help to preserve his soul from falling back into sin.

**(Ps. 119:41-48)** In these verses, holy fear is apparent and prominent. The man of God trembles, lest in any way or degree the Lord would remove His favor from him. The eight verses are one continuous plea for grace to abide in his soul. It is supported by holy arguments, which could only be suggested by a spirit burning with love to God.

**(Ps. 119:49-56)** These verses deal with the comfort of the word. They begin by seeking the main consolation, the Lord's fulfillment of His promise. Then it shows how the word sustains us in affliction and makes us so impervious to ridicule that we are moved by the horror of the sin of the wicked rather than by the possibility of submitting to their temptations. We are then shown how the Scripture furnishes songs for pilgrims and memories for night watchers. This section concludes with the general statement that this happiness and comfort come from keeping the Lord's statutes.

**(Ps. 119:57-64)** In this section, the psalmist takes a firm hold on God:

- He appropriates Him, verse 57.
- He cries out for Him, verse 58.
- He returns to Him, verse 59.
- He finds solace in Him, verses 61, 62.
- He associates with His people, verse 63.
- He sighs for the personal experience of His goodness, verse 64.

Note how the first verse of this octave is linked to the last verse of the previous section. It is an expanded repetition. "This has become mine, because I kept "four precepts" (v. 56). "You are my portion, O LORD; I have said that I would keep Your words" (v. 57)

**(Ps. 119:65-72)** In this ninth octave, all the verses begin with the letter TETH. They are the witness of experience, testifying to the goodness of God, to the graciousness of His dealings, to the preciousness of His word. The psalmist proclaims the excellent uses of adversity and God's goodness in afflicting him. Verse 65 is the text of this octave.

**(Ps. 119:73-80)** We have come to the tenth portion. Each stanza begins with YOD, but it certainly does not speak of jots, tittles, and other trifles. Its subject seems to be a personal experience and its attractive influence on others. The prophet, in deep sorrow, looks to be delivered and to be made a blessing. Endeavoring to teach, he first seeks to be taught (v. 73). He is persuaded that he will be well received (v. 74), and he rehearses the testimony he intends to give (v. 75). He then prays for more experience (verses 76, 77), for the proud to be baffled (v. 78), and for the godly to be gathered to him (v. 79). And he prays for himself again, that he may be fully equipped and sustained for witnessing (v. 80). This is the anxious yet hopeful cry of one who is heavily afflicted by cruel adversaries. Thus, he makes his appeal to God as his only friend.

**(Ps. 119:81-88)** This portion of the gigantic Psalm sees the psalmist *in extremism*. His enemies have brought him to the lowest condition of anguish and depression, but he is faithful to the Law, and he is trusting God. This octave is the midnight of the Psalm, dark and black. Stars shine, however, and the last verse promises the dawn, and the strain will become more cheerful. Meanwhile, it should minister comfort to see an eminent servant of God so used by the ungodly. Evidently, in our persecutions, no strange thing has happened to us.

**(Ps. 119:89-96)** In the last section, David's soul fainted, but here, the good man looks out of self and perceives, "The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary" (Isa. 40:28). Nor is there any failure in his word.

**(Ps. 119:97) Oh, how I love Your law!** It is a note of exclamation. David must express his love, and in making the attempt, he perceives that it is inexpressible. He cries, **Oh, how I love Your law!** We not only reverence but also love the Law. We obey it out of love, and even when it chides us for disobedience, we love it none the less. The Law is God's Law, and therefore it is our love. We love it for its holiness, and we want to be holy. We love it for its wisdom, and we study to be wise. We love it for its perfection, and we long to be perfect. Those who know the power of the gospel perceive an infinite loveliness in the Law as it is fulfilled and embodied in Christ Jesus.

**(Ps. 119:104) Through Your precepts I get understanding. Therefore I hate every false way.** This verse marks a great advance in character. It shows that the man of God is growing stronger, bolder, and happier. He has been taught by the Lord so that he discerns between the precious and the vile. And while he fervently loves the truth, he intensely hates falsehood. May all of us reach this state of discrimination and determination, that we may greatly glorify God.

**(Ps. 119:105) Your word is a lamp to my feet.** We are walkers through the city of this world, and we are often called to go into its darkness. Never venture there without the light-giving word, lest you slip. Use God's word personally, practically, and habitually to see the way and what lies in it. When darkness settles around me, the Lord's word, like a

flaming torch, reveals my way. Having no fixed lamps in certain ancient towns, each person carried a lantern to avoid falling into the open sewer or stumbling over the heaps of manure that defiled the road. This is a true picture of our path through this dark world. We would not know the way or how to walk in it if the Scripture, like a blazing torch, did not reveal it. One of the most practical benefits of the Bible is guidance in the acts of daily life. Scripture is not sent to astound us with its brilliance, but to guide us by its instruction. It is true that the head needs illumination, but the feet need direction even more, lest both head and feet fall into a ditch. Happy is the one who personally appropriates God's word and practically uses it as comfort and counsel, as a lamp to the feet.

**(Ps. 119:113) I hate the double-minded, but I love Your law.** In this paragraph, the psalmist deals with thoughts and things and persons that are the opposite of God's holy thoughts and ways. Evidently, he is in great fear of the powers of darkness. But his soul is stirred to stand against them with determined opposition. Just as he began an earlier octave, "Oh, how I love Your law!" (v. 97), he begins this section with a declaration of hatred against what breaks the Law. The opposite of the fixed and infallible Law of God is the wavering, changing opinion of people. David had total contempt and abhorrence for the double-minded. All his reverence and regard went to the sure word of testimony. In proportion to his love for the Law was his hate of people's inventions. Human thoughts are worthless, but God's thoughts are truth. We hear much about "people of thought," "thoughtful preachers," and "modern thought." What is this but the old pride of the human heart? Vain man wants to be wise. The psalmist did not glory in his own thoughts.

**(Ps. 119:117) Hold me up,** as a nurse holds up a baby, **and I shall be safe.** Unless You hold me up, I will fall like an infant. We are saved by past grace, but we are not safe unless we receive present grace. The psalmist vowed to keep the Lord's commands, but here he pleads with the Lord to keep him—a sensible course of procedure. We need this blessing, for in every way our adversaries seek to cast us down. To be safe is a happy condition, and there is only one door to happiness, and that door is held by God Himself. Thank God that door is open to even the least of us.

**And I shall observe Your statutes continually.** In obedience is safety, and in being held up is obedience. No one will outwardly keep the Lord's statutes for long, unless they have an inward respect for them, and this will never occur unless the Lord's hand perpetually upholds the heart in holy love. Perseverance to the end (continuous obedience) comes only through divine power. We veer off like a faulty bow unless we are kept right by Him who first gave us grace. Happy are they who realize this verse in life. Upheld through life in a course of unswerving integrity, they become safe and trusted as they maintain a sacred delicacy of conscience unknown to others. They feel a tender respect for the Lord's statutes, which keep them clear of the inconsistencies and conformities to the world that are so common in others. Thus, they are pillars in the house of the Lord.

**(Ps. 119:120) My flesh trembles for fear of You.** This was David's awe in the presence of the Judge of all the earth; his flesh trembled and he was afraid. His body felt a solemn dread at the thought of offending One so good and so great, One who would so effectively sever the wicked from the just. Poor flesh, this is the highest you can attain.

**And I am afraid of Your judgments.** God's words of judgment are solemn, and His deeds of judgment are terrible; they may well make us afraid. At the thought of the Judge of all, His piercing eye, His books of record, His day of court, and the operations of His justice, we may well cry for cleansed thoughts, hearts, and ways, lest His judgments fall on us. When we see the great Refiner separating the precious from the vile, we may well feel a godly fear, lest we be put away by Him and ground under His feet.

Love in the previous verse is consistent with fear in this verse. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). Fear with torment is cast out, but affectionate fear leads to reverence and obedience.

**(Ps. 119:127) Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold!** As it was God's time to work, it was David's time to love. Far from being swayed by evil people, to join them in slighting the Scriptures, David was led into a more fervent love of them. As he saw the commandments slighted by the ungodly, his heart was in sympathy with God; he felt a burning affection for His holy precepts. It is the mark of a true believer that they do not depend on others for religion, but drink water from their own well, which springs up even when cisterns of the earth are dry. Our holy poet, amid a general depreciation of the Law, felt his esteem of the commandments rising so high that gold and silver sank in comparison. Wealth brings so many conveniences that people naturally esteem it. Yet, in the judgment of the wise, God's laws are more enriching and bring more comfort than all the choicest treasures. The psalmist could not boast that he always kept the commands, but he could declare that he loved them. David was perfect in heart and wanted to be perfect in life. He judged God's holy commands to be better than the best earthly thing, better than the best sort of the best earthly thing. This esteem was confirmed and forced into expression by the world's opposition, which drives hypocrites to forsake the Lord and His ways.

**(Ps. 119:137-144)** This passage deals with the perfect righteousness of Jehovah and His word. It expresses the struggles of a holy soul in reference to that righteousness. The initial letter that begins every verse sounds like the Hebrew word for **righteousness**. Our keynote is righteousness.

**(Ps. 119:145-152)** This section is given to the memories of prayer. The psalmist describes the time and the manner of his devotions and pleads with God for deliverance from trouble. You who have been with God in the closet will find God with you in the furnace. If we have cried we will be answered. Delayed answers may drive us to beg, but we need not fear the ultimate result. God's promises are certain. He has **founded them forever**. This passage shows us: how David prayed (v. 145), what he prayed for (v. 146), when he prayed (v. 147), how long he prayed (v. 148), what he pleaded (v. 149), what happened (v. 150), how he was rescued (v. 151), and David's testimony (v. 152).

**(Ps. 119:145) I cry out with my whole heart.** David's prayer was the sincere, plaintive, painful, natural utterance of a creature in pain. We cannot tell if he always used his voice when he cried out, but we are informed of something that is offer greater consequence; he cried with his **whole heart**. Heart cries are the essence of prayer. David mentions the unity of his heart in this holy engagement. His whole soul pleaded with God; his entire affections and united desires all went toward the living God. It is well when people can say this of their prayers, but it is feared that many have never cried to God with their **whole heart**. There may be no beauty of elocution about such prayers, no length of expression, no depth of doctrine, or accuracy of diction, but if the **whole heart** is in them, they will find their way to the heart of God.

**(Ps. 119:153-160)** In this section, the psalmist draws nearer to God in prayer. He states his case and invokes divine help with great boldness and expectation. It is a pleading passage, and the key word is **consider**. He pleads with much boldness that his intimate union with the Lord's cause is a reason why he should be helped. The special aid that he seeks is personal reviving, for which he cries to the Lord again and again, **Revive me**.

**(Ps. 119:154) Revive me.** We had this prayer in the last section, and we will have it again and again. It is a desire that cannot be too often felt and expressed. The soul is the center of everything, so to be revived is the central blessing. It means more love, more grace, more faith, more courage, more strength. If we get these, we can hold our heads up before the adversaries. God alone can give this reviving. But to the Lord and giver of life, the work is easy, and He delights to perform it. **According to Your word.** David found this blessing among the promised things, or at least he perceived that it was according to the general tenor of God's word. Tried believers want to be revived and raised from the dust. Thus, he pleads the word and asks the Lord to act according to the word. What a mighty plea, **According to Your word**. No gun in all our arsenals can match it.

**(Ps. 119:161) Princes persecute me without cause. But my heart stands in awe of Your word.** He might have been overcome by awe of the princes had it not been that a greater fear drove out the lesser; he was swayed by his awe of God's word. How unimportant crowns and scepters become in the judgment of the person who perceives a more majestic royalty in the commands of God. We are not likely to be disheartened by persecution or driven by it into sin if the word of God continually has supreme power over our minds.

**(Ps. 119:169-176)** The psalmist is approaching the end of the Psalm, and his petitions gather force and fervency. He breaks into the inner circle of divine fellowship and falls at the feet of the great God whose help he is imploring. This nearness creates the most lowly view of himself and leads him to close the Psalm on his face in deep humiliation, begging to be found like a lost sheep.

**(Ps. 119:169) Let my cry come before You, O LORD.** David is afraid that he will not be heard. He is conscious that his prayer is nothing better than the cry of a poor child or the groan of a wounded animal. The psalmist fears that his cry will be shut out from the ear of the Most High. He boldly prays that it will come before God, in His sight, under His notice, and looked on with His acceptance. David goes further and pleads, **Let my cry come before You, O LORD**. He wants the Lord's close, considerate attention to his prayer. He uses a figure of speech to animate this prayer. Picture his prayer like Esther venturing into the royal presence, pleading for an audience (Esther 5:2) and finding favor in the sight of the blessed and only Potentate. It is sweet when our prayer has obtained an audience, when it has trodden the sea of glass before the throne and comes to the footstool of the glorious seat around which heaven and earth adores God. It is to Jehovah that this prayer is expressed with trembling earnestness. Our translators, filled with holy reverence, translated the word, **O LORD**. We crave an audience from no one else, for we have confidence in no one else.

**Give me understanding according to Your word.** This is the prayer that the psalmist is exceedingly anxious about. With all his getting he would get understanding; whatever else he misses, he is resolved not to miss this priceless blessing. He wants spiritual light and understanding as it is promised in God's word, as it goes from God's word, and as it produces obedience to God's word. David pleads as though he had no understanding of his own and needs it to be given to him. **Give me understanding.** David had understanding according to human judgment, but what he sought was an understanding according to God's word. This is quite different. To understand spiritual things is the gift of God. To have a judgment enlightened by heavenly light and conformed to divine truth is a privilege that only grace can give. Many who are wise in the ways of this world are fools according to the word of the Lord. May we be among those happy children who will be taught by the Lord.

**(Ps. 119:176)** This is *the, finale*, the conclusion of the whole matter, **I have gone astray like a lost sheep**—often, willfully, wantonly, and even hopelessly except for Your intervening grace. In times past, before I was afflicted, before You had fully taught me Your statutes, I went astray from the practical precepts, from the instructive doctrines, and from the heavenly experiences that You set before me. I lost my road! I lost myself! Even now, I am prone to wander and have already roamed.

Lord, restore me. **Seek Your servant.** David was not like a dog that somehow or other always found its way back. He was a lost sheep that goes further and further from home. Yet, he was the Lord's sheep. He was God's property, precious in His sight, and so he hoped to be sought in order to be restored. However far he might have wandered, he was still not only a sheep but also God's **servant**. Therefore, he wanted to be in his Master's house again, once more honored with commissions for his Lord. Had he been only a lost sheep, he would not have prayed to be sought, but being also a **servant**, he had the power to pray. David cries, **Seek Your servant**, and he hopes to be not only sought but also forgiven, accepted, and taken into work again by his gracious Master. Notice this confession. Frequently, David defended his innocence against foul-mouthed accusers, but when he comes into the Lord's presence, he is ready to

confess his transgressions. Here, he sums up not only his past but also his present life under the image of a sheep that has broken from its pasture, forsaken the flock, left the shepherd, wandered into the wilderness, and become lost. The sheep bleats, but David prays, **Seek Your servant.**

His argument is forcible, **For I do not forget Your commandments.** I know the right, I approve and admire the right. And what is more, I love the right and long for it. I cannot be satisfied to continue in sin. I must be restored to the ways of righteousness. I have a homesickness for God; I long after the ways of peace. I do not and cannot forget Your commandments or cease to know that I am always happiest and safest when I scrupulously obey them and find all my joy in doing so. If God's grace enables us to maintain the loving memory of God's commandments in our hearts, it will surely restore us to practical holiness. That man cannot be utterly lost whose heart is still with God. If he is gone astray but is still true to his soul's inner desires for God, he will be found and fully restored. Remember the first verse of this Psalm while you read the last verse. The major blessing does not lie in being restored from wandering but in being blamelessly upheld to the end. It is ours to keep the crown of the causeway, never leaving the King's highway for Bypath Meadow or for any other flowery path of sin. Lord, uphold us to the end. Yet, even then, we will not be able to boast with the Pharisee, but we will pray with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13) and with the psalmist, **Seek Your servant.**

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What do you think has occurred to the people's lives in Psalm 119:25, 50, 51 and 87?**

**What kind of heart is the Psalmist speaking about in Psalm 119:2, 7 & 10?**

Jam. 4:8

**Show how in Psalm 119 the Psalmist knows his human frailty and instability. Show also how he knows that he cannot by himself obey God's laws and needs to pray to God to establish his ways.**

**Can the human mind understand the wonders of God except by the light of God?**

Ps. 119:7, 18, 105, 130 2 Cor. 4:4, 6 Eph. 1:17-19

**Is the fruit of the psalmist prayer in Psalm 119:10 seen in Psalm 119:110?**

**Use the verses below to show the meaning of Psalm 119:119, "You put away all the wicked of the earth *like dross.*"**

Isa. 1:25-26 Ezek. 22:18-22 Mal. 3:2-3

**What chief prayer is repeated often in Psalms?**

Ps. 109:21 Ps. 119:12, 124

### **Psalm 120:1-7**

Suddenly, we have left the continent of the vast Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm for the islands and islets of the Songs of Ascents. Occasionally, it is good to have extended devotion, but this must not cast a slur on the sacred brevities that sanctify the godly life day by day. He who inspired the longest Psalm is equally the author of the short compositions that follow it.

**A Song of Ascents**, or Degrees. We have devoted sufficient space to the consideration of the title of this Psalm and the fourteen compositions that follow. They appear to be Pilgrim Psalms. We are not sure if they were always sung in groups, for many are in the first person singular. No doubt, there were solitary pilgrims as well as groups who went to the house of God, and for these lonely ones, hymns were prepared.

We do not know why this ode is placed first in the Psalms of Ascents, and we refuse to conjecture about it. We prefer the old summary of the translators, "David prayed against Doeg," to any far-fetched supposition. If this is the scope of the Psalm, we immediately see why it suggested itself to David at Obed-Edom's house, when David came to take the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12). David thought of Doeg and poured out his complaint. The author had been grievously slandered and tortured into bitterness by the false charges. Here is his appeal to the great Judge of right and wrong, before whose judgment seat no one shall suffer slanders.

**(Ps. 120:1) In my distress.** If these Psalms (120-134) were sung at the ascent of the ark to Mount Zion, and later by the pilgrims who were in Jerusalem at the annual festivals, and also at the return of the Israelites from Babylon (Ezra 2:1) to Jerusalem, we will find in David's life a reason why this Psalm is first. Did not this servant of God meet with Doeg the Edomite when Doeg asked about Abiathar, and did not that wretched creature lie and betray David to Saul (1 Sam. 22:18)? This made a painful and permanent impression on David's memory. Thus, in commencing the journey of the ark,

he poured out his lament to the Lord concerning the great and monstrous wrong of "that dog of a Doeg," as Trapp wittily calls him. The poet, like the preacher, may find it advisable to "begin low," for there is more room to rise. The next Psalm is a full octave above this mournful hymn. Whenever we are abused, it will comfort us to see that we are not alone in our misery. We are traveling a road where David left his footprints.

**(Ps. 120:2) Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips.** Divine power is needed to save us from these deadly instruments. Lips are soft, but **lying lips** suck away the life of character and are as murderous as razors. Lips should never be red with the blood of honest people's reputation nor salved with malicious lies. David says, **Deliver my soul.**

**And from a deceitful tongue.** This is worse than an outright lie. Those who bow, flatter, and have enmity in their hearts are horrible beings. They are the devil's seed, and he works his deceptive nature in them. It is better to meet wild beasts and serpents than deceivers.

**(Ps. 120:6) My soul has dwelt too long with one who hates peace.** Long, long enough, and for too long he had been an exile among barbarians. A peacemaker is a blessing; a peace-hater is a curse. Lodging with them for a night is dangerous; dwelling with them is horrible. This verse may apply to any of the psalmist's detractors. He had seen enough and wanted to leave. Perhaps the sweet singer did not at first detect the nature of these people, but when he realized it, he was unable to shake them off and was compelled to live there.

Thoughts of Doeg, Saul, Ahithophel, and the sons of Zeruah come to mind, the latter not as enemies but as hot-blooded soldiers who were often too strong for David. What a change for the man of God, from the quiet of the sheepfold to the turmoil of court and the tumult of combat! How he must have longed to lay aside his scepter and pick up his shepherd's crook! He felt the time of his dwelling with quarrelsome spirits to be long, too long. He only endured because, as the Prayerbook version has it, "He was constrained so to abide."

**(Ps. 120:7) I am for peace.** Properly, "I am peace," desirous of peace, peaceful, even peace itself.

**But when I speak, they are for war.** My kindest words appear to provoke them, for they immediately draw their daggers. Nothing pleases them. If I am silent, they consider me morose. If I open my mouth, they find fault and oppose my logic. Let those who dwell with such pugilistic company console themselves by remembering that both David and David's Lord endured the same trial. It is the saints' lot to find foes even in their homes. Let those who are in quiet resting places and peaceful habitations be greatly grateful for such ease. God has given us this tranquility. Let us never inflict on others what we ourselves have been screened from.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **Should we expect peace in our life?**

Ps. 120:5-7

### **Psalm 121:1-8**

This Psalm has no other title than **A Song of Ascents**. It is several steps in advance of its predecessor, for it tells of the peace of God's house and the guardian care of the Lord. Psalm 120 expresses sorrow for the departure of peace and the exposure to the venomous assaults of slanderous tongues. In Psalm 120, David looks around with anguish, but here he looks up with hope. From the constant recurrence of the word "keep," we are led to name this song "A Psalm to the Keeper of Israel." If it was not placed among the Pilgrim Psalms, we would consider it a military hymn, suited for the evening song of one who slept in the tented field. It is a soldier's song and a traveler's hymn. There is an ascent in the Psalm that rises to the greatest elevation of restful confidence.

**(Ps. 121:1) I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help?** Help comes to saints only from above. We look elsewhere in vain. Let us lift our eyes with hope, expectancy, desire, and confidence. Satan will try to keep our eyes on sorrow, to disquiet and discourage us, but let us firmly resolve to look up. For there is good cheer for the eyes, and those who lift up their eyes to the eternal hills will soon have their hearts lifted. The purposes of God, the divine attributes, the immutable promises, the covenant, in which all things are ordered and sure, and providence, predestination, and the proved faithfulness of the Lord—these are the hills to which we must lift our eyes, for from these our help must come. It is our resolve that we will not be bandaged and blindfolded but will lift up our eyes.

**(Ps. 121:6) The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.** Only the Lord can shelter us from these tremendous forces. These two great lights rule the day and the night, and under the lordship of both, we work and rest in equal safety. There are dangers in the light and in the dark. Nevertheless, in both and from both, we will be preserved in several ways: literally, from excessive heat and poisonous chills; mystically, from any harmful effects that might follow from doctrine bright or dim; spiritually, from the evils of prosperity and adversity; eternally, from the strain of overpowering glory and from the pressure of terrible events such as judgment. Day and night make up all time; thus, the ever present protection never ceases. All evil may be ranked as under the sun or under the moon, and if neither of these can **strike** us, we are indeed secure. God has not made a new sun or a fresh moon for His chosen. They exist under the same outward circumstances as others do, but in the case of the chosen, the power to **strike** is removed from temporal agencies,

for the saints are enriched, not injured, by the powers that govern the conditions of the earth. God has given them "the precious fruits of the sun" (Deut. 33:14), while removing all misery and curse of heat, glare, dampness, and chill.

**(Ps. 121:7) The LORD shall preserve you from all evil,** or, "keep you from all evil." It is a great pity that our admirable translation did not stay with the word "keep" throughout the Psalm. God not only *keeps* His own from every evil influence in evil times, but He *keeps* them from evil itself. This is an extensive covering; it includes everything and excludes nothing. The wings of Jehovah amply guard His own from evils great and small, temporary and eternal. There is a delightful double personality in this verse: Jehovah keeps the believer not by an agent but by Himself. The person protected is definitely pointed out by the word **you**. It is not your estate or name that is protected, but **you**. And to make this more intensely real and personal, another sentence is added, **The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul,** or, Jehovah will keep your soul. Soul-keeping is the soul of keeping. If the soul is kept, all is kept. The preservation of the greater includes that of the lesser, so far as it is essential to the main design. The kernel will be preserved, and to accomplish this, the shell must be preserved. God is the only keeper of the soul. Our soul is kept from the dominion of sin, the infection of error, the crush of depression, and the puffing of pride, as well as from the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is kept for holier and greater things, kept in the love of God, kept for the eternal kingdom and glory. What can harm a soul that is kept by the Lord?

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What is the keynote of Psalm 121 that occurs in one form or another many times?**

### **Psalm 122:1-9**

This brief but spirited Psalm is entitled, **A Song of Ascents. Of David.** Thus, we know its author. David wrote it for the people to sing as they went up to the holy feasts at Jerusalem. It is third in this series and appears suitable to be sung after the people entered the gates. It was natural that they should sing of Jerusalem and invoke peace and prosperity on the Holy City. Jerusalem was the center of worship, the place where the Lord revealed Himself above the mercy seat. Possibly, the city was not complete in David's day, so he may have written here under the spirit of prophecy, speaking of it as it would be during Solomon's reign. A poet has a license to speak of things not as they are but as they will be when they are perfected. Jerusalem, or the Habitation of Peace, is the keyword of this Psalm, wherein, in the original, we have many happy allusions to the salem, or peace, which they implored for Jerusalem. When the pilgrims stood within the triple walls, all things helped to explain the words they sang within this rampart of strength. One voice led the Psalm with its personal "I," but ten thousand united with the first musician and swelled the chorus.

**(Ps. 122:1) I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD."** The word was not "go," but, **Let us go.** The psalmist found a double joy. He was glad for *the sake of others*, glad they wanted to go, and glad they had the courage and liberty to invite others. He knew it would do them good. Nothing better can happen than to love the place where God's honor dwells. What a glorious day when many will say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths" (Mic. 4:2).

**(Ps. 122:3) Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together.** David, in a vision, saw the city built. He saw it no longer a waste, or a mere collection of tents or a city on paper, started but not completed. God's mercy to the nation of Israel allowed peace and plenty, which was sufficient for the building and perfection of its capital. That city flourished in happy times, just as the church only grows when all the people of God are prospering. Thanks be to God, Jerusalem is built. The Lord, by His glorious appealing, has built Zion. It is not built as a set of booths or as a conglomeration of hovels. It is a city: substantial, architectural, designed, arranged, and defended.

The city of God had this peculiarity about it. It was not a long, straggling street, or a city of magnificent distances, but the allotted space was filled. The buildings were a solid block, a massive unity. This struck the village dwellers and conveyed to them the idea of a close neighborhood, sure standing, and strongly defended. No quarter could be surprised and sacked while other portions of the city were unaware of the assault. The ramparts surrounded every part of the metropolis. It was singularly one and indivisible. There was no flaw in this diamond of the world, this pair of cities.

The church is a permanent and important institution, founded on the Rock, built with art, and arranged with wisdom. In a church, one of the most delightful conditions is the compactness of unity: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). A church should be one in creed, one in heart, one in testimony, one in service, one is aspiration, and one in sympathy. Those who would build dividing walls greatly injure our Jerusalem. She needs compacting not dividing. There is no joy in going to a church that is torn with internal dissension. The gladness of the saints is the adhesiveness of love and unity.

**(Ps. 122:4) Where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD.** When there is unity within there will be gatherings without. The tribes go to a compact center. Israel was one people, but the surface distinction of tribes divided them. This is a lesson showing that all Christians are essentially one, though for various reasons, we are divided into tribes. As much as possible, let us sink the tribal individuality in national unity. Then, the church will be many waves but one sea, many branches but one tree, many members but one body. The tribes were the Lord's. Whether Judah or Benjamin, Manasseh

or Ephraim, they were all the Lord's. Oh, that all the Christian army's regiments may be the Lord's own, chosen, redeemed, accepted, and upheld by Jehovah!

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What is the significance of Jerusalem and why should we be praying for the peace of it (Ps. 122:6)?**

**What did Charles Spurgeon mean when he said; "the church will be many waves but one sea, many branches but one tree, many members but one body"?**

### **Psalm 123:1-4**

**A Song of Ascents.** We are climbing. The first step (Ps. 120) saw us lamenting our troubled surroundings. The next Psalm saw us lifting our eyes to the hills and resting in assured security. Then we rose to delight in the house of the Lord. Here, we look to the Lord Himself, which is the highest ascent of all. Our eyes are now looking above the hills, above Jehovah's footstool on earth, to His throne in the heavens. Old authors called it, "The eye of hope." Let us call it, "The Psalm of the eyes." It is a short psalm, written with singular art, containing one thought expressed in an engaging manner. It is a favorite among God's people. It has been conjectured that this brief song, or sigh, may have been first heard in Nehemiah's day or during Antiochus' persecutions. This may be, but there is no evidence of it. Afflicted persons in all periods have probably found this Psalm a blessing. If it appears to describe days that are remote from David, the psalmist was also a prophet and sang what he saw in visions.

**(Ps. 123:1) Unto You I lift up my eyes.** It is good to have someone to look up to. The psalmist looked so high—not to the hills but to the God of the hills—that he could look no higher. He believed in a personal God. He knew nothing of modern pantheism, which is little more than atheism wearing a fig leaf. The uplifted eyes naturally and instinctively represent a heart whose desire, hope, confidence, and expectation are fixed on the Lord. God is everywhere. Yet, it is natural to think of Him as above us, in that land of glory beyond the skies.

We ought to be thankful for spiritual eyes. The spiritually blind of this world cannot see our God, for in heavenly matters, they are without sight. Yet, we must use our eyes with resolution, for they will not look up to the Lord by themselves. They are inclined to look down, or inward, or anywhere but to the Lord. Let it be our firm resolve that our heavenward glance will not be lacking. If we cannot see God, at least we will look toward Him. God is in heaven like a king in his palace, where He is revealed, adored, and glorified. From there, He looks down on the world and sends comfort to His saints as their needs demand. And from here, we look up, even when our sorrow is so great that we can do no more. It is a blessed condescension that God permits us to lift up our eyes to His glorious high throne, yes, even more, that He invites and commands us to do so. When we are looking to the Lord in hope, it is well to tell Him so in prayer.

**(Ps. 123:2) So our eyes look to the LORD our God.** Believers need to be attentive to the Lord's directions. Even little things are not little; we will account for every idle word, and we are anxious to give that account with joy. True saints, like obedient servants, look to the Lord their God with reverence. They have a holy awe and inward fear of the great and glorious One. They watch, *obediently*, obeying His commandments, guided by His eye (Ps. 32:8). Their constant gaze is *attentively* fixed on the Most High. They pay attention; they look *continuously*, for they are never off duty. Always they delight to serve; their eyes are fixed *expectantly* on the Lord, looking for supply, comfort, safety, and mercy. They look *singly* to Him. They have no other confidence. They learn to look *submissively*, waiting patiently, seeking to glorify His name both in their activity and their suffering. When the rod strikes, they turn *imploringly* to the hand that chastens, hoping that mercy will soon abate the rigor of affliction.

Perhaps it is profitable to ask this question, "Are you trained to serve?" Though we are children, have we learned the full obedience of servants? Have we surrendered our will to the heavenly Majesty? Do we desire to be at the Lord's disposal? If so, happy are we. Though we are made joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17), for the present, we differ little from servants. May we be content to take them for our model.

**(Ps. 123:3) Have mercy on us, O LORD, have mercy on us! For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.** Contempt is an acid that eats into the soul. Contempt is bitterness and wormwood, mixed with gall. They were **filled** with contempt, as if a bitter wine had been poured in until it reached the brim. **Contempt** had become their chief thought and the peculiar sorrow of their hearts. Excluding all other feelings, a sense of scorn monopolized the soul and made it wretched.

**(Ps. 123:4) Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorn of those who are at ease. With the contempt of the proud.** The proud think so much of themselves that they think less of those who are better than them. Pride is contemptible and contemptuous. The contempt of the earth's great for others is often biting. Some are like a well-known diplomat, "master of a smooth tongue, insults, and sneers." And they are best in their severity when their victim is a servant of the Lord.

It is easy enough to write on this subject, but to be the target of contempt is quite another matter. Great hearts have been broken and brave spirits have withered under falsehood and contempt. For comfort, we should remember that they "despised and rejected" our divine Lord (Isa. 53:3). But, even so, He did not cease his perfect service until He was exalted in heaven. Let us carry our share of this evil that still rages. Let us firmly believe that the contempt of the ungodly will turn to our honor in the world to come. Even now, it serves as a certificate that we are not of the world, for, if we were of the world, the world would love us. "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What is the message here for us when we are trodden down?**

### **Psalm 124:1-8**

**Ps. 124:1) "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side," let Israel now say.** The opening statement is abrupt, a fragment. It arouses attention and creates feelings. This is poetic fire breaking out in uncontrollable flame. The glorious Lord became our ally; He took our part and entered an agreement with us. If Jehovah were not our protector, where would we be? Nothing but His power and wisdom could have guarded us from the cunning and malice of our adversaries. Therefore, let all His people say so; let them openly give Him the honor due Him for His preserving goodness.

**(Ps. 124:7) Our soul has escaped—escaped** from our natural slavery, escaped from the guilt, the degradation, the habit, and the dominion of sin, escaped from Satan's deceptions and fascinations, escaped from all that can destroy. What a wonder of grace! What a miraculous escape, that we who are so easily led are not allowed to die by the hand of the dread fowler! The Lord has heard the prayer that He taught us to pray and has delivered us from evil (Matt. 6:13).

**The snare is broken, and we have escaped.** The song is worth repeating. It is good to dwell on so great a mercy. The snare may be one of many things, such as false doctrine, pride, lust, temptation, despair, or presumption. What a high favor to have it broken before our eyes, that it no longer has power over us. We do not see the mercy while we are in the snare. Or perhaps we are so foolish that we deplore the breaking of a Satanic charm upon us. Thus, gratitude comes after the escape, when we realize what we have escaped from and by what hand we have been set free. Then, our Lord has a song from our mouths and hearts, as we make heaven and earth ring with the notes, **The snare is broken, and we have escaped.** "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4:8, 9). Blessed be Jehovah!

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What figures are used by the Psalmist to illustrate his deliverance from threatened destruction?**

### **Psalm 125:1-5**

**(Ps. 125:1) Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion.** The emphasis lies on the object of their trust, Jehovah the Lord. What a privilege to rest in God! How condescending is Jehovah to become the confidence of His people! To trust elsewhere is foolishness, and the more implicit such misplaced trust becomes the more bitter the disappointment. Yet, to trust in the living God is sanctified common sense, which needs no excuse. Its result will be its best vindication. There is no conceivable reason why we should not trust in Jehovah. There is every possible argument for doing so, but apart from all argument, the end will prove the wisdom of the confidence. The results of faith are not occasional and accidental; its blessings come not to some who trust but to all who trust in the Lord. Trusters in Jehovah will be as fixed, firm, and stable as the mountain where David lived and where the ark rested. Moving Mount Zion was impossible. The mere supposition is absurd.

**Which cannot be removed, but abides forever.** He who holds the mountains by His strength uses that same power to hold the hearts of those that trust in Him. This steadfastness will endure **forever**. Be well assured that no believer will perish in life, death, time, or eternity. We trust in an eternal God, and our safety will be eternal.

**(Ps. 125:5) As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them away with the workers of iniquity.** Two kinds of people are always found, the upright and the crooked. Some pass from one class to another, not by a happy conversion, turning from the twisting lanes of deceit onto the highway of truth, but with an unhappy falling back. They leave the main road of honesty and holiness for the bypaths of wickedness. Such apostates have been seen in all ages. David knew enough of them. He could never forget Saul (1 Sam. 18:9), Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:31), and others. How sad that those who once walked in the way have turned aside. Observe their course. First, they looked for the crooked ways. Next, they made it *their* crooked way. And then they turned aside. The straight way becomes a little difficult, and they deviate. They never intended to go back to destruction, but only to make a curve and drop back on the right road again. These people are neither upright in heart nor good. They are not trusters in Jehovah, who will deal with

them. When execution day comes, these hypocrites and time-servers will be led to the same gallows as the openly wicked. All sin will one day be expelled from the universe, and to the surprise of many, they will be set in the ranks of those who openly worked iniquity. Then these secret traitors will find themselves ejected with open rebels. Divine truth will unveil their hidden pursuits and lead them out.

**Peace be upon Israel!** The execution of the deceiver will give the true Israel peace. When God is striking the unfaithful, not a blow will fall on the faithful. The Lord's chosen will have peace. Israel has prevailed with God and need not fear the face of man, for the wrestling is over (Gen. 32:24-26). The blessing of peace has been pronounced. Those who have peace with God will enjoy peace in all things. Tie the first and last verse together: Israel trusts in the Lord (v. 1), and Israel has peace (v. 5).

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Compare what is said in this Psalm with what Paul says in Galatians 6:9 and Philipians 1:6.**

Neh. 6:16

### **Psalm 126:1-6**

**(Ps. 126:1) When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream.** For comfort during trouble, the pilgrims remember times of national woe that were succeeded by remarkable deliverances. Then, sorrow was gone like a dream and a joy followed that seemed too good to be true, and they feared that it must be the vision of an idle brain. So sudden and overwhelming was their joy that they felt ecstatic, as in a trance. The **captivity** had been great; thus, great was the deliverance. The great God had worked it. It seemed too good to be true, and many said:

Is this a dream? O if it be a dream,  
Let me sleep on, and do not wake me yet.

It was not freedom of the individual but freedom of Zion, of the entire nation, that the Lord in mercy had worked. This was reason enough for overflowing gladness. We need not review the history of literal Israel to illustrate instances of this verse, but it is good to remember how often it has been true of us. Let us remember the prisons from which we have been set free. Ah, me, what captives we have been! At our conversion, we experienced a great release from captivity. Never will we forget that hour. Joy! Joy! Joy! And since then, we have been emancipated from multiplied troubles, depressions, miserable backslidings, and grave doubts.

**(Ps. 126:4) Bring back our captivity, O LORD.** They remembered the joy of a past rescue and cried to Jehovah to repeat it. When we pray, recalling past answers is wise. Nothing strengthens faith more effectively than the memory of an experience with God. "The Lord has done" harmonizes with the prayer, **Bring back**. The text shows the wisdom of going anew to the Lord, who in former times has been so good to us. Where else should we go but to Him who has done such great things for us? Who can bring back our captivity? He who returned it before.

**As the streams in the South.** Just as the Lord sends torrents down the dry southern beds after long droughts, He can fill our wasted and wearied spirits with floods of holy delight. The Lord can do this for any of us, and He can do it immediately. Nothing is too difficult for the Lord. It is good to pray and bring our case before Him "who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). Do not forget the past in your present difficulty. Go to the Lord. Implore Him to do what you cannot possibly do, to do that which no other power can perform for you or me. Israel returned from captivity in Babylon because of the Lord. Like a flood, her people hastened to Zion. Suddenly, many people again filled the temple courts in Jerusalem. And in the last days, in streams, they will again return to their own land and replenish it. Like a mighty torrent, the nations will flow to the Lord in the day of grace. May the Lord hasten it in His own time.

**(Ps. 126:5) Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.** Present distress must not be viewed as lasting forever. It is not the end; it is a means to the end. If sorrow is what we **sow**, **joy** shall be what we reap. If we do not sow in tears, we will not reap in joy. If we were never captives, we would never lead our captivity captive. Our mouth would never have been filled with holy laughter if it had not been filled with bitter grief. We must sow. We may have to sow in the wet weather of sorrow, but we will reap, reap in the bright summer of joy. Keep sowing! Find strength in the positive promise of this verse. This is one of the Lord's promises. It is freely given to His workers, waiters, and weepers, and they may rest assured that it will not fail. "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9).

Not every sower is insured against danger and guaranteed a harvest. This promise belongs to those who sow in tears. When your heart is so stirred that you weep over the sins of others, you are elected to usefulness. Winners of souls are first weepers for souls. As there is no birth without labor, there is no spiritual harvest without painful plowing. When our hearts are broken with grief over the transgressions of others, we will break the hearts of sinners. Tears of earnestness will bring tears of repentance. "Deep calls unto deep" (Ps. 42:7).

**(Ps. 126:6) He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.** In this text, we find the promise of fruitfulness in close contact with the return from captivity. And this is our experience, when our soul is revived, the souls of others are blessed by our labor. If any of us, having been once lonesome and lingering captives, return home and become sowers, the Lord will transform us into glad-hearted reapers. To Him is the praise forever and ever. Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Explain Psalm 126:5 in reference to the return of the Jew's from captivity?**

### **Psalm 127:1-5**

Observe that the heart is fixed on Jehovah in each of these songs. Read the first verses of each Psalm, from Psalm 120 to this present song:

- "I cried to the LORD" (Ps. 120:1).
- "I will lift up my eyes to the hills" (Ps. 121:1).
- "Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Ps. 122:1).
- "Unto You I lift up my eyes" (Ps. 123:1).
- "If it had not been the LORD" (Ps. 124:1).
- "Those who trust in the LORD" (Ps. 125:1).
- "When the LORD brought back the captivity" (Ps. 126:1).
- "Unless the LORD builds the house" (Ps. 127:1).

The Lord and the Lord alone is praised at each step of these songs of the ascents. Oh, for a life whose every step will suggest a new song to the Lord!

**(Ps. 127:1) Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.** The word **vain** is the keynote. It rings out clearly three times. Those who want to build know that they must work with all their skill and strength. But if Jehovah is not with them, their designs will fail. It was this way with the builders of Babel; they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower" (Gen. 11:4). The Lord returned their words, "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language" (Gen. 11:7). They labored in vain because the Lord was against them. When Solomon resolved to build a house for the Lord (1 Kings 5:5), things were different. God united all things to aid in this great project; even the heathen were at his beck and call (1 Kings 5:8). In the same manner, God blessed Solomon in the construction of his own palace. This verse evidently refers to all sorts of house building.

**Unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.** In Scriptural phrases, a dispensation, or system, is called a house. Moses was faithful as a servant over all his house, and as long as the Lord was with that house, it stood and prospered. When the Lord left it, the builders became foolish, and their labor was lost. They sought to maintain the walls of Judaism, but they sought in vain without the Lord. They watched every ceremony and tradition, but their care was idle. This is equally true of every church. Unless the Lord is in it and honored by it, the entire structure will eventually fall in hopeless ruin. Much can be done. We can labor and watch, but without the Lord, we can accomplish nothing.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**How would you comment on Psalm 127:2?**

### **Psalm 128:1-6**

**(Ps. 128:1) Blessed is every one who fears the LORD.** There is also a close community of subject. The fear of God is the cornerstone of all blessedness. We must reverence the ever blessed God before we can be blessed. Some think that this life is evil, an infliction, a thing on which a curse rests. But this is not so. God-fearing saints have a present blessing, and they are happy. They are the children of the happy God, the ever living Jehovah. We are joint heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17), whose heritage is not misery but joy. This is true of every one of the God-fearing, of all conditions, in all ages. Each and everyone is blessed. Carnal reason may not always see the blessedness, but it is always a fact, for God declares that it is so. We know those He blesses are blessed indeed. Let us cultivate that holy fear of Jehovah, which is the essence of true religion: the fear of reverence, of dread to offend, of eagerness to please, and of total submission and obedience. The fear of the Lord is the right fountain of holy living. We look in vain for holiness apart from it. Only those who fear the Lord will ever walk in His ways.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

## How does Psalm 128:2 fit into the message given by Charles Spurgeon in Psalm 127:1?

### Psalm 129:1-8

**(Ps. 129:1) "Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth," let Israel now say.** In Israel's present trial, previous afflictions are remembered and spoken for comfort, for drawing assurance that He who has been with her for so long will not desert her in the end. The song begins abruptly. The poet has been musing; the fire burns, and thus, he speaks. He has to speak. He must speak.

The trials of believers have been repeated again and again. The same afflictions are fulfilled in us as they were in our fathers. Jacob found his days full of trouble. Each Israelite is often harassed, and as a nation, Israel has gone from trial to trial. **Many a time**, Israel says, because she could not say how often. She speaks of her assailants as **they**, because it would be impossible to write, or even know, all their names. They had distressed, harassed, and fought her from the earliest days, from her **youth**, and they continued their assaults without ceasing. Persecution is the heirloom of the believer and the ensign of the elect. Among nations, Israel was special, and this brought many foes who could not rest until they fought God's people.

In Canaan, the chosen household was severely tried. In Egypt, it was heavily oppressed. In the wilderness, it was fiercely assailed. And in the promised land, deadly enemies often surrounded it. It was something for the afflicted nation, that it survived to say, **Many a time they have afflicted me**. The affliction began early, **from my youth**, and it continued late. The earliest years of Israel and the church of God were spent in trial.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What is the meaning of Psalms 129:3, "The plowers plowed on my back; they made their furrows long"?**

**What divine warning is here to those who hate Zion (Ps.129:5)?**

Zech. 2:8

### Psalm 130:1-8

**(Ps. 130:1) Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD!** This is the psalmist's statement and plea. He has never ceased to pray even when brought to the lowest depth. Depths usually silence all they engulf, but they could not close the mouth of the Lord's servant. On the contrary, it was in the abyss that he cried to Jehovah. Under the floods, prayer lived and struggled. Above the roar of the billows, the cry of faith rose. It little matters where we are if we can pray. Prayer is never more real and acceptable than when it rises out of the worst places. Deep places produce deep devotion. Depths of trials stir depths of earnestness. Diamonds sparkle in the dimness. Deep prayer gives God great glory. The more distressed we are, the more excellent is the faith that bravely trusts the Lord.

**Lord, hear my voice!** This is all we ask; nothing less can make us content. If the Lord hears, we will leave it to His superior wisdom to decide if He will answer. It is better for our prayer to be heard than answered. If the Lord were to make an absolute promise to answer all our requests, it might be more of a curse than a blessing, for it would place the responsibility of our lives on ourselves and put us in an anxious position.

**(Ps. 130:3) If You, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?** This verse shows that the psalmist was under a sense of sin, and that he felt it imperative not only to cry as a suppliant but also to confess as a sinner. He admits that in his own righteousness, he cannot stand before the Great King. The psalmist is struck with a sense of the holiness of God and the lightness of the Law. He is convinced that no mortal can answer before so perfect a Judge, concerning a Law so divine. Well does he cry, **O Lord, who could stand?** None! "There is none who does good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:12). Were it not for the Lord Jesus, could we hope to stand? Dare we meet Him in the dread day of account on the footing of the Law and equity? What a mercy, that we need not do so! The next verse shows a way of acceptance, to which we flee.

**(Ps. 130:4) But there is forgiveness with You. Blessed but.** Free, full, sovereign pardon is in the hand of the Great King. It is His prerogative to forgive, and He delights to exercise it. Because His nature is mercy, He has provided a sacrifice for sin. Forgiveness is with Him for all that come to Him confessing their sins. The power of pardon permanently resides with God. He has forgiveness ready right now.

**That You may be feared.** This is the fruitful root of holiness. None fear the Lord like those who have experienced His forgiving love. Gratitude for pardon produces far more fear and reverence of God than all the dread of punishment. If the Lord were to execute justice, there would be none left to fear Him. If all were under apprehension of His deserved wrath, despair would harden them against fearing Him. It is grace and a fear of grieving Him that leads the way to a holy regard of God.

**(Ps. 130:8) And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.** Our iniquities are our worst dangers. If saved from these, we are saved altogether. Yet, there is no salvation except by redemption. What a blessing that this is promised in terms that remove any question! The Lord will certainly redeem His believing people from all their sins. This redemption is plentiful because it concerns *all* Israel and *all* iniquities. Truly, our psalm has ascended to a great height. There is no cry out of the depths, but a chorale in the heights. Redemption is the top of covenant blessings. When all Israel will experience it, the latter day glory will have come, and the Lord's people will say, "Now, Lord, what do we wait for." This is a clear prophecy of the first coming of our Lord Jesus. We may now consider it a promise of His second and more glorious coming for the redemption of the body. For this our soul waits, and our heart and flesh cry out for it with joyful expectation.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **What is the meaning of Psalm 130:6?**

### **Compare Psalm 130:8 with other scripture. When has or when will this occur?**

Ps. 103:3-4    Matt. 1:21    Luke 1:68    Titus 2:14

### **Psalm 131:1-3**

**A Song of Ascents. Of David.** It is by David and of David. He is the author and the subject. Many incidents in David's life can illustrate this Psalm. Comparing all the Psalms to gems, this one is a pearl beautifully adorning the neck of patience. It is one of the shortest psalms to read but one of the longest to learn. It speaks of a young child, but it is the experience of a man in Christ. Lowliness and humility are seen in connection with a sanctified heart, a will subdued to the mind of God, and a hope that looks to the Lord alone. Happy are those who without falsehood can say these words, for they wear about them the likeness of the Lord, "I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29).

**(Ps. 131:1) LORD, my heart is not haughty.** This Psalm deals with the Lord. It is a solitary conversation with Him, not a discourse before others. We have a sufficient audience when we speak with the Lord; we can say things to Him that are not proper for others to hear. David makes his appeal to Jehovah, who alone knows the heart. We should be slow to do this, for the Lord is not to be trifled. Whenever anyone ventures on such an appeal, that person should be sure of his case. David begins with his heart, the center of our nature. If pride is there, it defiles everything, just as mire in the spring causes mud in all the streams. It is a grand thing to know your heart and to be able to speak to the Lord about it. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). Who can know it unless taught by the Holy Spirit? It is a greater thing if, after searching thoroughly, you can solemnly say to the Omniscient One, "My heart is not arrogant, proud, contemptuous, self-righteous, arrogant, boastful of the past, proud of the present, or ambitious for the future."

**Nor my eyes lofty.** What the heart wants, the eyes look for. Where desires run, glances usually follow. David did not seek elevated positions to gratify his ego, nor did he look down on others as inferior. The LORD hates a proud look (Prov. 6:17), and all agree with Him; even the proud hate scornful gestures in others.

**Neither do I concern myself with great matters.** As a private person, David did not usurp the king's power or devise plots against him. David minded his own business and left others to mind theirs. As a thoughtful individual, he did not pry into unrevealed things. He was not speculative, conceited, or opinionated. As a secular person, he did not put himself into the priesthood as Saul had done before him and as Uzziah did after him. It is good to exercise godliness so that we know our true sphere and diligently keep to it. Many wishing to be great have failed to be good. They were not content to remain in the lowly stations where the Lord appointed them. They rushed at grandeur and power, and found destruction where they looked for honor.

**(Ps. 131:2) Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul. Like a weaned child with his mother.** To the weaned child, the mother is comfort, though she has denied the child comfort. It is a mark of spiritual growth when we relinquish the joys that once seemed essential and find solace in Him who denies them to us. We behave like adults then, and every childish complaint is silenced. If the Lord removes our dearest delight, we bow to His will without grumbling. In fact, we find delight in giving up our delight. This is not a spontaneous fruit of nature but a well-tended product of divine grace. It grows out of humility and lowliness and is the stem of peace, blooming as a beautiful flower.

**Like a weaned child is my soul within me.** Blessed are the afflictions that subdue our affections, wean us from self-sufficiency, educate us in Christian maturity, and teach us to love God not only when He comforts, but also when He tests. Well might the sacred poet repeat the image of the weaned child. It is worth admiring and imitating. It is doubly desired and difficult to attain. Such weaning from self springs from the gentle humility in the previous verse and partly accounts for its existence. If pride is gone, submission will follow. On the other hand, if pride is to be driven out, self must also be vanquished.

**(Ps. 131:3) O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forever.** See how lovingly one who is weaned from self thinks of others. David thinks of his people and loses himself in his care for Israel. How he prizes the grace of hope!

He has given up the things that are seen, and now he values the treasures that are only seen through the eyes of hope. There is room for the largest hope when self is gone. There is ground for eternal hope when transient things no longer hold the mastery of our spirits (2 Cor 4:18).

This verse is the lesson of experience. David has been taught to renounce the world and live on the Lord alone. He exhorts everyone to do the same. He found it a blessed thing to live by hope, and he wants all his people to live that way. Let all the nation hope. Let their hope be in Jehovah. Let them begin hoping **from this time forth and forever**. Weaning takes children out of a temporary condition into a state where they will continue for the rest of their lives. To rise above the world is to enter a heavenly existence that can never end. When we cease to hanker for the world, begin to hope in the Lord.

Oh, Lord, as a parent weans a child, wean me. Then I will fix all my hope on You alone. Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### Is there any evidence that shows David's childlike humility was past down to his son Solomon?

1 Kings 3:6-7    1 Chron. 22:5    1 Chron. 29:1

### Psalm 132:1-18

**(Ps. 132:1) LORD, remember David and all his afflictions.** The covenant was made with David; thus, his name is pleaded on behalf of his descendants. Jehovah, who does not change, will never forget His servants or fail to keep His covenant. Nevertheless, even what we are assured the Lord will do must still be a matter of prayer. The request is that the Lord will **remember**, and this is a word full of meaning. We know that the Lord remembered Noah and the waters subsided (Gen. 8:1). He remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of Sodom (Gen. 19:15, 16). He remembered Rachel (Gen. 30:6) and Hannah (1 Sam. 2:21) and gave them children. He remembered His mercy to the house of Israel and delivered His people (Ex. 12:51). "He remembers us in our low estate, for His mercy endures forever" (Ps. 136:23). This is a notable prayer, "Lord, remember me."

The plea, here, is that God will bless David's family for David's sake. How much stronger is our master argument, that God will deal well with us for Jesus' sake! David had no personal merit; the plea is based on the covenant graciously made with him by the Lord. Jesus has His own rewards, boundless merit, and these we may ask for without hesitation. When the Lord was angry with the reigning prince, the people cried, **LORD, remember David**. When they needed a special blessing, they again sang, **LORD, remember David**. This was good pleading, but it is not as good as, "Lord, remember Jesus and His afflictions."

**(Ps. 132:2) How he swore to the LORD, and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob.** Moved by intense devotion, David expressed his resolve in the form of a vow, which had been sealed with an oath. The fewer such vows the better. Our Great Representative said, "Do not swear at all" (Matt. 5:34). Perhaps leaving the pious resolve in God's hands as a prayer would have been wiser, because the vow was not fulfilled. The Lord did not permit David to build the temple. We should not swear to anything until we know the Lord's mind, and then there is no need to swear. David's vow shows that vows are allowed, but it does not suggest that they are desirable. Possibly, David went too far in his words. It is good that the Lord did not hold him to the letter of his bond. God accepted the will for the deed, the meaning of the promise rather than its literal sense. David imitated Jacob, the great vow-maker at Bethel, who received the blessing pronounced on him by Isaac, "God Almighty bless you" (Gen. 28:3). God is mighty to hear and to help in performing our vows. We should be in awe at the idea of making a promise to the Mighty God; trifling with Him is serious. Affliction led both David and Jacob into covenant dealings with the Lord; many vows are made in anguish of soul. If David's obligations are to be remembered by the Lord, much more are the securities of the Lord Jesus before the mind of the great Lord, to whom our soul turns in the hour of distress.

Note that Jehovah was the God of Jacob, the same God evermore, his is His attribute. He is mighty, mighty to comfort His Jacobs who trust in Him even when their afflictions are many. Moreover, He is the Mighty One of His people. He is the God of Jacob in a sense that He is not the God of unbelievers. Here, we have three points concerning our God: *name*, Jehovah; *attribute*, mighty; *special relationship*, **the Mighty One of Jacob**. This is who David asks to remember him and his trials, and there is a plea for that blessing in each of the three points.

**(Ps. 132:8-10)** In these three verses, we see the finders of the ark moving it to its appointed place, using a formula similar to that used by Moses when he said, "Rise up, O LORD" (Num. 10:35), and, again, "Return, O LORD, to the many thousands of Israel" (Num. 10:36).

**(Ps. 132:8)** The ark had been moving around for a long time, and no proper place had been found for it in Canaan. Now, however, devout people prepared a temple and sang, **Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength**. They hoped that the covenant symbol had found a permanent dwelling, a rest, and they trusted that Jehovah would abide with it forever. It would be folly to settle the ark if the Lord did not remain there and perpetually shine from between the cherubim. Unless the Lord rests with us, there is no rest. Unless the ark of His strength abides with us, we are weak. The ark of the covenant is mentioned by a well deserved name, **the ark of Your strength**, for in its captivity, it struck its captors and broke their gods (1 Sam. 5:3). When they brought it back, it guarded its honor by the

death of those who dared to treat it with disrespect (2 Sam. 6:7). Thus, God's power was connected with that sacred chest. Solomon reverently prayed about it as he sought the living God to consecrate the temple by His presence (1 Kings 8:1). It is the Lord and the covenant, or, rather, the covenant Jehovah, whose presence we need in our assemblies. This presence is the strength of His people. Oh, that the Lord would abide in all the churches and cause His power to be revealed in Zion!

**(Ps. 132:9) Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness.** No garment is so splendid as a holy character, and in this glorious robe, our great High Priest is forever arrayed. And He wants all His people dressed this way. Only then, when they dignify their lives with goodness, are priests fit to appear before the Lord and minister for the people's benefit. They must always remember that they are God's priests and that they must wear their Lord's holiness. They are not only to have righteousness, but also to be clothed with it; on every part of them, righteousness must be conspicuous. Whoever looks on God's servants should see holiness, if they see nothing else. This righteousness is here prayed for in connection with the Lord's presence, which instructs us that holiness is only found among those who fellowship with God and that it only comes through visits of the Holy Spirit. God will dwell among a holy people, and where God is the people become holy.

**And let Your saints shout for joy.** Holiness and happiness go together. When one is found, the other is never far away. Holy people have a right to great and demonstrative joy. They may shout because they are saints, Your saints, and *You* have come to dwell with them. You have made it their duty to rejoice and to let others know of their joy. The sentence, while it may read as a permit, is also a precept, for saints are commanded to rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 4:4). Happy religion makes it a duty to be glad! Where righteousness is the clothing, joy may well be the occupation.

**(Ps. 132:10) For Your servant David's sake, do not turn away the face of Your Anointed.** King Solomon was praying, and here the people pray for him, that his face would not be turned away, or, that he may not be refused an audience. It is a terrible thing to have our face turned from God or to have His face turned from us. If we are anointed with the Spirit, the Lord will look on us with favor. This is especially true of Him who represents us, the Christ, the truly anointed of the Lord. Jesus is both our David and God's anointed. In Christ is a fullness that David received only in part, and for His sake, all who are anointed in Him are accepted. God blessed Solomon and succeeding kings for David's sake, and He will bless us for Jesus' sake. How condescending was the Son of the Highest to take the form of a servant, to be anointed for us, and to go before the mercy seat to plead on our behalf. This psalm sings of the ark, and it may remind us of the anointed priest going within the veil, when all depended on God's acceptance of him (Lev. 16:2). The people do well to pray, **Do not turn away the face of Your Anointed.**

In these verses, we have a prayer for the temple, the ark, the priests, the Levites, the people, and the king. Each petition is full of meaning and well worth careful thought. We cannot plead too much in detail; the fault with most prayers is their indefiniteness. In God's house and in worship, everything and everyone needs a continual blessing. As David vowed and prayed, when he was reminded to consecrate the ark, the prayer is continued when the temple is consecrated and the Lord fills it with His glory. We will never be done praying until we are done needing.

**(Ps. 132:12) If your sons will keep My covenant and My testimony which I shall teach them, their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore.** We gladly look forward to seeing our children and our children's children walking in the truth. We know, however, that grace does not run in the blood, and so we are filled with holy fear, lest any of our children have an evil heart of unbelief and depart from the living God (Heb. 3:12).

**(Ps. 132:13) For the LORD has chosen Zion.** Zion was no more than any other Canaanite town until God chose it, David captured it, Solomon built it, and the Lord dwelt in it. The church was a mere Jebusite stronghold until grace chose it, conquered it, rebuilt it, and dwelt in it. Jehovah has chosen His people; thus, they are His people. He has chosen the church, and that is what makes it as it is. In the covenant, David and Zion, and Christ and His people, go together. As David is for Zion and Zion for David, the interests of Christ and His people are also mutual.

**(Ps. 132:14) This is My resting place forever.** Glorious words! It is God who speaks! Think about it—a *rest* for God, a Sabbath for the Eternal, an abiding place for the Infinite. God calls Zion, **My resting place forever.** Oh, that we may enter His rest and be part and parcel of His church! May we by loving faith yield to the mind of Him who "takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy" (Ps. 147:11).

**Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.** This, however, is a type of the spiritual house where Jesus is the foundation and the cornerstone, on which all the living stones are built together (Eph. 2:20) for God's dwelling through the Spirit.

**(Ps. 132:15) I will abundantly bless her provision.** This must be so. How can we be without a blessing when the Lord is with us? We live on His word, His love clothes us, and His power arms us. All sorts of provisions are in Him. How can we be anything but blessed? The provision is to be **abundantly** blessed; thus, it will be abundant and blessed.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What was the promise made to David by the Lord regarding the temple and the establishment of the kingdom?**

2 Sam. 7:1-17

**David could not enjoy sleep until he had to do what?**

Ps. 132:3-5

**What is the bread that the Lord says will satisfy the poor in Psalm 132:15?**

**What encouragement is there for Israel in this Psalm?**

Ps. 132:10-18

### **Psalm 133:1-3**

**A Song of Ascents. Of David.** We see no reason for depriving David of the authorship of this sparkling sonnet. He knew by experience the bitterness caused by family division and was well prepared to celebrate in a choice melody the blessing of unity that he desired. Among the "Songs of Ascents," this hymn has certainly attained a good degree. Even in common literature, it is frequently quoted for its perfume and dew. There is no wry word in this Psalm; all is sweetness and light. It is a notable ascent from Psalm 120, where the pilgrims started. That was full of war and lamentation, but this sings of peace and pleasantness. The visitors to Zion were about to return to their homes, and this may have been their hymn of joy because they had seen the union among the tribes gathered at the common altar. Psalm 132, which sings of the covenant, had also revealed the center of Israel's unity in the Lord's Anointed and the promises made to Him. No wonder the saints dwell in unity when God dwells among them and finds His rest in them. Our translators have given this Psalm an admirable explanatory heading, "The benefit of dwelling in unity." These translators often hit on the meaning of a passage in a few words.

**(Ps. 133:1) Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!** No one can tell the exceeding excellence of this condition, and so the psalmist uses the word **how** twice, **Behold, how good and how pleasant.** He does not attempt to measure the good or the pleasure; rather, he invites us to **behold** it.

**(ps. 133:3) It is like the precious oil upon the head.** In order to better behold brotherly unity, David gives us an example, as if in a mirror we might perceive its blessedness. It has a sweet perfume, comparable to the precious ointment that anointed the first high priest at his ordination. It is holy, like the oil of consecration used only in the Lord's service. What a sacred thing brotherly love must be when it can be compared to an oil that must never be poured on anyone but the Lord's high priest! It is dispersed. Poured on Aaron's head, the fragrant oil then flowed down and dropped on to his garments, until even the hem was anointed. Brotherly love extends its benign power and blesses everyone under its influence. Hearty agreement brings a blessing on all concerned; its goodness and pleasure are shared even by the lowest members of the household. Even the servants are better and happier because of the lovely unity among the family. It has a special use, for the anointing oil set Aaron apart for the special service of Jehovah. Thus, in this way, those who dwell in love are better suited to glorify God in His church. The Lord is not likely to use those who are without love for His glory; they lack the anointing necessary to make them priests unto the Lord.

**(Ps. 133:3) It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion.** Oh, for more of this rare virtue! Not the love that comes and goes but that which dwells. Not the spirit that separates and secludes but that which dwells together in unity. Never will we know the full power of the anointing until we are of one heart and of one spirit. Never will the sacred dew of the Spirit descend in its fullness until we are perfectly joined in the same mind. Never will the covenanted and commanded blessing come from the Lord our God until once again we have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5).

Lord, lead us into this most precious spiritual unity, for Your Son's sake. Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What encourages and what disrupts the unity of believers?**

### **Psalm 134:1-3**

**A Song of Ascents.** We have reached the last of the Gradual Psalms. The pilgrims are going home, singing the last song in their psalter. They leave early in the morning, before the day has begun, because the journey is long. While night lingers, they are on the move. Outside the gates, they see the guards on the temple walls and the lamps shining from the windows of the chambers that surround the sanctuary. Moved by the sight, they chant a farewell to the perpetual attendants at the holy shrine. Their parting exhortation arouses the priests to bless them; this blessing is contained in the third verse. The priests in essence say, "You have wanted us to bless the Lord, and now we pray the Lord to bless you."

This Psalm teaches us to pray for those who are continually ministering before the Lord. It invites all ministers to pronounce blessings on their loving and prayerful people.

**(Ps. 134:1) Behold, bless the LORD.** Think well of Jehovah, speak well of Him, adore Him with reverence, draw near to Him with love, and delight in Him with exultation. Do not be content merely with the praise that all His works give Him.

But, as His saints, see that You **ble**ss *Him*. He blessed you; be zealous to bless Him. The word **ble**ss is the characteristic word of this Psalm. The first two verses stir us to bless Jehovah, and in the last verse, Jehovah's blessing is invoked on the people. Oh, to abound in blessing! May "blessed" and "blessing" be the two words that describe our lives. Let others flatter others, or bless their stars, or praise themselves. As for us, we will bless Jehovah, from whom all blessings flow.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### How do you “ble

### Compare how this last “song of degrees” ends with endings in similar passages of scripture?

Num. 6:22-26 Ps. 128:5

### Psalm 135:1-21

**(Ps. 135:1) Praise the name of the LORD.** Let His character be extolled. Let all that He has revealed concerning Himself be the subject of your song. Let the holy and incommunicable name of Jehovah be the true object of your adoration. By that name, He proclaims His self-existence and His immutability, so let this name arouse your praises of His Godhead. Think of Him with love, admire Him with heartiness, and extol Him with eagerness. Magnify the Lord not only because He is God but also because you have studied His character and His doings and are thus able to give intelligent and appreciative praise.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### Why are we asked here to “praise the Lord” (Ps. 135:3)?

Ps. 135:3, 4, 5, 14

### Is the fact that the Jews are in Israel today compliment Psalm 135:12?

### Psalm 136:1-26

We do not know who wrote this Psalm, but we do know that it was sung in Solomon's temple (2 Chr. 7:3, 6) and by Jehoshaphat's armies when they sang themselves to victory in the Tekoa wilderness (2 Chr. 20:18-23). From its striking form, we believe that it was a popular hymn among the Lord's ancient people. Most hymns with a solid, simple chorus become favorites with congregations, and this is sure to have been one of the most beloved. It contains nothing but praise tuned to a rapture that can only be fully enjoyed by a devoutly grateful heart.

#### **Division**

- The Psalm begins with a threefold praise to the triune Lord, verses 1-3.
- It gives six notes of praise to the Creator, verses 4-9.
- Six more notes of praise are produced on deliverance from Egypt, verses 10-15.
- It yields seven praise notes on the wilderness journey and the entrance into Canaan, verses 16-22.
- Two happy verses of personal gratitude for present mercies are offered, verses 23-24.
- One verse tells of the Lord's universal providence, verse 25.
- A closing verse stimulates never-ending praise, verse 26.

**(Ps. 136:1) For His mercy endures forever.** We will have this chorus repeated in every verse of this song, but not once too often. It is the sweetest stanza that a person can sing. What joy that there is mercy, mercy with Jehovah, enduring mercy, mercy enduring forever! We are ever needing it, trying it, praying for it, and receiving it. Therefore, let us forever sing of it.

**(Ps. 136:16) To Him who led His people through the wilderness.** He led them into it, and, thus, He was pledged to lead them through it. They were **His people**, but they must go into the **wilderness**, and the wilderness must remain barren. Yet, in the end, they would come into the Promised Land. God's dealings are mysterious, but they are right simply because they are His. The people knew nothing of the way. They were **led**. They were an enormous multitude, yet they were all **led**. There were neither roads nor tracks, but, led by unerring wisdom, they never lost their way. He who brought them out of Egypt also led them through the wilderness. By Moses, Aaron, Jethro, and the pillar of cloud, He **led** them. What a multitude of mercies are seen in God's conduct of them through a region where there was no provision even for a single traveler. Yet, the Lord, by His infinite power and wisdom, conducted the entire nation through the desert for forty years. Their garments did not wear out, and their feet did not swell those forty years (Deut. 8:4).

**For His mercy endures forever.** Their conduct in the wilderness severely tested His mercy, which bore the strain. He forgave them many times, although He struck them for transgressions. But He waited to be gracious and readily turned to them in compassion. *Their* faithfulness soon failed, but *His* did not. The fiery, cloudy pillar never ceased to lead and was visible proof of His immutable love.

**Ps. 136:18) And slew famous kings.** What good was their fame? As they opposed God, they became infamous rather than famous. Their deaths made the Lord's fame increase among the nations; their fame ended in disgraceful defeat.

**For His mercy endures forever.** Israelite patriots could never have too much of this music. God had protected their nation, and they chanted His praises with unwearied iteration,

Kings He smote despite their fame,  
For His mercy's still the same.

**(Ps. 136:20) And Og king of Bashan.** He was from the race of giants, but he was routed like a pygmy before giants when he fought the God of Israel (Num. 21:35). The Lord's people were called to fight him, but it was God who won the victory. The armies of Bashan were no defense against Jehovah. Og was soon ousted from his stronghold when the captain of the Lord's army led the war against him. Og exchanged his iron bed for a bed in the dust when he fell on the battlefield.

Glory be to the divine conqueror, **for His mercy endures forever.**

Giant kings before Him yield,  
Mercy ever holds the field.

If Sihon could not turn the Lord away from His purpose, we may be sure that Og could not. He who delivers us out of one trouble will rescue us out of another and fulfill all the good pleasure of His grace in us.

**(Ps. 136:21) And gave their land as a heritage.** As Lord of all the earth, He transferred His estate from one tenant to another. The land did not become the property of the Israelites by their sword, but by a grant from God's throne. This was the great end that had been aimed at from Egypt to the Jordan. He brought His people out and brought them in. He who promised the land to Abraham's descendants saw that the deed of the gift did not remain a dead letter. Both our worldly and spiritual estates come from royal charter. What God gives is ours by the best of titles. Inheritance by God's gift is a tenure that even Satan cannot dispute.

**For His mercy endures forever.** Faithful love endures forever. "You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance" (Ex. 15:17), said the prophet-poet. Here we see the complete deed.

Till they reach the promised land  
Mercy still the same must stand.

**(Ps. 136:23) Who remembered us in our lowly state.** Personal mercies wake the sweetest song, "He remembered us." Our prayer is, "Lord remember me." This is our encouragement: He has remembered us. For the Lord even to think of us is a wealth of mercy. Ours was a sad estate, an estate of bankruptcy and begging. Israel rested in its heritage. But we were still in bondage, groaning in captivity. The Lord seemed to have forgotten us and left us in our sorrow. Yet not for long, for He turned again in compassion, thinking of His afflicted children. Our state was once so low as to be at the mouth of hell. Since then, it has been low in poverty, sorrow, depression, sickness, and sorrow of heart, and, we fear, also sinfully low in faith, love, and every other grace. Yet the Lord had not forgotten us as a dead thing out of mind. He tenderly remembered. We thought ourselves too small and too worthless for His memory to burden itself about us. But He remembered.

**For His mercy endures forever.** Yes, this is one of the best proofs of the immutability of His mercy. If He could have changed toward any, it would certainly have been toward us who have brought ourselves low, kept ourselves low, and prepared ourselves to sink even lower. It is a memorable mercy for Him to remember us in our low condition. Thus, in our highest joys, we will exalt Jehovah's name, because we are sure that He will not desert us.

**(Ps. 136:24) And rescued us from our enemies.** Israel's enemies brought them low, but the Lord intervened. He turned the tables by a great redemption. The expression infers that they had become like slaves and so were not set free without price and power; they needed to be *redeemed*. In our case, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus is an eminent reason for giving thanks to the Lord. Sin is our enemy, and we are redeemed from it by the atoning blood. Satan is our enemy, and we are redeemed from him by the Redeemer's power. The world is our enemy, and we are redeemed from it by the Holy Spirit. We are ransomed. Let us enjoy our liberty. Christ has worked our redemption. Let us praise His name.

**For His mercy endures forever.** Even to redemption by the death of His Son did divine mercy stretch. What more can be desired? What more can be imagined? "Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it" (Song 8:7).

**(Ps. 136:26) Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven!** This tide is full of honor. The Lord is God in the highest realms and among celestial beings. His throne is set in glory, above all, out of reach of foes, in the place of universal oversight. He who feeds ravens and sparrows is the glorious God of the highest realms (Matt. 6:26). Angels count it their glory to proclaim His glory in every heavenly street. Let us see in this the greatness of His nature, the depths of His condescension, and the range of His love.

Note the only reason for His bounty: **His mercy endures forever.** He has done all things from this motive. And because His mercy never ceases, He will continue to multiply deeds of love world without end. Let us with all our powers of heart and tongue give thanks to Jehovah's holy name forever and ever.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### Is this Psalm only speaking on God's past acts of mercy?

#### Psalm 137:1-9

The poetic power of this plaintive ode makes it one of the most charming compositions in the Book of Psalms. If it were not inspired, it would occupy a high place in poetry, especially the early verses, which are tender and patriotic to the highest degree. In the latter verses (7-9), we have a burning indignation against Israel's chief adversaries, indignation as righteous as it is fervent. Let those find fault who have never seen their temple burned, their city ruined, their wives ravished, and their children slain. They might not be so velvet-mouthed if they had suffered. It is one thing to talk of the bitter feelings that moved the captive Israelites in Babylon and quite another thing to be captive under a savage and remorseless power, which does not know how to show mercy but delights to inflict barbarities on the defenseless captives. The song, which is a fruit of the captivity in Babylon, might be fitly sung in the Jew's wailing place; it has often furnished expression for unutterable sorrow. It is a shining Psalm, within whose mild radiance glows a fire that strikes the beholder with wonder.

**(Ps. 137:1) By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down.** Water was abundant in Babylon, both natural streams and artificial canals, for it was a place of broad rivers and streams. Pleased to be away from the noisy streets, the captives sought the riverside, where the flow of water seemed to be in sympathy with their tears. It was some comfort to be out of the crowd, to have a little breathing room, and to sit, rest, and find solace in sorrow. In little groups, they sat and made common lamentation, mingling memories and tears. The rivers were fine, but they were Babylon's rivers, and the ground was foreign soil. They wept. Those who interrupted their quiet were citizens of the destroying city, and such company was not wanted. Everything reminded Israel of her banishment from the holy city, her slavery in the shadow of the temple of Bel, and her helplessness under a cruel enemy. Her sons and daughters sat in sorrow.

**Yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.** Nothing else could have subdued their brave spirits except the memory of the temple of their God, the palace of their king, and the center of their national life. These memories broke them down. Destruction had swept away their delights. They wept. The strong wept, and the sweet singers wept! They did not weep because of the cruelties of Babylon, for the memory of fierce oppression dried their tears and made their hearts burn with wrath. It was when the beloved city came to mind that they could not stop the floods of tears. True believers mourn when they see the church deprived and they are unable to comfort her. We could bear anything better than this. In this day, the Babylon of error ravages the city of God, and the hearts of the faithful are grievously wounded as they see truth fallen and unbelief rampant among the professed servants of the Lord. We protest. But it appears to be in vain. The multitude are mad after their idols. So we weep in secret for the hurt of our Zion. It is the least we can do, and perhaps it may prove to be the best thing we can do. It is our duty to sit and deeply consider what is to be done. It is our responsibility to keep on our minds and hearts the memory of the church of God, which is so precious to us. The frivolous may forget, but Zion is engraved on our hearts, and her prosperity is our chief desire.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### What was the mood of the Israelites at this time?

### Is Psalm 137:7 a similar saying of Israel's neighbors today?

#### Psalm 138:1-8

**A Psalm of David.** This Psalm is wisely placed. Whoever edited and arranged these sacred poems had an eye to position and contrast. If in Psalm 137 we see the need of silence before revilers, here we see the excellence of a brave confession. There is a time to be silent, lest we cast pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6), and there is a time to speak openly, lest we are guilty of cowardly withholding our confession. This Psalm is Davidic, exhibiting all the loyalty, courage, and decision of that king of Israel and prince of psalmists.

**(Ps. 138:1) I will praise You with my whole heart.** His mind is so taken with God that he does not mention His name, for to David there is no other God, and Jehovah is so perfectly realized and so intimately known to him that, in addressing God, the psalmist no more thinks of using His name than we would when speaking to a father or a friend. He sees God with his mind's eye and simply addresses Him with the pronoun **You**. He is resolved to **praise** the Lord with the full force of his life, with his **whole heart**. He would not act restrained because of others. In the presence of the living God, David would be hearty in worship, as if everyone was cheerfully united with him. If others do not praise the Lord, this is all the more reason why we should do so with enthusiastic eagerness. We need a broken heart to mourn our sins, but a whole heart to praise the Lord's perfections. If ever our heart is whole, and wholly occupied with one thing, it should be when we are praising the Lord.

**Before the gods I will sing praises to You.** Why should these idols rob Jehovah of His **praises**? The psalmist will not for a moment suspend his songs because images and their foolish worshipers might not approve of his music. I believe David was referring to the false gods of the neighboring nations and the deities of the surviving Canaanites. He was not pleased that these gods had been set up, but he intended to express his contempt of them, and his absorption in the worship of the living Jehovah, by continuing to sing earnestly wherever he might be.

**(Ps. 138:2) I will worship toward Your holy temple,** the place of God's dwelling, where the ark abode. He would worship God in God's way. The Lord ordained a center of unity, a place of sacrifice, a house of His indwelling, and David accepted the way of worship. The Jew looked to the temple; we are to look to Jesus, the living temple.

**For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.** The word of promise made to David was, in his eyes, more glorious than everything else he had seen of the Most High. Revelation excels creation in the clearness, definiteness, and fullness of its teaching. The name of the Lord in nature is not so easily read as it is in the Scriptures, which are a revelation in human language, adapted to the human mind, explaining human need, and revealing a Savior who appeared in human nature to redeem humanity. "Heaven and earth will pass away," but the divine word "will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:33), and in this respect, it has a preeminence over every other form of manifestation. Moreover, the Lord lays all the rest of His name under tribute to His word. His wisdom, power, love, and all His other attributes combine to carry out His word. As a word of command, it is supreme, and in the person of the Incarnate Word, it is set above all the works of God's hands. The sentence in the text is wonderfully full of meaning. We have collected a vast mass of literature on it, but space will not allow us to put it all in our notes. Let us adore the Lord, who has spoken to us by His word and by His Son, and in the presence of unbelievers, let us praise His holy name and extol His holy word.

**(Ps. 138:3) You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul.** "When God gives spiritual strength in our souls, that is one gracious way of answering our prayers. If He does not give the things we desire, He graciously answers our prayers by giving strength in our souls. What is this spiritual strength? I answer that it is the work of the Spirit of God, enabling us to do and to suffer what God would have us to do, without fainting or backsliding." (*James Nation, 1664*)

**(Ps. 138:6) But the proud He knows from afar.** He does not need to come near to discover their vanity; a distant glance reveals their emptiness and offensiveness. He has no fellowship with them but views them from a distance. He is not deceived. He knows the truth about them, despite their blustering. He has no respect for them; He abhors them. To a Cain's sacrifice, a Pharaoh's promise, a Rabshakeh's threat, and a Pharisee's prayer, the Lord has no respect. Nebuchadnezzar, when far from God, cried, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built" (Dan. 4:30). But the Lord sent him grazing with the cattle (Dan. 4:32). The proud boast loudly of their culture and of freedom of thought, and they even dare to criticize their Maker. But He knows them from afar and will keep them at arm's length in this life, and shut them up in hell in the next.

**(Ps. 138:8) The LORD will perfect that which concerns me. Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever.** The refrain of a former Psalm is in his ears; he repeats it as his personal conviction and consolation. The first clause of this verse is the assurance of faith, and the second clause reaches the full assurance of understanding. God's work in us will abide unto perfection because God's mercy toward us abides.

**Do not forsake the works of Your hands.** If the Lord begins to build and does not finish, it will not be to His honor. He will have a desire to complete the work of His hands, for He knows what it has cost already, and He will not throw away a vessel on which He has expended so much labor and skill. Thus, we praise Him with our whole heart, even in the presence of those who depart from His holy word and set up another god and another gospel.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What should be our attitude toward adversity?**

Ps. 138:3

**What is God's promise for the lowly? For the proud?**

Ps. 18:27 Ps. 138:6 Prov. 3:34 Jam. 4:6 1 Pet. 5:5

**How would you interpret the words of Psalm 138:8a: "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me"?**

Ps. 57:2 Isa. 26:12 Phil. 1:6

## Psalm 139:1-24

This Psalm is one of the most notable of the sacred hymns. It sings of God's omniscience and omnipresence, inferring from these the overthrow of the powers of wickedness, since He who sees and hears the abominable deeds and words of rebels will certainly deal with them according to His justice. The brightness of this Psalm is like a sapphire or Ezekiel's "awesome crystal" (Ezek. 1:22). It throws out flaming flashes of light, so as to turn night into day and to throw a clear light even to the ends of the sea. It warns against practical atheism, which ignores God's presence and makes shipwreck of the soul.

**(Ps. 139:1) O LORD, You have searched me and known me.** David invokes Jehovah, the all-knowing God, and goes on to adore Him by proclaiming one of His special attributes. If we are to praise God properly, we must draw the matter of our praise from Him, "O Jehovah, **You have.**" No pretended god knows about us. The true God, Jehovah, knows and understands us. He is intimately acquainted with our person, nature, and character. How good it is for us to know the God who knows us! Divine knowledge is extremely thorough and searching.

**(Ps. 139:2) You know my sitting down and my rising up.** Me **You know**, and all that comes of me. I am observed when I quietly sit and marked when I resolutely rise. My most common and casual acts and my most needful and necessary movements are noted by You. **You know** the thoughts that regulate them. Whether I sink in lowly self-renunciation or ascend in pride, You see the motions of my mind as well as those of my body. This is a fact to be remembered every moment: when sitting to consider or rising to act, we are seen, known, and read by Jehovah our Lord.

**(Ps. 139:3) And are acquainted with all my ways.** You are familiar with all I do. Nothing is concealed from You, or surprising to You, or misunderstood by You. Our paths may be habitual, accidental, open, or secret, but with them all, the Most Holy One is well acquainted. This should fill us with awe, so that we do not sin, and with courage, so that we do not fear, and with delight, so that we do not mourn.

**(Ps. 139:7) Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?** We must be, whether we will it or not, as near to God as our soul is to our body.

**(Ps. 139:11) If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me."** Dense **darkness** may oppress me, but it cannot shut me out of You or You out of me. You see as well without light as with it. You are not dependent on light that You created for the full exercise of Your perceptions. You are present with me whatever the hour. And being present, You discover all that I think, feel, or do.

**(Ps. 139:14) For I am fearfully and wonderfully made.** Who can gaze on a model of our anatomy without wonder and awe? Who could dissect a portion of the human frame without marveling at its delicacy and trembling at its frailty? The psalmist had scarcely peered within the veil that hides the nerves, sinews, and blood vessels from common inspection. The science of anatomy was unknown to him, but he had seen enough to arouse his admiration of the work and his reverence for the Worker.

**And that my soul knows very well.** David was no agnostic; he *knew*. He was no doubter; his soul *knew*. He was no dupe; his soul *knew very well*. They know a truth who first know the Lord and then know all things in Him. David was made to know the marvelous nature of God's work with assurance and accuracy. He found from experience that the Lord is a master worker, performing inimitable wonders when accomplishing His kind designs. If we are marvelous works before we are born, what shall we say of the Lord's dealings with us after we leave His secret workshop, and He directs our pathway through the pilgrimage of life? What shall we say of that new birth, which is more mysterious than the first and exhibits even more the love and wisdom of the Lord?

**(Ps. 139:15) My frame was not hidden from You. When I was made in secret. And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.** "Embroidered with great skill," is an accurate poetical description of the creation of veins, sinews, muscles, and nerves. What tapestry can equal the human fabric? This is worked as much in private as if it had been accomplished in the grave, or in the darkness of the abyss. These expressions are poetical, beautifully veiling, and yet they do not conceal the real meaning. God's intimate knowledge of us from the beginning, and even before, is charmingly set forth. Cannot He, who made us so wondrously when we were not, still carry on His work of power until He has perfected us? And can He not do this even though we are unable to aid in the process and are lying in great sorrow and self-loathing, as though cast into the lowest parts of the earth?

**(Ps. 139:17) How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! How great is the sum of them!** Such **thoughts** are natural to the Creator, the Preserver, the Redeemer, the Father, and the Friend, and they flow evermore from the Lord's heart. Thoughts of pardon, renewal, upholding, supplying, educating, perfecting, and of a thousand more kinds perpetually well up in the mind of the Most High. It should fill us with adoring wonder and reverent surprise that God's infinite mind should turn so many thoughts toward us, who are so insignificant and so unworthy!

What a contrast to the notion of those who deny the existence of a personal, conscious God! Try conceiving a grim providence of machinery, or a fatherhood of law, such philosophy is hard and cold. A person might as well try resting his head on a pillow of sharp rocks as to seek rest in such thoughts. God is always thinking of us, and this makes a happy world, a rich life, and a heavenly hereafter.

**(Ps. 139:21) Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You?** David was a good hater; he hated only those who hated good. He was not ashamed of this hatred but considered it a virtue, to which he would have the Lord bear testimony. To love everyone with benevolence is our duty, but to love the wicked with complacency would be a crime. To hate someone for his sake, or for any evil done to us, would be wrong, but to **hate** someone because they are the foe of goodness and the enemy of all righteousness is nothing more nor less than an obligation. The more we love God, the more indignant we will grow with those who refuse Him their affection. "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed" (1 Cor. 16:22). Jealousy is as cruel as the grave (Song 8:6). The loyal subject must not be friendly to the traitor.

**And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?** David appeals to heaven, saying that he took no pleasure in those who rebelled against the Lord. Quite the contrary, he mourned at the sight of their bad behavior. Since God is everywhere, He knows our feelings toward the profane and ungodly. He knows that, far from approving such characters, the sight of them is grievous to our eyes.

**(Ps. 139:22) I hate them with perfect hatred.** David does not leave it open to question. He does not take a neutral position. His hatred to bad, vicious, blasphemous people is intense, complete, and energetic. He is as wholehearted in his **hate** of wickedness as he is in his love of goodness.

**I count them my enemies.** He makes it personal. They may not have done him harm, but if they despise God, His laws, and the great principles of truth and righteousness, then David proclaims war against them. Wickedness gives favor to the unrighteous, but it excludes them from fellowship with the just. We pull up the drawbridge and man the walls when a person of Belial (2 Cor. 6:15) goes by our castle. We can do nothing but contend with those who contend with God.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What knowledge does the Psalmist declare to be "too wonderful" (Ps. 139:6) for him?**

**What does the Psalmist say about the beginnings of our human life?**

**How can you hate someone with perfect hatred (Ps. 139:22)?**

**How deep does Psalm 139:23-24 go?**

Heb. 4:2      1 Pet. 1:6-7

### **Psalm 140:1-13**

This Psalm is "The Cry of A Hunted Soul." It is the supplication of a believer incessantly persecuted and hunted by skillful enemies who hunger for his destruction. David was hunted like a partridge on the mountains; he seldom obtained a moment's rest. This is his forlorn appeal to Jehovah for protection, an appeal that gradually intensifies into a denunciation of his bitter foes. With this sacrifice of prayer, he offers the salt of faith. In a marked and emphatic manner, he expresses his personal confidence in the Lord, as the protector of the oppressed and as his God and Defender. Few short Psalms are so rich in the jewelry of precious faith.

**(Ps. 140:1) Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men. Preserve me from violent men.** Evil in the heart simmers in malice and boils in passion. Evil is a raging thing when it gets liberty to manifest itself. Evil men soon develop into **violent men**. What watchfulness, strength, or valor can preserve the child of God from deceit and violence? There is but one sure Preserver, and it is our wisdom to hide under the refuge of His wings (Ps. 91:4). It is a common thing for good people to be assailed by enemies. David was attacked by Saul (1 Sam. 19:1), Doeg (1 Sam. 22:22), Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:31), Shimei (2 Sam. 16:5,6), and others. Even Mordecai, sitting humbly by the gate, had his Haman (Esth. 5:9). Our Lord, the Perfect One, was surrounded by those who thirsted for His blood (Matt. 26:3, 4). We may not hope to pass through the world without enemies, but we may hope to be delivered out of their hands and preserved from their rage, so that no real harm will come from their malignity. This blessing is sought by prayer and expected by faith.

**(Ps. 140:2) Who plan evil things in their hearts.** They cannot be happy unless they are plotting and planning, conspiring and contriving. They seem to have but one heart; they are completely agreed in malice and with heart and soul pursue their victims. One piece of mischief is not enough. They work in the plural and prepare many arrows for their bows. What they cannot actually do, they like to think over and rehearse on the stage of their cruel imaginations. It is an awful thing to have this kind of heart disease. When the imagination gloats over doing harm, it is a sure sign that the entire nature is far gone in wickedness.

**(Ps. 140:3) Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked.** It would be a calamity to fall into **the hands of the wicked**. David, in his most pitiable plight, chose the hand of a chastising God rather than to be left in the power of man. No creature among the wild beasts is so terrible an enemy to man as man when guided by evil and impelled by violence. The Lord, however, by providence and grace, can keep us out of the power of the wicked. He alone can do this. Neither our own watchfulness nor the faithfulness of friends can protect from the serpentine assaults of foes. We need to be preserved from the smooth as well as from the rough hands of the ungodly, for their flattery may harm as much as their

slander. The hands of their example may pollute and do more harm than the hands of their oppression. Jehovah must be our keeper, or evil hands will do what evil hearts have imagined and evil lips have threatened.

**(Ps. 140:13) Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name.** The previous Psalm had its "surely," but this one is more pleasing. As **surely** as God will slay the wicked, He will save the oppressed and fill their hearts and mouths with praise. Whoever else may be silent, the righteous will give thanks. Whatever they may suffer, it will end in their living through the trial and magnifying the Lord for His delivering grace. On earth, before long, and in heaven, forever, the pure in heart will sing to the Lord. Loud and sweet will be the songs of the redeemed in the millennial, when the meek inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What is the violent man's purpose?**

Ps. 140:4

**Does Psalm 140:7 reveal why David is confident when dealing with the wicked?**

Gen. 15:1

**What prayer does David have for the evil and violent man?**

Ps. 140:8-11

### **Psalm 141:1-10**

**A Psalm of David.** Here is: David under suspicion, half afraid to talk, lest he should speak unadvisedly while trying to clear himself. David slandered, beset by enemies, and censured even by saints, and taking it well. David deploring the condition of the godly party of whom he was the acknowledged head. David waiting on God with confident expectation.

**(Ps. 141:4) Do not incline my heart to any evil thing.** This is the equivalent of the petition, "Do not lead us into temptation" (Matt. 6:13). May nothing arise in providence that would send our desires in wrong directions. The psalmist is careful of his heart, for whoever holds the heart is the lord of the person. If the tongue and heart are under God's care, all is safe. Let us pray that He may never leave us to our own inclinations, or we will soon decline from the right.

**(Ps. 141:7)** David's case seemed hopeless. God's cause in Israel was dead; it was like a skeleton, broken, rotten, and shoveled out of the grave to return as dust to dust. **Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave.** There seemed to be no life, cohesion, form, order, or headship among the godly in Israel; Saul had demolished it and scattered its parts, so that it did not exist as an organized whole. David was like one of these dried bones, and the rest of the godly were in much the same condition. There seemed to be no vitality or union among the holy descendants. Their cause lay at death's door.

**As when one plows and breaks up the earth.** They were like plowed earth, divided and torn apart. Good people have often thought this about God's cause. Wherever they looked, death, division, and destruction have stared them in the face. They were cut, split, hopelessly torn, and scattered at the mouth of the grave. This is what the cause of God and truth seemed to be to them on **the earth**. The prospect was wretched; the church's field was plowed, harrowed, and torn. It had become a wood chopper's yard, where everything was doomed to be broken up. We have seen churches in this condition, and have been heartbroken. What a mercy, that there is always a place above where we can look! There lives One who will resurrect His cause and reunite His divided people. He will bring up the dead bones from the mouth of the grave.

**(Ps. 141:8) But my eyes are upon You, O God the Lord.** David looked up and kept his eyes fixed on God. He regarded duty more than circumstances, considered the promise rather than the external providence, and expected help from God, not man. David did not shut his eyes in indifference or despair, nor did he turn to the creature in vain confidence. He gave his eye to God and saw nothing to fear. Jehovah his Lord is also his hope. Thomas called Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28), and here David speaks of His God and Lord. Saints delight to dwell on the divine names whether they are adoring or appealing.

**In You I take refuge,** not in Your attributes or promises only, but **in You**. Others might trust where they choose, but David kept to God. In Him only, he confidently and without reservation trusted.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**How does David receive the reproof of the righteous?**

Ps. 141:5

**How can we imitate the Psalmist after feeling as hopeless as he did in Psalm 141:7?**

Ps. 141:8 Heb. 13:5

## Psalm 142:1-6

**A contemplation of David.** This contemplation is written for our instruction. It principally teaches how to pray in times of distress. This instruction is necessary, practical, and effective for our spiritual education. Those who have learned how to pray have been taught the most useful of the arts and sciences. The disciples asked the Son of David, "Lord teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). Here David gives a valuable lesson by recording his prayer experience while he was under a cloud. **A prayer when he was in the cave.** David was in one of his many hiding places, either Engedi, Adullam, or some other cavern where he was concealed from Saul and his bloodhounds. Caves make good prayer closets; gloom and solitude are helpful in the exercise of devotion. Had David prayed as much in his palace, as he did in his cave, he might never have fallen into the act that brought such misery in his later days.

**(Ps. 142:2) I pour out my complaint before Him.** Inner meditation filled his soul. The bitter water rose to the brim. What was to be done? He must pour out the wormwood and the gall; he could not keep it in. David lets it run so that his heart may be emptied of the fermenting mixture. He took care where he poured his complaint, lest he should do mischief or receive an ill return. If he poured it before man, he might receive contempt from the proud, or hard-heartedness from the careless, or pretended sympathy from the false. He resolved on an outpouring before God, since He would pity and relieve him. The word is scarcely **complaint**, but even if it is, we may learn from this text that our **complaint** must never be of a kind that we dare not bring before God. We may complain to God, but not of God. When we complain, it should not be before men, but before God alone.

**(Ps. 142:3) When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path.** The bravest spirit is sometimes hard put. A heavy fog settles on the mind. The person seems drowned and smothered in it; covered with a cloud, crushed with a load, confused with difficulties, and conquered by impossibilities. David was a hero, but still his spirits sank. He could knock a giant down, but he could not keep himself up. He did not know his own path or feel able to carry his own burden. Notice his comfort. He looked away from his condition to the ever observant, all knowing God. He found solace in the feet that all was known to his heavenly Friend. It is good to know that God knows what we do not know. We lost our head, but God never closes His eyes. Our judgments lose their balance, but the eternal mind is always clear.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

David said in Psalm 142:4: "For there is no one who acknowledges me; refuge has failed me; no one cares for my soul."  
**What gave David comfort during his deep depression of spirit (Ps. 142:3)?**

Deut. 2:7 Ps. 1:6 Ps. 31:7

**Show from David's words where he put his confidence in.**

Ps. 142:5, 7

## Psalm 143:1-12

**Ps. 143:2) Do not enter into judgment with Your servant.** David pleaded for an audience at the mercy seat, but he had no wish to appear before the judgment seat. Though clear before people, he could not claim innocence before God. Even though he was the Lord's servant, he did not claim perfection or plead merit, for, even as a servant, he was unprofitable. If this is the humble cry of a servant, what should the plea of a sinner be?

**For in Your sight no one living is righteous.** No one can stand before God on the basis of the Law. God's sight is piercing and discriminating; the slightest flaw is seen and judged. Pretense and profession cannot avail where that glance reads all the soul's secrets. In this verse, David gives the doctrine of universal condemnation by the Law long before Paul wrote the same truth. And to this day, it stands as true as in David's day. On the footing of the Law, no one living at this moment may dare present themselves for trial before the throne of the Great King. This foolish age, however, has produced specimens of a pride so rank that some have dared to claim perfection in the flesh. These vainglorious boasters are no exception to this rule, for they are only human—and poor specimens at that. When their lives are examined, they are frequently found to be more faulty than the humble penitents before whom they vaunt their superiority.

**(Ps. 143:3-4) For the enemy has persecuted my soul. He has crushed my life to the ground. He has made me dwell in darkness, like those who have long been dead. Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is distressed.** David was not a stoic; he felt his banishment. He hurt from the cruel assaults made on his character. He felt perplexed, overturned, lonely, and afflicted. David was a man of thought and feeling who suffered in spirit and heart from undeserved and unprovoked hostility. He labored under a sense of fearful loneliness; for a while, he was forsaken by God, and his soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. These are words our Lord Jesus might have used. (Matt. 26:38) In this, the Head is like the members, and the members are like the Head.

**(Ps. 143:12) In Your mercy cut off my enemies, and destroy all those who afflict my soul.** David believes that this will happen and thus prophesies the event. The words may be read as a declaration, and it is better to understand them in this connotation. We could not make this prayer with our Christian light, but under Old Testament arrangements, the spirit of it was congruous to the Law. It is a petition that justice sanctions, but the spirit of love is not at home in presenting it. We, as Christians, turn the petition to spiritual use only. David, however, was of so generous a mind, and dealt so tenderly with Saul, that he could hardly have meant all that his words are made to say in our version.

**For I am Your servant.** I hope that my Master will protect me in His service and grant me victory while I fight His battles. It is a warrior's prayer, which smells of the dust and smoke of battle. It was heard, so it was properly asked. Still, there is a more excellent way.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Is David saying in Psalm 143:2 that he is unable to answer the charges God could bring against him?**

**Should this be something we should be concerned with since it says in Romans 3:20: "For in thy sight shall no man living be justified"?**

John 13:10

**Express Job's feeling on this matter.**

Job 9:2-3    Job 14:3-4    Job 15:14    Job 25:4

**Is David asking God to come to his side against the godless in spite of his many shortcomings?**

Ps. 7:4-5    Ps. 143:7-12

### **Psalm 144:1-15**

**(Ps. 144:1) Blessed be the LORD my Rock.** David cannot delay his gratitude. He immediately bursts into loud notes of praise. His best word is given to his best friend, **Blessed be the LORD my Rock.** When the heart is right, it must praise God, for it cannot be restrained.

**Who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle.** The psalmist, in the second part of the verse, declares that God is the teacher in the arts of war. If we have strength, we still need skill.

All wisdom and skill are from the Lord, and He deserves to be gratefully extolled for it.

David was called to be a warrior, and he was eminently successful. He does not trace this success to good generalship or valor, but to being taught and strengthened for the fight by God. If the Lord plans to have a hand in such unspiritual work as fighting, surely He will also help us proclaim the gospel and win souls.

**(Ps. 144:3) LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him?** What a contrast between Jehovah and man! The psalmist turns from glorious all-sufficiency of the **LORD** to the insignificance and nothingness of **man**. He sees Jehovah as everything. Then he cries, **LORD, what is man?** What is man in the presence of the infinite God? What can man be compared to? Man is too little to be described. Only God, who knows the most minute object, can tell what man is. Certainly man is not the rock of our confidence, for he is too fickle and feeble to be relied on. The psalmist's wonder is that God should stoop to know him. This is more remarkable than if the greatest archangel should study ants or become a friend of mites. God knows His people with a tender intimacy, a constant and careful observation: He foreknew them in love, He knows them by care, and He will know them in acceptance at last. Why? What has man done? What has he been? What is he, that God should know him and make Himself known as man's goodness, fortress, and high tower? This is an unanswerable question. Infinite condescension alone accounts for the Lord stooping to be man's Friend. That He should make man the subject of election, the object of redemption, the child of eternal love, the darling of infallible providence, and the next of kin to Deity is a matter requiring more than the two question marks found in this verse.

**Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him?** The phrase **son of man** in the original implies a weaker being than "man." That is, he is not so much man as God made him but man as his mother bore him, and how can the *Lord* think of him and credit his account? Yet, the Lord thinks much of man, and, in connection with redeeming love, He makes a great figure of him. This can be believed, but it cannot be explained. Adoring wonder makes us cry, "Why do You take knowledge of me?" We know from experience how little man can be counted on. We know by observation how greatly he can vaunt himself. Thus, it is proper for us to be humble and to distrust ourselves. This should make us more grateful to the Lord, who knows man better than we do, yet fellowships with him and dwells in him. Every trace of the man-hater should be hateful to the believer. If God is mindful of man, it is not for us to despise our own kind.

**(Ps. 144:4) Man is like a breath.** Adam is like Abel; he is like nothing at all. He is actually a breath. He resembles that unsubstantial, empty thing, which is nothing but a blown up nothing: a puff, a bubble. Yet, he is not **a breath**, but only **like** it. Lord, what is man? It is wonderful that God should think of such a pretentious insignificance.

**His days are like a passing shadow.** Man is so short-lived that he scarcely attains to years but exists by the day, like something ephemeral, whose birth and death are seen by the same sun. His life is like a passing shadow, like a

vague resemblance, like an absence of something rather than an existence of something. Human life is less than a shadow; it is **like** a passing shadow, like a mirage, like the image of a thing which is not, like an imagination that melts into nothing. Why does the Eternal make so much of mortals, who begin to die as soon as they begin to live?

The connection of these two verses with the rest of the Psalm is not far to seek: David trusts in God and finds Him to be everything; he looks to man and sees him to be nothing. David then wonders how the great Lord can condescend to notice a piece of folly and deceit like man.

**(Ps. 144:12-15)** David wants to be separated from the wicked while seeking the Lord's gracious presence with a special eye to the peace and prosperity that will follow.

**(Ps. 144:12)** God's blessing works wonders for a people. **That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth.** David wants them strong, like well rooted young trees that promise great things. If they do not grow in their youth, when will they grow? If they are dwarfed in early manhood, they will never get over it. Oh, the joys that we have through our sons! And, on the other hand, what misery they can cause! Plants do grow crooked or disappoint the planter in some other way, and so may our sons. Yet, when we see them develop in holiness, what joy we have.

**That our daughters may be as pillars, sculptured in palace style.** We want a blessing for the entire family, and to leave the girls out would be sad. Daughters unite families as cornerstones join walls; at the same time, they are the polished stones of the structure.

**(Ps. 144:14)** **That our oxen may be well laden** to perform plowing, hauling, and to accomplish the farmer's work without unduly taxing the animals or working them cruelly.

**That there be no breaking in or going out,** no marauders, no forced emigration, no burglaries, no evictions.

**That there be no outcry in our streets,** no secret dissatisfaction, no public riots, no poverty, and no clamor for rights denied. The state of things pictured here is delightful; all is peace and prosperity. The throne is efficiently occupied, and even the animals in their stalls are the better for it. This has been the condition in our country, and if it should change, who can wonder? Our ingratitude well deserves to be deprived of blessings that it has despised.

These verses may, with a little accommodation, be applied to a prosperous church, where the converts are growing, where the gospel stores are abundant, and where the spiritual increase is cheering. There, ministers and workers are in full vigor and the people are happy and united. Lord, make it so in all our churches.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**How do apply Psalm 144:1 to our lives today?**

**What is David saying to God in Psalm 144:3 when he says, "LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him?"**

**Who are the "happy people" of Psalm 144:15?**

Deut. 33:29 Heb. 11:10, 14-16

### **Psalm 145:1-21**

**A Praise of David.** It is David's Psalm of Praise, David's very own, David's favorite. It is "David's Praise" just as Psalm 86 is "David's Prayer." It is all praise, and praise pitched in a high key. David had blessed God many times in other Psalms, but this is his crown jewel of praise. Certainly, David's praise is the best of praise, for it is from a man of experience, sincerity, calm deliberation, and intense warmth. It is not for us to offer David's praise, for only David could do that. But we may take David's Psalm as a model and make our personal adoration as much like it as possible. It will be a long time before we equal it. Let every Christian reader offer praise to the Lord. What a wealth of varied praise will be presented through Christ Jesus!

**(Ps. 145:1)** **I will extol You, my God, O King. And I will bless Your name forever and ever.** David determined that his praise should rise to blessing, that it should intelligently bless the name, or character, of God, and that it should be continued world without end. He uses the word **bless** not merely for variation of sound but also for deepening and sweetening the sense. To bless God is to praise Him with personal affection. This is an easy exercise as we advance in experience and grow in grace. David declares that he will offer every form of praise, through every form that exists. His notion of duration is full; **forever** has no end. But when he adds another **ever**, he forbids all idea of a close. Our praise of God will be as eternal as the God we praise.

**(Ps. 145:2)** **Every day I will bless You.** Whatever my daily circumstances and conditions, I will bless You. There are abundant reasons everyday to offer special blessings to the Lord. All blessings before the day, all blessings in the day, all blessings following the day should cause us to magnify God every day, year round. Our love to God is not a matter, for holy days. Everyday is holy to holy people. David comes closer to God, here, than he did when he said, "I will bless Your name" (v. 1). It is now, **I will bless You.** This is the center and kernel of true devotion. We admire not only the Lord's words and works, but also the Lord Himself. Without realizing God's personality, praise is impossible. You cannot extol an abstraction.

**And I will praise Your name forever and ever.** He said that he would "bless" (v. 1) that name; now he vows to **praise** it. He will extol the Lord in every sense and way. Eternal worship will have variations, but it will never be monotonous. Heavenly music is not harping on one string, but all strings tuned to one praise. Observe the personal pronouns in these first two verses. Four times he says, **I will**. Praise is not discharged by proxy. You, yourself, must be in it, or it is nothing.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**What effect does it have on you when you meditate (Ps. 145:5) on the glorious splendor of God's majesty and wonderful works?**

It says in Psalm 145:18; "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth." **How important is it to have the truth when calling upon Him?**

Jam. 4:8

**What is "truth"?**

John 4:24    John 8:31-32    John 14:6    John 16:13-15

### **Psalm 146:1-10**

We are now among the Hallelujahs. The rest of our journey lies through the Delectable Mountains. All is praise to the end of the book. The key is high-pitched; the music is on the high-sounding cymbals. Oh, for a heart full of joyful gratitude, that we may run, leap, and glorify God as these Psalms do!

**(Ps. 146:1) Praise the LORD, O my soul!** He practiced what he preached. He led the choir that he had summoned. It is poor business if we exhort others and do not stir our own soul. It is evil to say, "You praise the Lord," and never add, **Praise the LORD, O my soul!** When we praise God, let us arouse our innermost selves, our central life. We have one soul, and if it is saved from eternal wrath, it is bound to praise its Savior. Come heart, mind, and thought! Come my whole being, my soul and my all, flame with joyful adoration! Sing, saints! Lift the song! **Praise the LORD.** How dare I call on others, if I am neglectful. If ever a man was under bonds to bless the Lord, I am that man. Let me put my soul in the center of the choir, and let my better nature stimulate me to the utmost height of loving praise. Oh, for a well tuned harp! No, for a sanctified heart! Then, if my voice is poor and lacking in melody, my soul without my voice will accomplish my resolve to magnify the Lord.

**(Ps. 146:2) While I live I will praise the LORD.** I will not live here forever. This mortal life will end in death. While it lasts, however, I will praise the LORD my God. I cannot tell how long or short my life will be, but every hour will be given to praising my God. While I live I'll love; while I breathe I'll bless. It is only for a while, and I will not waste that time in idleness. I will consecrate it to the same service that will occupy eternity. Our life is the gift of God's mercy, and so it should be used for His glory.

**I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.** When I am no longer a being on earth, I hope to have a higher being in heaven. There, I will not only praise but also sing praises. Here I have to sigh and praise; there, I will only sing and praise. **While I have my being** will be a great while, but all of it will be filled with adoration. The glorious Jehovah is my God, my God by covenant and by blood relationship in Christ Jesus. I have no being apart from **my God**, and therefore I will not attempt to enjoy my being other than by singing to God's honor.

**(Ps. 146:5) Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help.** Heaped up is his happiness. He has happiness indeed; true and real delight is with him. The **God of Jacob** is the God of the covenant (Gen. 15:18), the God of wrestling prayer (Gen. 32:24), the God of the tested believer. He is the only living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9). The God of Jacob is Jehovah, who appeared to Moses (Ex. 3:5) and who led the tribes of Jacob out of Egypt and through the wilderness (Ex. 13:18). Those who trust in Him are happy; they will never be ashamed or confounded. The Lord never dies; nor do His thoughts perish. His purpose of mercy endures to all generations. Hallelujah!

**(Ps. 146:6) Who keeps truth forever.** This is a second and most forcible justification of our trust. The Lord will never permit His promise to fail. He is true to His nature, true to the relationships that He has assumed, true to His covenant, true to His word, and true to His Son. He keeps true, and He is the keeper of all that is true. Immutable fidelity is the character of Jehovah's procedure. None can charge Him with falsehood or vacillation.

**(Ps. 146:10) The LORD shall reign forever. Your God, O Zion, to all generations.** Zion's God, the God of His worshiping people, will reign in every age. There will always be a Zion, and she will always have Jehovah for her King. He will always prove Himself by reigning in great power. What should we do in the presence of so great a King? Let us enter His courts with praise and pay Him joyful homage.

**Praise the LORD!** Again they said, "Hallelujah!" Again the sweet perfume rose from the golden vials of sweet fragrances. Are we not prepared for an outburst of holy song? Here ends this cheerful Psalm, but the praise of the Lord does not end. It ascends forever and ever. Amen.

## How much help is there when you trust in “princes” (Ps. 146:3)

Ps. 146:3

## Going back to the word “truth” again, how can you get “truth”?

Deut. 28:29 Job 12:25 Ps. 146:8 2 Thess. 2:9-12 3 John 3-4

### Psalm 147:1-20

This is a remarkable song. In it, the Lord's greatness and condescending goodness are celebrated. The God of Israel is set in His special glory as caring for the sorrowing, the insignificant, and the forgotten. The poet finds a singular joy in extolling One who is so singularly gracious

**(Ps. 147:2) The LORD builds up Jerusalem.** God appears both in the material and in the spiritual world as a Builder and Maker, and for this He is to be praised. His grace, wisdom, and power are seen in the formation and establishment of the chosen seat of His worship. Once a city with material walls, the church is now composed of spiritual stones. The Jews rejoiced in rebuilding their capital, and we triumph in the growth of the church in a godless world.

**He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.** He repairs the waste places and causes the former desolations to be inhabited. This sentence may relate to Nehemiah and those who returned with him (Neh. 2:17). There is no reason, however, why it should not equally refer to David who, with his friends, was once an outcast, but who before long became the means of building Jerusalem. In any case, the psalmist ascribes to Jehovah all the blessings enjoyed. He equally traces to the divine hand the city's restoration and the restoration of the banished. How clearly these ancient believers saw the Lord working among them and for them. Spiritually, we see God's hand in the edification of the church and in the ingathering of sinners. What are people under conviction of sin but outcasts from God, from holiness, from heaven, and even from hope? Who other than the Lord our God could gather them from dispersions and make them citizens in Christ Jesus? And He is constantly performing this deed of love and power, so let the song begin at Jerusalem, our home, and then let every living stone in the spiritual city echo the strain, for it is the Lord who has brought back His banished ones and built them together in Zion.

**(Ps. 147:6) The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.** He reverses the evil order of things. The meek are down, and He lifts them. The wicked are exalted, and He hurls them to the dust. The Lord loves those who are reverent to Him, humble in their own eyes, and gentle to humanity. These He lifts to hope, peace, power, and eternal honor. When God lifts a person, it is a lift indeed. In their own esteem, the proud are high enough. Only those who are low care to be lifted, and only these will Jehovah raise. As for the wicked, they must come down from their seats of vainglory. God is accustomed to overthrow such, for it is His way and habit. None of the wicked will escape. To the earth they must go, for from the earth they came and for the earth they live.

**(Ps. 147:12) Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!** The poet insists on praise. He cries, **Praise . . . praise**, as if it were the most important duty. A special people should give special praise. The city of peace should be the city of praise. The temple of the covenant God should resound with His glories. If nowhere else, surely in Zion there should be joyful adoration of Zion's God. Note: We are to praise the Lord in our houses in Jerusalem as well as in His house in Zion. The holy city surrounds the holy hill. Both are dedicated to the holy God, and both should ring with hallelujahs.

**(Ps. 147:13) For He has strengthened the bars of your gates.** Her fortifications were finished, even to how the gates were fastened. God has made them all sound and strong, even to her bolts and bars. Her security against invading foes was guaranteed. This is no small mercy. Oh, that churches were so preserved from false doctrine and unholy living! This must be the Lord's doing. Where He has worked it, His name is greatly to be praised. Modern liberals would tear down all gates and abolish all bars, but we do not, because we fear the Lord.

**(Ps. 147:14) He makes peace in your borders.** Quiet extends to the boundaries; no enemies are wrangling with those who live on the borders. If there is peace there, we may be sure that peace is everywhere. "When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7). Peace is from the God of peace. Considering the differing constitutions, conditions, tastes, and opinions of people, it is a work of God when unbroken peace is found year after year in large churches. It is an equal wonder if sinners, instead of persecuting the godly, treat them with marked respect. He who builds Zion is also her Peacemaker, the Lord and Giver of peace.

**(Ps. 147:19) He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel.** He who is the Creator is also the Revealer. We praise the Lord above all things for manifesting Himself to us. Whatever part of His mind He shows, whether it is a word of instruction, or a statue of direction, or a judgment of government, we are bound to bless Him for it. He who causes summer to take the place of winter has also removed coldness and death from our hearts by the power of His word. This is an abundant cause for singing His name. As Jacob's descendants were made to know the Lord, so are we in these latter days. Let His name be magnified! By knowledge of the Lord, Jacob's name was changed

to Israel (Gen. 32:28); therefore, let the one who is made a prevailing prince in prayer be also a chief musician in praise. The elect were bound to sing hallelujahs to their God. Why were they so favored if they did not tell the glory of God above all others?

**(Ps. 147:20) He has not dealt thus with any nation.** Israel had clear and exclusive knowledge of God, while others were left in ignorance. Election is the loudest call for grateful adoration.

**And as for His judgments, they have not known them.** Not knowing God's laws, they might be looked on as having no laws worth mentioning. The nations were covered with darkness. Only Israel sat in the light. This was sovereign grace in its fullest noontide of power.

**Praise the LORD!** When we have mentioned electing, distinguishing love, our praise can rise no higher, and so we close with one more "Hallelujah!"

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

### **Who did God use to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and who will He use in the future to rebuild those walls?**

Deut. 30:3 Neh. 1:4-11 Ps. 107:1-9 Ps. 147:2 Isa. 11:12

### **In whom does the Lord take pleasure?**

Ps. 20:7 Ps. 33:16-18 Ps. 147:10-11 Isa. 40:29

Psalm 147:3 says, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." **\_To whom and how has this promise been fulfilled spiritually?**

Ps. 34:18 Ps. 103:3 Isa. 57:15, 18, 19 Luke 4:18

Psalm 147:17 states; "He casts out His hail like morsels; who can stand before His cold"? **What does the "cold" spoken of mean?**

### **Psalm 148:1-14**

This song is one and indivisible. It seems almost impossible to expound it in detail, for a living poem is not to be dissected verse by verse. It is a song of nature and grace. As a flash of lightning wraps both heaven and earth in one robe of glory, the adoration of the Lord in this Psalm lights up the universe and makes it glow with a radiance of praise. The song begins in the heavens, sweeps down to the depths, and then ascends until the people who are close to Jehovah take up the strain. The chief requirement for its exposition is a heart on fire with reverent love to the Lord, who is to be blessed forever.

**(Ps. 148:1) Praise the LORD!** See how the psalmist trumpets the word **praise**. It sounds nine times in the first five verses of this song. Like minute-guns, exultant exhortations are sounded with tremendous force. **Praise! Praise! Praise!** The drum of the Great King beats around the world with this one note. **Praise! Praise! Praise!** Again, they said, "Hallelujah!" All this praise is distinctly and personally for Jehovah. Do not praise His servants. Do not praise His works. Praise Him! Is He not worthy of all possible praise? Pour it out before Him in full volume, and pour it only there!

**(Ps. 148:5) Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created.** This is good logic. The Maker should have honor from His works. They should praise Him. They should tell His character by their praise. They should praise His name. The name Jehovah is legibly written on His works. His power, wisdom, goodness, and other attributes are made known to thoughtful people who praise His name. The highest praise of God is to declare what He is. We can invent nothing that would magnify the Lord.

We can never extol Him better than by repeating His name or describing His character. The LORD is to be extolled as creating all things that exist by the simple agency of His word. He created by command. What power! Well may He expect those to praise Him who owe their being to Him. Evolution may be atheistic, but the doctrine of creation logically demands worship. As a tree is known by its fruit, it proves itself true. Those created by command are under command to adore their Creator. The voice that said, "Let there be," now says, **Let them praise.**

True devotion hears the praises of God not only in the sweet song of feathered minstrels but also in the croaking from the marsh or in the buzz of the bluebottle singing on the windowpane. More worthless than reptiles, more insignificant than insects, are people without a song.

**(Ps. 148:11) Kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all judges of the earth.** Now the poet has reached our race. He would have rulers, subjects, chiefs, and magistrates unite in worshiping the sovereign Lord of all. Monarchs must not disdain to sing, nor should the people refrain from uniting with them. Those who lead in battle and those who decide in court must not allow their vocation to keep them from reverently adoring the Chief and Judge of all. All people and all judges must praise the Lord. What a happy day it will be when it is universally acknowledged that through our *Lord* Jesus, the incarnate Wisdom, "kings reign and princes decree justice." It is not so as yet! Kings have been patrons of vice and princes ringleaders in folly. Let us pray that the psalmist's song will soon be realized.

**(Ps. 148:14) And He has exalted the horn of His people.** He has made them strong, famous, and victorious. His goodness to all His creatures does not prevent Him from showing special favor to His chosen nation. He is good to all, but He is God to His people. He lifts the downtrodden, but He lifts His people in a special way. When they are bought low, He raises a horn for them by sending a deliverer. When they are in conflict, He gives them courage and strength to lift their horn in the fray. When all is peaceful around them, He fills their horn with plenty, and they lift it with delight.

**Praise the LORD**, or Hallelujah! This should be the Alpha and Omega of a good person's life. Let us praise God to the end, world without end. The field of praise that lies before us in this Psalm is bounded at the beginning and the end by landmarks in the form of Hallelujahs. Every word that lies between them is to the Lord's honor. Amen.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Would you say the creation of His host: angels, sun, moon, stars, fire, hail, mountains, animals, etc. praise God by their very being?**

**Show how Israel is permitted to approach Him?**

Ex. 19:3-7 Lev. 10:3 Deut. 4:4-8 Ps. 147:19-20 Ps. 148:13 Ezek. 42:13-14

### Psalm 149:1-9

We are almost at the last Psalm and still among the Hallelujahs. This is "a new song," evidently intended for the new creation and for the people of a new heart. It is a song that may be sung at the Lord's coming when, with the new dispensation, there will be an overthrow of the wicked and honor to the saints. The tone is exceedingly jubilant and exultant. All through this Psalm one hears the beat of dancing maidens' feet, keeping time with the timbrel and harp.

**(Ps. 149:1) Praise the LORD**, especially you chosen, whom He has made saints! You have praised Him before; praise Him again. Yes, praise Him forever. With renewed zeal and fresh delight, lift your song to Jehovah.

**Sing to the LORD a new song.** Sing, for it is the best method of expressing reverent praise. Sing a newly composed hymn, for you have new knowledge of God. He is ever new in His manifestations. His mercies are "new every morning" (Lam. 3:23). His deliverance is new in every night of sorrow. Let your gratitude and thanksgiving be new. It is good to repeat the old; it is more useful to invent the new. Originality goes well with heartiness. Our singing should be **to the LORD**. The songs we sing should be of Him and to Him.

**(Ps. 149:4) For the LORD takes pleasure in His people**, and they should take pleasure in Him. If our joy is pleasing to Him, let us make it full. What condescension on Jehovah's part, to notice, to love, and to take pleasure in His chosen! Surely, were it not that He condescends to people of low estate, there is nothing in us or our actions to give pleasure to the Ever-blessed One. The thought that the Lord takes pleasure in us is a mine of joy never to be exhausted.

**He will beautify the humble with salvation.** They are humble, and they feel their need of salvation. He is gracious, and He gives it to them. They lament their deformity, and He puts a choice beauty on them. He saves by sanctifying, and they wear the beauty of His holiness and the beauty of a joy that springs from full salvation. He makes His people meek, and then He makes the meek beautiful. This is a great argument for worshiping the Lord with exultation. He who takes pleasure in us must be approached with exceeding joy.

God takes pleasure in all His children, as Jacob loved all his sons (Gen. 49:28). But the meek are His Josephs, and on these he puts the tunic of many colors (Gen. 37:3), beautifying them with peace, contentment, joy, holiness, and influence. A gentle and quiet spirit is called "an incorruptible beauty" and, certainly, it is "very precious in the sight of God" (1 Pet. 3:4). When God beautifies people, they become beautiful indeed, beautiful forever.

**(Ps. 149:5) Let the saints be joyful in glory.** God has honored and placed a rare glory on them, so let them be joyful. Should those to whom God is their glory be cast down and troubled? No! Let their joy proclaim their honorable estate.

**(Ps. 149:6) Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.** We will not copy the chosen people by making literal war, but we will fulfill the emblem by carrying on spiritual war. We praise God and contend with our corruption. We sing joyfully and war earnestly with every kind of evil. Our weapons are not carnal (2 Cor. 10:4). They are mighty, and they wound both with back and edge. The word of God is all edge. Whatever way we turn it, it strikes deadly blows at falsehood and wickedness. If we do not praise, we will grow sad in our conflict. If we do not fight, we will become presumptuous in our song. This verse shows a happy blending of singer and crusader.

**(Ps. 149:7) To execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples.** This was once literally the duty of Israel. When they came into Canaan, they fulfilled the Lord's righteous sentence on the guilty nations (Josh. 1:1-15). Under the gentler dispensation of grace, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12). Yet, our warfare is no less difficult, and our victory none the less sure. All evil will eventually be overthrown. The Lord will display His justice against evildoers, and in the war, His servants will play their parts. The saints will judge the world. Both the conflict and the victory at the end of it will give glory to God and honor to His holy ones.

**(Ps. 149:8) To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.** Jehovah's enemies are reduced to shame, made helpless, and punished. Israel literally did this, and it is ours to do spiritually. The chief powers of evil shall be restrained and ultimately destroyed. Those who captured the godly will be made captive. The powers of evil cannot bind our King, but by His power, their king will be bound with a great chain and shut up in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3) to be trodden under the saints' feet.

**(Ps. 149:9) To execute on them the written judgment.** Israel did this, and they rejoiced in the God who gave them such success. We praise our God in another way. We are not executioners of justice, but heralds of mercy. It would be sad for anyone to misuse this text. Lest warlike behavior should be led to do so, we remind you that the execution must not go beyond the warrant and sentence, and we have not received any warrant of execution against our fellow man. Christians have no commission of vengeance. They are to execute the command of mercy alone.

**This honor have all His saints.** All the godly shared in the Lord's triumphs when He struck Israel's foes. We have the same honor, but it is shown in a different kind of victory. All the holy ones are sent on errands by their holy Lord. The honors described in this Psalm are common to all the family of grace, and the service which the Lord appoints is to be undertaken by everyone without exception. The Lord honors all His chosen here, and He will glorify them hereafter. This rule is without exception. Surely, in this, we have the best argument for glorifying the Lord. Thus, we close our new song with another Hallelujah, **Praise the LORD!**

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

#### **Comment on the phrase "a new song" in Psalm 149:1.**

Ps. 144:9 Ps. 147:6, 10, 11 Ps. 148:14 Prov. 11:20 Isa. 42:10-13 Zeph. 3:16-17 Zech. 9:9 Matt. 5:5  
Matt. 21:5

#### **Comment on the "two-edged sword in their hand" (Ps. 149:6).**

Neh. 4:16-18 2 Cor. 10:4 Eph. 6:17 Heb. 4:12 Rev. 1:16

#### **Will the N. T. saints be part of the judgment spoken of in Psalm 149:6-9?**

Ps. 149:9 Dan. 7:22 Luke 22:28-30 Rev. 3:21 Rev. 20:4

### **Psalm 150:1-6**

We have reached the last summit of the mountain chain of Psalms. It rises high into the clear air; its brow is bathed in the sunlight of the eternal world of worship. It is a rapture. The poet-prophet is full of inspiration and enthusiasm. He does not argue, teach, or explain. He cries with burning words, "Praise Him, Praise the LORD!"

**(Ps. 150:1) Praise the LORD! Hallelujah!** This exhortation is to everything in earth and in heaven. Should they not all declare the glory of Him whose glory they are and whose glory they were created for? Jehovah, the one God, should be the one object of adoration. To give the least particle of His honor to another is shameful treason, and to refuse to give Him honor is heartless robbery.

**Praise God in His sanctuary.** Praise El, the strong one, in His holy place. See how power is mentioned with holiness in this change of names. Praise begins at home. "In God's own house pronounce His praise." The holy place should be filled with praise, just as the high priest filled the Most Holy Place with the smoke of sweet smelling incense. Hallelujahs should be continually presented, both in His church below and in His courts above. In the person of Jesus, God finds a holy dwelling, or sanctuary, and there He is greatly to be praised. He dwells in holiness, for all His ways are right and good, and for this we extol Him with heart and voice. Whenever we assemble for holy purposes, our main work should be to give praises to the Lord our God.

**Praise Him in His mighty firmament!** It is a blessed thing that holiness and power are united in God. Power without righteousness is oppression, and righteousness without power is too weak to be useful. When the two are together in an infinite degree, however, we have God. What an expanse we have in the boundless firmament of divine power! Let it all be filled with praise. While the sanctuaries of the earth magnify the Almighty, let the heavens, so great and strong, echo with the praises of the thrice holy Jehovah.

**(Ps. 150:2) Praise Him for His mighty acts.** This is a reason for praise, and in these deeds of power we see Him. The mighty acts of His omnipotence are always on behalf of truth and righteousness. His creation, providence, and redemption call for praise. They are His acts, His mighty acts, so let them be praised.

**Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!** He is unlimited, and praise should correspond to this. He possesses a multitude of greatness and should be greatly praised. There is nothing little about God, and there is nothing great apart from Him. If we were always careful to make our worship appropriate for our great Lord, how much better would we sing? How much more reverently would we adore Him? Such mighty acts should have excellent praise.

**(Ps. 150:3) Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet.** Let us call the people with the loudest, clearest notes. All need to know that we are not ashamed to worship. Let us summon them, with an unmistakable sound, to bow before their

God. The sound of the trumpet is associated with the grandest and most solemn events, such as the giving of the Law, the proclamation of jubilee, the coronation of Jewish kings, and the waging of war. It is referred to in our Lord's Second Coming and the raising of the dead (1 Cor. 15:51-54). If we cannot play this martial instrument, at least we can let our praise be as decided and bold as a blast on the horn. Let us never sound a trumpet for our own honor, but reserve all our trumpeting for God's glory.

When the people have been gathered by the trumpet's call, let them **praise Him with the lute and harp!** String instruments are to be used as well as brass. Dulcet notes are to be consecrated as well as the more startling sounds. The gospel meaning is that all powers and faculties should praise the Lord. All people, under all circumstances, should honor the Lord of all. If there is any virtue, if there is any talent, if there is any influence, let it all be consecrated to the service of the universal Benefactor. Lute and harp, the choicest, the sweetest, must be all our Lord's.

**(Ps. 150:5) Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with clashing cymbals!** Let the clash of the loudest music be for the Lord. Let the joyful sound of the loftiest notes be all for Him. Praise has beaten the timbrel, swept the harp, and played the trumpet. And, now, for a last effort, awakening the heaviest slumberers and startling the most indifferent onlookers, praise dashes together the disks of brass, and, with sounds both loud and high, it proclaims the glories of the Lord.

(The Treasury of David, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy Clarke)

**Where are the two places God is to be praised as stated in this Psalm?**

Ps. 19:1 Ps. 150:1

**Would you also say that the praises set forth in Psalms is what God desires from man, giving Him the proper respect of His omnipotent reign?**

**What should the cymbals compare to in nature?**