

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



COMMENTARY

PSALMS 1-8

by

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[BOOK 49-A]

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WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Professor Simon Greenleaf was one of the most eminent lawyers of all time. His "Laws of Evidence" for many years were accepted by all States in the United States as the standard methodology for evaluating cases. He was teaching law at a university in the United States when one of his students asked Professor Greenleaf if he would apply his "Laws of Evidence" to evaluate an historical figure. When Greenleaf agreed to the project he asked the student who was to be the subject of the review. The student replied that the person to be examined would be Jesus Christ. Professor Greenleaf agreed to undertake the examination of Jesus Christ and as a result, when he had finished the review, Simon Greenleaf personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Professor Greenleaf then sent an open letter to all jurists in the United States saying in part "I personally have investigated one called Jesus Christ. I have found the evidence concerning him to be historically accurate. I have also discovered that Jesus Christ is more than a human being, he is either God or nothing and having examined the evidence it is impossible to conclude other than he is God. Having concluded that he is God I have accepted him as my personal Saviour. I urge all members of the legal profession to use the "Laws of Evidence" to investigate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you find that he is wrong expose him as a faker but if not consider him as your Saviour and Lord"

HOW CAN I BE SAVED?

Salvation is available for all members of the human race.

Salvation is the most important undertaking in all of God's universe. The salvation of sinners is never on the basis of God's merely passing over or closing His eyes to sin. God saves sinners on a completely righteous basis consistent with the divine holiness of His character. This is called grace. It relies on God so man cannot work for salvation, neither can he deserve it. We need to realise that the creation of this vast unmeasured universe was far less an undertaking than the working out of God's plan to save sinners.

However the acceptance of God's salvation by the sinner is the most simple thing in all of life. One need not be rich, nor wise, nor educated. Age is no barrier nor the colour of one's skin. The reception of the enormous benefits of God's redemption is based upon the simplest of terms so that there is no one in all this wide universe who need be turned away.

How do I become a Christian?

There is but one simple step divided into three parts. First of all I have to recognise that I am a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24).

Secondly, realising that if I want a relationship with Almighty God who is perfect, and recognising that I am not perfect, I need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16).

Thirdly, by the exercise of my own free will I personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, believing that He died personally for me and that He is what He claims to be in an individual, personal and living way (John 1:12; 3:36; Acts 16:31; 4:12).

The results of Salvation

The results of this are unbelievably wonderful:

My sins are taken away (John 1:29),

I possess eternal life now (1 John 5:11,12),

I become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17),

The Holy Spirit takes up His residence in my life (1 Corinthians 6:19),

And I will never perish (John 10:28-30).

This truthfully is life's greatest transaction. This is the goal of all people; this is the ultimate of our existence. We invite and exhort any reader who has not become a Christian by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to follow these simple instructions and be born again eternally into God's family (Matthew 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

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DOCTRINES

BTB

THE PSALMS OF DAVID**AUTHOR:**

The book we have before us was the hymn book of the early church and of Israel beforehand. These Psalms form the finest musical expression of spiritual life, with all its ups and downs, than appears in the literature of any other nation that has ever lived upon the earth. The Psalms were the comfort to my old father as he walked the decks of his warship in World War II, and continued to be his comfort through the even darker days of cardiac caused episodic dementia as his life ebbed away in the Old Folks Home where he finally died full of years at 90. Through the most incredible pressures I have faced over the last TEN years in my own life they have comforted my soul with the same power they did when I was a young university student. I love this book!

I love my brothers in the Lord who wrote these psalms, and there were many authors, and they all testify to the grace, mercy, love, and patience of God with us all. David wrote all the psalms of the first section (or "book") of the collection, and he is a "trophy of grace" if ever there was one. David gives me hope every day, for if he could be forgiven and lifted up to serve again after his great sin, then there is hope for each and every one of us.

The "Sons of Korah" later in the book also testify to the grace and mercy of the Lord, for they ought not to even live, given the great sin and judgement that came upon their forefather, and yet the "remnant of grace" survived and they lived on to sing the glory of the Lord who judged their ancestor in justice and righteousness and saved their posterity in loving kindness. King Hezekiah also figures as an author, and he also testifies to the grace and mercy of the Lord under the greatest time of national suffering.

King David was the youngest son of Jesse and ruled Israel from approximately B.C. 1052 - 1012. David learned to play music on the hills around Bethlehem and his skill saved his life several times from the madness of Saul. He was a skilled musician even as a young man (1 Samuel 16:18-23), and as is seen in 1 Chronicles 16:7 and 2 Samuel 23:1, continued writing psalms through to the end of his life. The psalms were his heart felt expression of his walk with God and his honesty with the Lord is at times overwhelming and humbling.

The first forty-one psalms are, with a handful of anonymous exceptions, all attributed to David with a number of others scattered throughout the remainder of the book. The entire collection is called after him as he is the greatest of the singers of Israel, and their great king from whom Messiah is to come. It was probably collected into its final form that we see today by Ezra after the return of the Exiles from Babylon, but it had existed in earlier forms right back to the days of David and Solomon and in its five sections formed the song book for the Temple worship services, just as it will again in the Millennial Temple.

In the entire book of Psalms David is specifically credited as author of 73 Psalms, Asaph with 12, the Sons of Korah with 10, Moses with 1, Solomon with 2, Ethan with 1, Heman with 1, and 50 are anonymous.

I thank Brian Huggett, who did the earlier series of volumes on these Genesis Psalms, and I honour him for these works. I had used his Key Word analysis in the previous versions of these volumes of mine, but the Reflections and Application points are the result of my present walk through a deep "valley of the shadow of death" that the Lord has allowed me to walk through at this time in 2014-2015. It has been the severity of the trials I have experienced over recent weeks that has moved me to reflect deeply on these psalms and write these new books for our ministry. I have been encouraged and pray you will be.

PSALMS SECTION ONE**THE GENESIS PSALMS – PSALMS 1 - 41****INTRODUCTION**

The Psalms are arranged in five specific books. Book 1 covers Psalms 1 – 41, and is tied to the book of Genesis, book 2 covers Psalms 42-72 and is tied to the book of Exodus, book 3 covers Psalms 73-89, and is tied to the book of Leviticus, book 4 covers Psalms 90 – 106, and is tied to the book of Numbers, and book 5 covers Psalms 107-150, and is tied to the book of Deuteronomy. The book of the Psalms gets into its final form in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (around 440 BC) when books four and five of the Psalms appear to be added to the earlier collection. The longest Psalm, 119, dates from the time of the Exile to Babylon in the early sixth century, but there are others that may date from the times after the Exiles return in 535 BC, and even some from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century BC.

The dominant name for God used in this section is "Jehovah - JHWH", the holy name of God given to Moses. It is used 277 times in this book of the Psalms, well ahead of the next three sections, with the last section alone getting close with 226 uses of this special name of God. This name of God was never pronounced so do not get into debate about whether it should be said as "Jehovah" or "Yahweh", because it was simply breathed through by the readers, or the word "Adonai", or Lord, used in its place. Other names for God used in this first book of the Psalms are, Elohim 48 times, El 15 times, Adonai 11 times, Alyon 3 times, Adon 2 times, and Eloah once. Refer to the doctrinal study on the names of

God below to explore the significance of these names, as all carry important reference to the psalmist's understanding of the triune God.

Just as Genesis was the book of beginnings, or "first principles" so this section of the Psalms covers doctrinal topics that are the "first principles of faith". The section begins with the consequences of the Fall of Mankind in the Garden of Eden, where man confronts his daily choices as to what his eternal destiny is to be. This section includes many of the psalms of the Great Rebellion of Absalom where David must face the consequences of his own great sin with Bathsheba that let loose such evil in his own household. This section traces man's choices and the terrible and gracious consequences of those as they work out in time. David must face the full reality of his life and works, both for good and for evil and bring them to the Lord for solution. 1 Peter 5:5-10. He does and we rejoice in the things we learn about ourselves through our brother David and the things we learn about our great redeemer through his honesty in confronting his sins, fears, doubts and errors.

DOCTRINES

CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

GOD – NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Notes

Psalm 1

INTRODUCTION

As is appropriate for the first Psalm the subject is the choice of each man since the Fall of Mankind in our shared ancestors Adam and Eve. The psalmist reminds us that we walk this earth for a limited time and that the end of all things is death because of the Fall. Each and every day we choose a path to walk through this limited life upon this temporary planet; will we select a path that walks in righteousness or in ungodliness? Will we be blessed or judged?

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him, shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.....Hebrews 9:27-28.... Vengeance belongs to me, I will recompense says the Lord, and again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. Hebrews 10:30-31, Wherefore we receive a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:28-29.

Suffering is the lot of all mankind since the fall brought sin and evil into the creation and warped all that God had made perfect. We live within a fallen world where Satan and his fallen doomed angels battle against mankind in a desperate fight to kill and destroy the hope of as many as he can before he himself is judged finally in the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:10ff. The Psalms are the poetry of redemption and the songs of salvation, to be sung in the midst of terrible temptation and pressure. Later in the book a whole section is dedicated to the fighters in the Great Tribulation period to give them courage and the last section records the songs of victory as the Lord enters Jerusalem at the Second Advent.

This first psalm sets the scene for all that follows; man's Free Will sets up the drama and it unfolds in each of our lives daily for good or ill depending on which inner voice we heed in our choices. Let us heed the commandments of the Lord and the apostles and walk in the power and under the direction of the Holy Spirit. John 16:7-14, Acts 1:4-8, Ephesians 3:17-19, 5:1-2, 15-18. Let us truly bear spiritual fruit that is worthy of the Lord and so walk with joy through the testing times that must come in this world, and bring glory to the Lord and confound and rebuke the devil and his demons.

Psalm 1:1-2

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

REFLECTION

Blessed – What men seek above all is the happiness and joy that is captured by this word. Most pagans who seek for happiness in all the wrong places still cry out for the deep inner joy that the psalmist recognises rests only with those who find God's path through this vale of tears. There is happiness in no other place than in the "faith-rest" life of the believer who seeks the will of the Father for His loved Child. I remember an unbeliever coming to see my wife and I many years ago. He sat on our deck facing the setting sun in the west and said with tears in his eyes, "I want what you have got!" He recognised that all the sexual relationships he had experienced, and all the money in his wallet was nothing without peace in his heart, and that was only possible with God.

This word could be translated similarly to the New Testament word for "Joy", and it reminds us when we consider this that the joy and happiness referred to in the scriptures is a fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit within. It is a result of walking with God on His plan for your life, not any goal that you can shoot for and hit by human effort and scheming. The definition the psalmist gives us here is through a series of negatives. He tells us what happiness is not, and where it cannot be found. Like Solomon in the early chapters of Proverbs it is warning against foolishness. Proverbs 1:7, 3:1-8.

There is advice that will maim and kill man, and that advice is from the enemy and his deceived agents. The counsel of the ungodly is the advice that flows from those who reject God's path and select the self centred road of Satan's rebellion. Matthew 7:13-23. The road is known by the fruit produced in the lives of those who walk it, and Satan's path is devious indeed, but over time its terrible results are written large in the lives of his deceived followers.

My wife and I love Jazz and Blues and are members of a club that has the best musicians and singers each week performing for the entertainment of their fellow members. Just last night we reflected together how old, worn and debauched some of our fellow members looked, and yet they were only our age or younger, but they have walked the path of evil and the scourge of drink, drugs and promiscuity has lined them and aged them. Youth and make up covers the effects of evil choices, but only for a time. Blessed is the man or woman who does not allow themselves to be made a fool of by evil counsel, and pointless activity. Job 5:17-18.

There is only one safe place to stand in this life, and it is upon the rock of stability that is the person, plan and purpose of Christ Jesus. Jesus told His parable of the foolish man who built upon the sand to underline the importance of having a stable foundation for life's choices, and His truth alone is a safe foundation. Matthew 7:24-27. He alone is the rock, and all that is built upon any other foundation other than His will for our life is built upon foolishness. Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 118:22.

We make our stand in this life by every choice we make, either for God's path or for the path of Satan. To "stand" means to abide, confirm, continue, establish, and when used in conjunction with the phrase 'in the way' - a reference to a well trodden road - it means to establish a lifestyle by repetitive choices. People often ignore this important fact; that every choice builds up a pattern of response and establishes a life style over time.

"Blessed is the man who does not establish a pattern in his life in the manner of sinners— for then he will be assured of "missing the mark" in life. We are here for a purpose, and we are answerable for our time and productivity here to our Creator who left us here. The parable of the talents illustrates this principle. Matthew 25:15-28. We must all give account for our "stewardship" upon this earth. What have we done with the time and talents we were given by the Lord who made us? Sin is defined as "missing the mark" of the righteousness that God demands of man, but to stand in the counsel of the ungodly and the path of persistent sinners means that this foolish and deceived person misses the entire point of their being left upon the earth!

Notice the progression of the deceived person in these verses so far. First they heed and are deceived by the "counsel of the ungodly", then they "stand in the path of the sinner", and finally they "sit in the seat of the scornful". There is a terrible consequence to deceptive philosophy and it is to rot the character of the mind so that it mocks what is good in the end. The sneering voice of the atheist, who not so much disbelieves in God, but rather hates God, is the obvious indication of this. Beliefs will always work out into the life and attitudes to others over time. We cannot sit on an evil belief without it rotting the soul within and decaying the very heart of the individual over time, so in the end there is only bitterness and hatred that flows from evil.

There is great sadness for me in my clinical work when I work with people who after years of hardening themselves in their evil thoughts that all they can see is a jaundiced view of life, love and beauty. They end up despising the good and hating all that is lovely and wonderful. There is a sadness in their presence, for they have chosen a path that has killed their capacity for joy, and it can only be recovered at the foot of the Cross if they will cast away self and cast themselves at the foot of the One who died for them. John 3:16, 36. Very few do that, for Satan's sin of pride is theirs.

In contrast to the ungodly the believer who walks with Christ, in the light of the Word of God has delight in their soul, even though in the "Valley of the shadow of death". Psalm 23:4. To delight in the Word of the Lord is a true fruit of the Holy Spirit's presence in the soul. To love the Lord means we will love every word He speaks, and the Bible is His love letter to us, with instructions to keep because they are His best for us. His commands are to be kept if we love Him. He bluntly tells us this, "If you love me keep my commandments". John 15:7-14.

His commands are not grievous! 1 John 5:3. His commands are life and health to the soul. Solomon will say, following on from this psalm before us. "Be not wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord and depart from evil. It shall be health to your navel and marrow to your bones." Proverbs 3:7-8. Malachi records the joy of the righteous in time and eternity as they express their faith in their loving Lord. "They that feared the Lord spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it. And a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name." Malachi 3:16.

APPLICATION

1. All choices carry consequences over time, for the repetitive selection of any specific path makes a "groove" in the road that becomes a settled path for the soul and one which over time is harder and harder to leave, so deep become the ruts that keep the individual entrapped within it. Let us passionately encourage young people to reject the path described in this verse, and select the path of God alone. Every step in evil darkens and further entraps the soul.
2. To teach discernment is to teach the truth, for men do not need a definition of "crooked", they simply need to know what "straight" is, and all else is crooked! As the Lord's pastors let us teach the truth of the Word and so keep men from evil, by the focused proclamation of the truth. Our job is to turn the light of the Word into the darkness that has descended upon the creation since Adam and Eve's Fall. Psalms 119:105-107, 130, 154-156, 161-165, Matthew 5:14-16.
3. There is no blessing in the "seat of the scornful". Let us be careful to remove any "root of bitterness" (Hebrews 12:15) in our own life. Let us not allow any hatred of men or their beliefs to pervert us from the path of godliness. There is no substitute for "unfeigned love". 2 Corinthians 6:6, 1 Timothy 1:5, 1 Peter 1:22. Let us see all mankind through the shadow that the Cross casts, not the shadow that their sins cast around them. Let us see them as sinners for whom Christ died, not people who annoy, upset, and affront us through their evil works. It is not about us, it's about Him!
4. Do we delight in the Word of God as we ought to? Do we hunger and thirst after the righteousness that comes as we allow the Holy Spirit to work upon the Word in our daily lives? It is delighting in the Word of God that shows our

delight in the presence of the absent Lord, just as pouring over a letter/email from our loved ones shows the depth of our love for them when they are away from us. Let us be people who delight in the Lord and His truth.

DOCTRINES

HAPPINESS – HAPPINESS AND EXPERIMENTS IN ECCLESIASTES

ABIDING IN GOD

Psalms 1:3

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

REFLECTION

The result of all life’s choices will be seen over time in the fruit in the individual’s life; both for good and for evil. If we simply draw deeply upon the resources of God’s Word we draw up into our soul and spirit the riches of His grace and the Word is food for our soul and spirit. We are told as pastors to “feed the flock of God with the Word of God”. John 21:15-17, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2. The result of deeply feeding upon the Word of God daily is the same as feeding on good physical food – spiritual growth and health and the production that goes with it. It is regular, consistent and deeply feeding on the Word that bears the lasting fruit in life. Fruit is meant to be a blessing to others, and to them consistently, even in the worst of times.

In **Psalm 92:12-14** we see the same thought expressed:

*“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;”*

In **Hosea 14:5-6**, the LORD says through His prophet, *“I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.”* The olive tree puts its roots deep into the soil, so deep that it can defeat the worst of droughts and still be fruitful. It is this deeply rooted tree that can draw up water from the deepest sources that is in view here. The picture of the strong believer is that of a great tree planted by a great river, when even though the rains have not fallen for years the water is there deep under the dried up river bed and the tree remains fruitful; a place of refreshment to all who feel the pressures of the drought around them.

We are to be refreshments to others and we can be if we are deeply rooted and grounded in the Word of the Lord. We are here to be a blessing, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit is God’s provision for this to occur. In John 15:1-8, believers are likened to branches of the true vine, in that through deeply feeding in the earth and careful cultivation and purging (pruning) they bring forth much fruit. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul gives a list of what this fruit is: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. In Romans 6:21-23, 7:4-6, 9:16-23, Philippians 1:9-11, and James 3:17-18, 5:1-6 there are other “fruits” of the Holy Spirit mentioned. By deeply feeding on the Word we allow the Holy Spirit to go to work within us and produce these to bless all we meet on our journey through this life.

If we deeply and consistently feed upon the Word of God certain results flow into our life. Just as there are consequences from walking in the paths of the ungodly, so there are natural consequences for walking in the paths of righteousness. These godly consequences flow from the work of the Holy Spirit upon the Word in our soul as we hear it, believe it and apply it into the fabric of everyday life. I rejoice in the Bible classes I have taught over the years as I see this operate in the lives of the attendees; for just by feeding on the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit they are changed over the years, without any counselling other than that of the Holy Spirit within. Romans 12:1-2.

The first result is described as we have seen above in “fruitfulness”. No plant ever strains to produce fruit; it simply is a plant of its own species and produces fruit that is appropriate to that species. The fruit that is “appropriate” for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ is the “fruit of the Holy Spirit”, for that is all the Holy Spirit will produce. By the nature, quality and quantity of the fruit so the identity of the plant is known! Jesus followers are known because they are like Him! We don’t have to strain at human works programmes for this to occur, we simply obey His commands, are filled with the Holy Spirit, feed upon and apply the Holy Word of God! The Holy Spirit will do the rest.

The second result is that our “leaf will not wither in the drought”. I chuckled as I read this passage today, for I face great and overwhelming pressures at present that have no human solution. I face a turning point in my entire life where my clinical business is literally drying up before my very eyes, with fewer referrals from the doctors to me than at any time in the last twenty years. It is certainly a drought of work, and therefore a financial drought, and yet my spirit is joyful as I write these words, for I draw up the rich promises of the Word of God and am still fruitful to God’s people in the church and through the written material of EBCWA around the world.

People cannot eat the leaves of a great tree, but they can act as a shelter from the heat of the scorching sun, and provide a place of refreshment for all who take shelter under them. That is also our task before the Lord upon this earth; to be comforters to the Lord's people; places of refuge, comfort, and encouragement in difficult times. Even in the worst times we will not "wither" under the pressure, for the food of the Lord's provision still flows through us and the promises of God remain fresh and real to us. Read Paul's account of a similar time to that which I am travelling through at present in 2 Corinthians 1:8-12. Pressed down under great adversity we are not depressed; standing under fierce heat of affliction we are not "dried out". The reason why we can stand in such places is the Lord's powerful encouragement that flows from His Word that is deeply grounded within us and daily flowing through us in joy.

The result of all this is that we are prosperous in the path the Lord has called us to walk. This is not a reference to the false so called "prosperity gospel". This is not a reference to the silver and gold of mammon, but the rich blessing that accompanies the work of the Lord through all believers who feed richly on the Word and allow the Holy Spirit to truly have His way within their lives. Colossians 3:16. What we will do in the power of the Holy Spirit will prosper because it is God's will, done in God's power, for God's glory. Who can stand against such a life path? Romans 8:31-39. It is this life path we are called to stand upon, not the path of the ungodly and deceived. There is eternal profit on God's path, and eternal regret on the self-deceived path of evil. 1 Corinthians 3:6-15.

APPLICATION

1. Let us drink deeply from the Word of God daily, studying the Word at every opportunity. As we feed upon the Word we allow the Holy Spirit to work powerfully within us. Pastors teach the Word powerfully and systematically at every opportunity, and so fulfil the Lord's command to "feed the sheep", given to the apostles.
2. As we consistently feed upon the Word we build resilience for the days of drought and pressure later in our lives. When the dark and troubled days come the light of the Word brings hope and peace; when drought comes the food of the Word stored away can be drawn upon to keep us spiritually healthy and well. Let us lay up doctrines that we can draw upon in the storehouse of faith.
3. Whatever we do in the plan of God will prosper if it is done in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Let us walk obediently on the path the Lord has called us and so bring glory to the Lord in all we say and do. It is the eternally significant prosperity of the Lord that we seek, not the temporary wealth of man. Let us preach the real "Prosperity Gospel", which is the prosperity that comes to all who walk with God on His path for their life.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

CHRISTIAN LIFE – REWARDS AND CROWNS

Psalm 1:4

"The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."

REFLECTION

All the blessings that are available and indeed "automatic" for the Holy Spirit filled believer are not present in the life of the ungodly person. They may even prosper financially and politically and their apparent "easy life" may baffle and offend us, for we look to justice. This is a reminder that what we may feel is "justice" in time may not be felt by the godless person in their material wealth, but it will always be anticipated in their soul as they draw near to death and final judgement. They may continue to be wealthy and powerful until they drop into Hell, just as many in the past were. Isaiah pictures the arrival of the great and powerful into hell and it is a terrible image he leaves us. Isaiah 14:4-11. The Lord builds upon this in His parable of the Rich man and Lazarus the beggar, Luke 16:19-31.

Don't expect all who sin against God and you to obviously suffer in this world, for their suffering may be totally internal and they may put on a "brave face" to the world watching them. There are two things to consider of such people; the first is in our verse before us, and the second is God's grace. God's grace upon the lost is such that they are given grace to repent and that may mean great wealth and time to relax and enjoy it and be therefore without excuse before their Creator. Our Lord captures this truth in the Luke passage above. God is not willing that any should perish, and so the worst pagan is worked upon until the moment they die; then alone it is too late. 2 Peter 3:9, Revelation 20:11-15.

The second point about the unrepentant godless person is here before us in our present verse. Unlike the believer they have no inner spiritual power to handle the things that unfold in their lives and so they increase in deep inner despair often as they increase in wealth and power. They should be fruitful vines, but they become dried up chaff and are blown away eventually by time, with all their wealth. Matthew 6:19-20. My work as an archaeological volunteer on various sites

over the years has really reinforced this message, as you find the precious things of a person long dead, rotting quietly where they were dropped, forgotten like their owner. All is dust, but praise God the Lord remembers that we are dust, and salvation is freely provided to all who bow their knee before Him. Psalms 103:10-18.

APPLICATION

1. All is dust in this life except the things done in the power and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us remember the truth about the things we fret over and consign them to the “dust file” in our minds, and concentrate our energies upon the things that matter eternally.

2. Do not look for justice in time against the ungodly, for you cannot see their private thoughts and fears. Do not be distracted or discouraged when the evil ones prosper in material things, for that is all they have, and those things turn to dust, just as they will in the end. Focus on getting the message of mercy and grace to them, though they despise you to the end. We are called to give the Gospel to all, but to some it will be a ministry of condemnation, (John 3:16-19) for all we can do is ensure they have no excuses when they stand before their Maker.

DOCTRINES

UNBELIEVER

WORLD

WORLDLINESS

Psalm 1:5

“Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.”

REFLECTION

None will stand defiant before the Lord on the last day of judgement. The scripture records “every knee shall bow”, and every knee will bow in that day, Satan’s included. Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10. There will be no arrogance in that day for all created beings will be forced to admit the truth that the demons presently fear! This bowing does not save them in that day, any more than the demon’s confession of the truth saves them today. James 2:18-20.

Ticking the box of truth saved no person at any time in history for all that is acknowledged is what is real and there is no honour or value in that; it is simply real and true! It is saving faith that saves, and the faith that saves transforms the life, not just moves the lips. The demons believe Jesus is the Christ and they tremble! In that day of judgement all mankind will bow before the Lord and tremble in His presence; the presence of the King they despised when they should have served Him. Revelation 20:10-15.

There is an ultimate separation between the saved and the lost at death, and the Last Judgement (Called the “Great White Throne Judgement” as a result of the throne of the Lord as described in Revelation 20.) simply eternally establishes that separation forever. There is no room for evil in the new creation. The lost who have rejected the Lord’s salvation offer and His kingship, are cast with Satan, the first rebel against the truth, into the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:10-15, 21:8, 27.

In some way they are perpetually caught there forever, and even in the new heaven and the new earth the Lake of Fire can be seen in some form; the last fire radiating remnant of the matter of the old creation, forever separated from the beauty of God’s provision. This is possible without any distress to those in the heavens with God, so forget all the medieval pictures of demons torturing the lost forever. Whatever the form of the Lake of Fire in the New Creation there is no distress to those seeing it, and eternal regret to those trapped there forever by their own choices.

APPLICATION

1. There will be eternal separation between the saved and the lost, and so let that separation between evil thoughts and actions begin now for every believer, even while we try to reach the lost. Jude 22-23.

2. Every rebellious demon and man will bow before the Lord in the end. Do not feel that you need to defend the Lord, for He will defend Himself. Pity those who hate Him, for one day they will bow before Him. With pity in our heart towards the lost reach out to them all.

DOCTRINES

JUDGEMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE

SALVATION – IMPUTATION

Psalm 1:6

“For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

REFLECTION

There is no way around this verse, and praise God for that fact, for it settles our eternal security and assures us of eternal justice for those who are determined to resist the Lordship of Jesus until the end. God knows our ways, and He embraces us in love. We are known and we are loved. My favourite Psalm would have to be Psalm 103 in this matter:

“8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”

We are known by the Lord as we truly are; sinners in need of a Saviour, and children in need of loving forgiveness. The Lord meets us where we are and lifts us up to where we belong in Christ Jesus. We are loved and received forever in Christ and through His work on our behalf. He knows our deepest inexpressible thoughts and fears and answers our unspoken prayers. Romans 8:26. He did the work of the Cross for all mankind, 1 John 2:1-2, but for those who have rejected His work, they must stand on the basis of their own works. Revelation 20:12. Their choices are in space-time but they are infinite and eternal in their consequences. Just as ours is to accept Christ as our Saviour and Lord. There is no hope eternally for those who fully and finally reject the Lord, for He alone has the gift of eternal life. Without Him there is only eternal judgement.

Well does the apostle John remind us all of the facts about the choices we make daily. *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: ... but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”* 1 John 2:15-17.

APPLICATION

1. Relax believer, for you are known by the One who gave Himself for you. You cannot be more secure than in the love of the Lord for you. He knew you and He knows you and He went to the Cross with all the facts and you are saved to the uttermost!

2. The rejecter of the Lordship of Jesus must be told the “bad news” of the eternal nature of their choice, for eternal it is, and their fate is sealed if they remain in active or even passive rebellion against the One who went to the Cross for them. Weep for them now and share the truth with them with passionate concern, for there will be no tears in heaven and for those who have rejected Jesus there will be no hope once they pass death's door.

Notes

Psalm 2

INTRODUCTION

While this psalm is one of the “anonymous” ones, in Acts 4:25-26, this psalm is expressly attributed to David; we read: “Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, “Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?”” These words leave no argument as to their origin and author so far as the apostles were concerned.

It is a strongly “Messianic Psalm”; the psalmist affirms with absolute certainty that against all satanic and human viewpoint opposition, the LORD God will bring about Heaven’s rule over the Earth. God the Father will set His anointed King, God the Son, upon the throne of the world and will bless “all they that put their trust in Him” (v12b) from out of “the nations”, and from “the uttermost parts of the earth ” (v 8). The Holy Spirit will be poured upon all men and women in that day, and mankind will finally and fully see for 1000 years what the Plan of God for this earth really entailed

Psalm 2:1

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?”

REFLECTION

It is a vain and empty thing for unsaved and rebellious man to mock the Almighty God who made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. What gets into man that he/she should mock or insult their Maker? It is only the same satanic sin that defiled the earth in the very beginning; pride and arrogance, whereby men think they are “entitled” to a special deal from God that does not involve bowing their knees before Him. The key hallmark symptom of the so called “Narcissistic Personality Disorder”(read = evil) is a sense of entitlement! Truly nothing has changed amongst men.

The heathen still “rage” in hate filled anger, and abuse the Lord and all who stand for truth. There are some things that are predictable and the hatred of the satanic for the godly is one of those things. John 15:18-25. Men may rage against God but it is the Lord who is the judge of all, and He will judge, in His own time and in His own way. Psalms 46:6, Isaiah 8:9-10. God remains “with His people” today, and those who rage against the godly have picked a fight they cannot win and will not win.

They mocked the Lord of glory, humiliated Him and assaulted Him, and led Him to His death, but on the third day He rose again. Luke 18:32-34. The Lord has the last word at the Great White Throne Judgement, and it is the word of judgement to all who have rejected His person, plan and power for a godly life. The Lord revealed to the apostle Paul the path of rage and self deception that the psalmist refers to here. In his letter to the Romans Paul records his lack of shame in the message of the Gospel, and he records the lack of common sense, let alone wisdom, on the path of evil men. Romans 1:16-17, 18-32. The list of terrible sins and evils that Paul details in this chapter are the reminder that a life ruled by and directed by rage is one that is self destructive in an extreme.

Why do people ponder on things that are not worth the effort? Why would men give their life effort for things that will cost them their eternal soul? Matthew 16:26, Mark 8:36-37. What is it that moves evil within our fellow man? We are left with so many sad questions and the only answer is the mystery of selfishness and arrogant stupidity on the part of men. We are left baffled as we reflect upon the fate of the lost, for they have wilfully rejected their own Maker and denied their need for a Saviour. What can move such people? Only the power of the conviction of the Holy Spirit can move upon them. John 16:8-11. Truly salvation is the work of God alone, for they will not heed our logic or entreaty.

APPLICATION

1. Let us not be angry and outraged at the hatred of the unsaved towards God and ourselves, but rather feel the pathos of their stupidity and pray earnestly for them that the Holy Spirit might move in power upon them. Let us always remember that evangelism begins and ends with prayer, for salvation is a work of God not of man. Let us never be arrogant in our preaching, thinking that we are “having impact” upon the minds and hearts of men, for only the power of the Holy Spirit will save and deliver men from their arrogant rebellion.

2. Man may mock, but the Lord alone is the Judge of all, and He will judge all men for their sins and evils. We can leave men in the hands of Almighty God, and no matter how they insult us we can pray for them.

DOCTRINE

HEATHENISM AND GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS

Psalm 2:2-3

“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, ‘Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.’”

REFLECTION

We do well to remember that when Jesus was offered the kingdoms of the world in His temptation by the Devil, that He did not argue that they were not Satan’s to give him that day. At various days some kingdoms may be obedient to the Lord, but on that day the kingdoms of the world were Satan’s to give. Matthew 4:8-10. The rebellion identified here does not need to be the last great rebellion in the Great Tribulation period, for every day power hungry and power deceived men gather and plot to mock and work against God and His people.

Men love either the light or they love the darkness. John 3:16-36. There isn’t a twilight zone in the spiritual realm; man must bow before God or he will bow before the enemy of God. It is warfare to the end upon this earth, and there is no neutral ground for man to stand upon, only salvation or damnation. Acts 4:12, Hebrews 9:27.

It is foolishness for mere men to plan and plot against God their Creator, but it was equal foolishness for Satan and his demonic forces to do the same in eternity past. What arrogance and stupidity to plot against your own Maker and think that you can out think the One who gave you your inferior mind! Truly such people and angels prove their evil heart to do such a thing, and they also illustrate their weakness, for arrogance is a great weakness, for you over-estimate yourself and under-estimate your limitations and God’s almighty nature. Satan has always done so and so do those who sell out to him through his great deception.

Notice the heart of their rebellion. It is against the restraints that the Lord places upon mankind. The Lord has set moral limitations upon man’s behaviours in each of the areas of the Four Great Divine Institutions; Free Will, Marriage, the Family, and the Nation State. Satanic malice has been focused since the beginning upon each of these four divinely instituted protocols for mankind to live within. God’s boundaries are set and are not to be broken, but Satan’s focused energy is directed at destroying all the barriers the Lord has set up. 1 Peter 2:6-8. Satan hates mankind and by attacking the boundaries of morality and freedom he enslaves people, and does so often under the banner of some false concept of “freedom”. It is intriguing to see this work out in the abortion debate, where those who wish to kill unborn children are called “the pro-choice lobby”.

Satanic malice attacks free will by eroding man’s will power through alcohol, drugs, abuse that distorts the soul, and the temptations of the Old Sin Nature, as well as attacking freedom through political tyranny of all forms. He attacks Marriage by pornography and all forms of sexual perversion and sinful or stupid associations. Often all he has to do is get a believer to marry a person who is not godly and as focused as they are on the Lord’s will! He always will bring in “alternatives” to challenge the divine institutions and argue for “tolerance” when anything short of total rejection of the evil will lead to the eroding of morality in a society. Satan attacks the Family by distracting parents from their God given duty to bring up their children morally and consistently. He attacks the State by internationalism and all forms of government that tyrannise and restrict religious freedom for the people.

APPLICATION

1. Let us not be ignorant of the “devices” of the devil, (2 Corinthians 2:11) for his malice and hatred is to be feared and guarded against. He is a lion and he tears apart all who fail to protect themselves with their armour and prayer. Let us be people of prayer and people who walk carefully through this world, wary of their enemy and his evil schemes. He doesn’t need to have a new idea for the old ones work so well on foolish men and women.
2. While the hatred and deviousness of evil is consistent, so is the Love and power of God towards us. Let us be discerning and strong in the Word and so stand against the devil and all his wicked devices.

DOCTRINES

UNBELIEVER

CHRIST – PROPHET, PRIEST, KING

Psalm 2:4

“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.”

REFLECTION

The Lord is God indeed, and men are but grasshoppers in His sight. Isaiah 40:21-24. There was a beginning and there will be an ending and the Lord has spoken enough to men for them to know His truth and stand for righteousness, and all who mock God will be mocked in their evil. It is not as if God is mocking them, but He mocks their pride based actions, for they are foolish in light of reality. God hates sin, but has given Himself for the sinners. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, Galatians 1:4.

Evil men will finally be rebuked in one thing alone, and that is the full reality of the Cross, that it was indeed for them. Acts 4:12, Philippians 2:7-8, 3:21, Colossians 1:20, 1 Timothy 2:6, 1 John 2:1-2. When unsaved men see the truth they will be on their knees, but sadly there is no repentance in eternity, for their choices are now fixed, but they acknowledge the truth, even if they lived hating it. These evil people joined Satan in active and passive rebellion against the Lord of glory who gave Himself for them, and so their choices, their life styles, and their words, are rightly mocked from heaven's throne for the pathetic and empty headed evil activities they were.

This is no nasty mockery of the lost, only a righteous and just mockery of their attitudes and the pathetic and tragic attitudes that have led them to the Lake of Fire with Satan and his demons. There is nothing but sadness at the fate of evil men, for they didn't have to be this way, but choose their own fate through their own arrogance. Jesus words over Jerusalem give us the Father and Son's heart regarding the lost, and there is sadness for their fate, but finally there is also the total divine mockery of everything that evil stood for. Matthew 23:37ff.

In the end all their jibes at the Lord and at believers are turned back on them, and their choices and words are indeed eternally mocked as the evil, pointless and wasted rebellion they were. The saddest thing is that arrogance finally bows too late because they actually don't want and will not accept "inconvenient truth" that challenges their "right" to reject anything they don't like and approve of. God's grace and mercy reach out to them, but they hate any thought of it, and their choice to join Satan is respected by God. They share Satan's fate because they share his choices.

APPLICATION

1. There is no peace for the wicked, and after death there is no hope for the wicked either. Psalm 7:11, 119:155. These people made their choices in time and joined Satan and their choices are rightly and justly mocked by the Lord and by all the assembled throng who suffered at their hands in time. Let us leave any mockery of their evil deeds until this last day, and until then devote ourselves to prayer for their salvation as the Lord directs us. John 16:8-11.
2. There is a day when consequences overwhelm evil people and when there is no escape from them, and such a day is the Great White Throne Judgement day when those who mocked the Lord of glory have their choices mocked! This is the flip side of the Gospel message and we need to remind the unsaved of this and urge their repentance with tears.

Psalm 2:5

“Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.”

REFLECTION

At that last day for unsaved man God will rightly and justly show His anger at those who insulted the Lord and abused His sacrifice and those who stood with Him. There is a day when men must answer for their crimes and this is the day. God does get angry and we are told to be in fear/respect/awe of the Lord. The Lord's great anger flashed out briefly during His time on earth and it was in the temple with the crooked money changers who were abusing the poor and making religion a racket rather than keeping the rituals pointing to the reality that was Jesus. Matthew 21:11ff.

This "mafia type" operation was the cause of His righteous anger, and if you reflect upon all the evils of organised crime, especially when it combines with religious racketeering then you get a glimpse of the source of the Lord's anger. The Lord hated those who abused the genuine seeker after truth, and profited from abuse of faith. Matthew 23:29-33.

God will be openly angry at the lost on that last day and will speak to all and convict them all of their sins and their evil attitudes towards His love and care for them as His creatures. None will oppose the Lord's anger, for all will acknowledge it is right and just. The Lord will then "vex" them with eternal punishment for their evils. There is punishment for sinful and evil filled malice towards the Saviour and it is right and just that it should be announced and executed upon those who hate goodness. Psalms 110:1, 5-6, Zechariah 1:14-16, Revelation 20:10-15.

APPLICATION

1. The last judgement is a theme that we ought to speak upon after every Gospel appeal, for it is the alternative to salvation and we owe it to the lost to tell them their fate. Let us not be hesitant in speaking the truth about such things.
2. God is entitled to be righteously angry at those who with evil and malice have abused the saints down the centuries. There is punishment for the damned and they are richly deserving of them all and they will drink that cup to the full. Our challenge is to remain focused upon their salvation, but be always mindful that their day is limited and their punishment is secure and final.

Psalm 2:6

“Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.”

REFLECTION

David was anointed king many years before his ruler ship in Jerusalem, and the hill of Zion was a Jebusite stronghold in that day, so this verse cannot refer to David as king, and it does not resonate that it refers to any other king who ruled before the Babylonian Captivity. It is an acknowledged messianic reference and is rightly seen as applying to the Lord Himself for He alone will truly rule in righteousness from Zion’s hill in the Millennial Kingdom.

Note the word **“yet”** that starts the verse. In spite of man’s plots/plans, God has a Plan, and it centres in the “Son of David”. David himself is a flawed, but saved sinner. His evils indicate any can be saved if they bow before God’s Plan!

This is the Lord’s doing, not the anointing of any man that is in view here. It is God who has appointed this actual hill in Jerusalem to be the centre of history; it is not the choice or work of any group of men. The Lord is telling us all through the psalmist here that HE is doing something in history and man must come to terms with it, not debate it or try to explain it away. There is nothing intrinsically “holy” about the hill of Zion in its geology, but in its choice by God it is declared “holy” – that is “set apart” for the service of God and for His glory. It remains significant – this choice of God ends with time itself.

Five hundred years later Daniel sees a vision of the centrality of the Lord Jesus as the King of kings the very focal point of history. Daniel 7:9-14. Daniel is overwhelmed by what he sees, for he sees that the Kingship and Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the focus of all history – and His kingdom opens the door into eternity itself, and His kingdom goes into eternity beyond the closing of the door on this temporary time and space universe.

The great passage of scripture where the centrality of the hill of Zion emerges is in 2 Samuel chapters 6-7. David brings the Ark up to the city and it becomes the centre of worship there, and under Solomon will be moved north to the site (Mt Zion) that becomes the great temple site. David then thinks about the building of the temple and is told by the Lord that he is not allowed to build on Mt Zion, but he can prepare to build and his son will complete the job. He is then told the marvellous things about the desire he has to build on Mt Zion, for he is forbidden to build there, but God will build there a “house for David” and the “building” of the Lord will last, in a way that the temples on that site have not. 2 Samuel 7:8-16.

APPLICATION

1. Jerusalem is special because God’s choice was upon it and the Temple Mount area (Mt Zion) is the most special site on the entire planet, for it is God’s chosen place to anoint the Messiah as King. Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for the Prince of Peace is coming to bring in that peace! Remember that little word **“YET”** – God will win!
2. David’s desire was to build upon Mt Zion, but his heart was to bring glory to God through what he did. God’s heart towards him was to bring glory and praise and joy to him both then and forever, and through his descendent salvation came and the Saviour comes again to rule, and to rule as a son of David from that very hill top (although much “remodelled” by the great last earthquakes of the Tribulation period). Revelation 16:16-21.

Psalm 2:7

“I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

REFLECTION

The “decree” here refers to an appointment, and in the context of the psalm that is the appointment and anointing as King of all kings and Lord of all lords. When is this transaction taking place then? Is it a reference to the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension and Session, or the Second Advent? The later context of the psalm tells us that the decree is the formal announcement of the rulership of Jesus over the entire earth after the Second Advent, however the entire process may in view for the decree is from the Father over the Son and comes from beyond time and space in eternity

itself. It is the formal announcement that victory is fully and finally won, the damned are judged, and the saved are entered into His kingdom and the entire creation is brought subject to His Lordship.

From the resurrection to the Second Advent there is the unfolding of His victory over sin and death amongst men, but the two events are intimately connected. We separate things and divide up topics, but that is because we are creatures of space and time. God unites things by their organic relationship and in this divine decree we see eternity touch time at various times. The victory was assured in the cradle in Bethlehem, and upon the Cross at Calvary, and in the tomb that Easter morning, it was celebrated on the day of Pentecost, and it will be all fully seen in its finale in the situation after the Second Advent when the Lord rules as God-Man, King-Priest over all mankind forever.

For God the Father to say to God the Son "this day have I begotten you" encapsulates the greatest mystery of this temporary universe, for space and time are invaded by eternity here. The Creator has stepped into time and space as a creature, albeit a unique One. Like the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union itself we stand here on holy ground with little full understanding of what it all means save that we see the results in time in our salvation and in the filling of the Holy Spirit that we enjoy. In eternity past the Godhead made decrees about what would occur upon this earth during time and these decrees involved our salvation and the certainty of the results are bound up in their essence from before time was made. We glimpse here also part of the doctrines of Election and Predestination, and neither may be fully understood this side of eternity. The right response to all this is worship, Psalms 148:1-6, Isaiah 46:9-13.

Eternity touches time in the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ upon this planet to be our Saviour, Mediator and Lord. He, as our Creator, becomes like us, a "little lower than the angelic hosts", in order that He might win our salvation and so prove the angels who fell are all culpable for their great evil in rebellion against God. If man, as a creature lower than the angels can respond to the Gospel, freely bow their knees and be saved, then the fallen angels could have as superior beings, with better minds! John 1:14-18, 3:16, Hebrews 1:3-6, 5:5-10.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord stepped into space-time and won our salvation. In so doing He lifted man up above the angels, who from that point became our servants, or our sworn enemies. The plan of God lifts man up in Christ Jesus above all else. Let us praise Him for His gracious provision of salvation and the incredible position we have in and through the work of the Lord for us.

2. Let us praise the Lord indeed for the salvation we have received that is secure in the divine decrees that stretch back to eternity past. Let us see a glimpse of the immensity of the Plan of God in this verse, for we are delivered by means of a plan that comes from before time and space were made! We cannot be more secure than we are! Let us praise the Lord for His amazing gifts to us in Christ Jesus.

DOCTRINES

KINGDOM

CHURCH

Psalm 2:8-9

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

REFLECTION

This passage may appear to be a destructive one but it is far from that; it is the victory of the Lord announced here and His rulership celebrated. As a father would say to a son so the Father tells the Son to simply "ask" for the gift of the nations of the world, and they will be given right there and then. As we have seen the temptation of the Lord referred to in the earlier psalm we can see the significance of the reference here in verse eight. The nations are presently, and have been since the Fall of Man mainly controlled by Satan through power and other lusts. Matthew 4:8-10. They were Satan's to offer at the temptation, but after his defeat and the judgement of the lost they are the Lord's alone for no satanic evil nor Old Sin Nature tendency to lust can influence their governance.

Notice also the true meaning of "heathen" here, as it is translated by the old KJV English version. It simply means all of the non-Jewish nations of the world, from Israel outwards to the furthest corner of the globe. This quiet and actually lovely word between the Father and the Son at the Second Advent reminds us of the prayer of the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane as John records part of it in **John 17:1-5**. The godly remnant in all the nations are finally blessed in Jesus, and His prayer for mankind is answered in that wonderful day.

- "1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:
2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*
4. *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*
5. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."*

The great psalm that takes us inside the agony of the Cross itself is a prophetic word looking forward to this wonderful day also. **Psalm 22:25-28**. All these "messianic psalms" point to the final victory of the Lord over all that Satan did in the garden of Eden in deceiving our ancestors and bringing evil, sin, and death into the world of men.

"25. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindred's of the nations shall worship before thee.

28. For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations".

Once again we are also reminded of the prophecies given to Daniel five hundred years after David's death concerning the final victory of the "Son of David" – the Messiah to come. **Daniel 7:13-14**. What God says occurs, and what the Lord has revealed through His prophets will come to pass. If it has not come to pass man must simply wait, for it always will, for there is certainty in the plan of God for mankind, for the Lord will overturn all the evil legacy Satan's victory in the Garden of Eden all those centuries back.

"13. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Way down at the bottom of the world in Australasia we take great joy from these verses that mention the "uttermost parts of the earth", for you cannot get further away from Jerusalem than ourselves, except in Antarctica! We are right here in the scriptures and we rejoice in the promises of God relating to us here, for our descendants will be ruled by the Lord from Jerusalem, throughout the entire Millennial Kingdom. Hallelujah!!!!

Verse nine reminds us again of the judgement of the rebellious amongst mankind, as there has been against the angelic host who followed Satan. All who rejected their Creator and King are judged and destroyed, wiped away from the surface of the earth and sentenced to eternal judgement. Revelation 20:5-15.

The Lord will judge in His power and authority and condemn all who have stood against goodness, righteousness and truth, and who have followed after the satanic lie. Right to the end of time there are rebels, even after 1000 years of the Lord's perfect rulership. This incredible state of affairs is a shock to see, but a reminder of the sinfulness of fallen man. The evil ones, both angelic and human, are judged, but the meaning of verse nine may not be solely judgement, and may not apply to the lost at all, or if it does, it may only be in part.

The language used, that sounds so destructive is language used of the potter as he works at the wheel making pots from the malleable clay, and if you watch even the most skilled potter, at times he must smash the half formed pot because of a failure of one aspect of the clay he is working with. He will smash the pot down with a single blow at times, and at others will cut the clay into pieces and mix in fresh clay to change its consistency, and then adding water will start to reform the pot from the renewed mound of clay again. **Isaiah 30:15-18**.

Those who enter the Millennial Kingdom with the Lord are the saved from the Great Tribulation period and they have been through a trial of fire like hell itself and come through beaten, smashed about, cut and bruised, but delivered by the Lord, their divine potter.

They have been remade through the experiences of these last terrible days upon the earth. They have been malleable clay in the potter's hands and so they enter His Kingdom. They cry out with the words of Isaiah, "You are the potter and we are the clay Lord". Isaiah 64:5.

Hear the words of Jeremiah in this regard, **Jeremiah 18:1-10**.

"1. The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2. Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

3. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

4. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

5. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

6. O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

7. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;

8. If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

9. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;

10. If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."

APPLICATION

1. Let us allow the Lord Jesus to do His work with us through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, and let us rejoice in the “knocking about” that we can get at times. The Lord is the potter and we are the clay; we are His clay to be formed into the pot of His desires and plan, not our own! Let us rejoice in His work in us for it brings us to the form that will bring most glory to His holy name.

2. There is final and full victory over the entire earth for the Lord at His Second Advent. The Lord will rule over every nation at the end of the earth, and will do so from Jerusalem. There is glory for all the nations of the earth at this time, and so let us rejoice in this now and give praise now for what He will achieve then. It is a settled thing and will occur, and so it is a worthy item for praise and glory now. Let us praise God for the things that we do not see present now, but know will be on the basis of His Holy Word, for the reality of prophecy is absolutely certain.

DOCTRINES

HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

HOLY SPIRIT – COMFORTER

JUDGEMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE

Psalm 2:10-12

“Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.”

REFLECTION

In the light of the content of the previous verses all rulers are asked to pause and reflect upon the source of their own power and wisdom to be sure they are not deceived and distorted in their own thinking by any power (or other) lust. Rulers are under more pressure than ordinary people, for the wielding of power brings with it temptations to abuse that power that “lesser mortals” will never know. Satan’s great sin was arrogance and it is the point of weakness for all so called “great men”. It is easy to start to believe one’s own publicity machine and at that point Satan has deceived your mind and will destroy your body over time unless you repent thoroughly.

The orders are direct and blunt. “Be wise”, Be Instructed!” Wisdom is from the Lord alone, and all who seek other sources will end up at the self-centred and narcissistic shrine of Satan himself. Well did Solomon note the source of all true wisdom in Proverbs, and yet he himself walked away from wisdom into gross sexual immorality and so destroyed himself and his kingdom over time. Hear his words believer, and remember that he himself did not follow through on them! Read the following passage from Hebrews and reflect upon the need to hear, believe and apply the Word, not just affirm its truth! **Hebrews 3:7 – 4:10.**

Proverbs 1:7, 22-23,

“7. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

“22. How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?”

23. Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.”

Proverbs 3:1-8

“1. My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

2. For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

4. So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

8. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.”

Proverbs 5:21-23

“21. For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

22. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

23. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.”

There is no wisdom that ignores the Lord and His Holy Word. There is wisdom only when we bow before the Lord and worship His holiness and serve Him alone. It is in bowing our knee at the Cross that we find grace and the help that is

needed to serve in truth in the place we are called to serve. If any ruler ignores the Lord he/she is on the path to destruction. We govern and judge the earth's inhabitants only by the Lord's permission. There is no hope for us if we ever forget that.

Verse eleven reminds us that a holy fear of the Lord is the sign of an intelligent ruler. To have reverence for the Creator and His rules is a sign of moral and intellectual intelligence. It is the Creator who makes the rules not men who are creatures. Let us heed the Word and follow the Maker in all things lest we fall into gross error. The writer of Hebrews follows through on all the themes of these first two psalms and urges holy fear of the Lord in all our rulership duties as pastors or leaders of clubs, businesses, or even nations.

Hebrews 12:12-15, 25-29

- “12. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;*
- 13. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*
- 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*
- 15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*
- 25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:*
- 26. Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.*
- 27. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*
- 28. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*
- 29. For our God is a consuming fire.”*

We serve in holy and reverent fear, and we are to worship with joy and trembling. This is a strange combination to many in today's love soaked world. Let us pause and reflect upon the psalmist's challenge in the worship area. Paul also combines these two concepts, in Philippians 2:12 he says, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling", and in Philippians 4:4, he urges all believers to, "rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice".

Rejoice in all of that the Lord's Plan contains to bless and provide for you, but rejoice with trembling, not abandoned emotion, for we walk upon fragile ground and we have an enemy who hates us. All rejoicing is tempered with holy reverence and cautious awareness of the reality of the Invisible War against the Devil. We are passionate in our love for the Lord and in our worship at all times, but it is not unbridled emotion, but joy that is tempered by the reality of the battle that still rages around us at this time.

APPLICATION

1. Let us remember the Angelic Conflict and in all our worship rejoice while being watchful of our enemy.
2. Let us live and serve the Lord in the holy "fear of the Lord", for His standards are holy and must be met in Christ Jesus. Let us walk worthy of our Lord in thought and deed, and fight against temptations as they arise to derail our progress. Let us walk in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

DOCTRINES

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD

CHRISTIAN LIFE – HUMILITY

Psalm 2:12

“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

REFLECTION

To kiss the Son is to recognise who He is and honour Him in Middle Eastern tradition. This was homage shown and rightly shown to the Saviour and Lord of all. 1 Kings 19:8, Hosea 13:2. All who would rule and not face God's judgement need to heed the right of the Lord their God to homage and give it freely, well before the unsaved "bow their knee". The Lord seeks for our voluntary worship and service, not any forced submission.

All kings expected their visitors to bow and wait to be asked to stand before them. If a king did not receive proper homage their "wrath" (righteous anger) would flash out and the visitor would be executed or beaten from their throne into the street outside. The psalmist reminds all who hear his words that we stand before the Lord of glory and God who

made us and there ought be no hesitation in giving proper honour and dignity to the Lord. **Hebrews 4:16** – it is the “throne of grace”, but that does not mean we are casual – we remember what that grace cost the Lord to bless us!

Notice that it is not love that is mentioned but what is right and proper, and this is the emphasis that we need to give at times to balance the love focused thinking of our day. It is also right and proper to remember that we love Him because He first loved us, and that while we were still sinners Christ died for us, and on both counts we ought to fall to our knees daily, but we also ought to bow with the simple thought of the Character of God and our own creatureliness.

The power of the Lord is the key point for the psalmist here. He identifies the stupidity of the rebellion of Satan, as if he could get away with his evil plans! Only the worst narcissist would think that he could replace the Lord who made him and lifted him up as the greatest of the angels. Satan was the most honoured and he was the most evil and foolish in his rebellion. Even the slightest power from the Lord will blow away the greatest angel. The One who breathed out the present universe will have no problem in breathing men and angels into the Lake of Fire for eternity! Revelation 20:10-15

While the power of the Lord is awesome it is not expressed in judgement towards those who worship the Lord in spirit and truth, but is expressed in loving care and protection. The Lord is One to whom we can run to find refuge. There is blessing to all who worship the Lord and seek refuge for their soul and body in the Lord's Plan for their life. Psalm 40:6, Psalm 84:10-12, 146:3-5, Isaiah 26:3-4, 28:16.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be quick to bow our knee to the Creator and Saviour, and let us spend time in prayers of thanks for the greatness of the grace we have all received. Let us also simply praise and worship the Lord for who He is rather than just for what He has done for us. Let us serve the Lord in joy and thankfulness, but in gratefulness and humility also.
2. Let us seek the shelter of His wings and rejoice in the care that He has over us. We are protected and we are beloved. Let us rest in His love and rejoice in His plan, even though at times we cannot see the next step to take. Let us keep worshipping the Lord until the answers to our specific prayers arrive, for they are certain from eternity past.

DOCTRINES

COVENANTS – DAVIDIC COVENANT

HAPPINESS – HAPPINESS AND EXPERIMENTS IN ECCLESIASTES

Notes

PSALM 3

(A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN HE FLED FROM ABSALOM HIS SON.)

INTRODUCTION

David faced a great evil in the so called "Great Rebellion", but it was an evil he had produced for himself by his inaction over years in addressing the evils in his palace. The rape of Tamar, his favouritism of one son over another, and his refusal to address the evils with judgement and even execution would ultimately lead to the murder of the rapist son Amnon, and the fleeing of Absalom. 2 Samuel 11-15. Absalom was totally narcissistic and the study of these chapters is recommended before reading this psalm to get the flavour of events behind it. All the characters here are wonderful psychological studies in dysfunction and disorders that still abound in politics and business.

Old Joab was ruthless and opportunistic in his favouritism of Absalom and in engineering his return. David was in error in ignoring his son and opened the door for him to plan and execute the rebellion when it occurred. Many good men saw David's inaction as a reason to side with the arrogant young man Absalom, but he was unworthy of their allegiance. Joab played politics here and probably supported Absalom initially but then changed sides when he could see how weak and pathetic the young man was. 2 Samuel 14. Narcissists are always dangerous allies, for they worship only themselves.

David is seriously depressed through these years and certainly is not focused upon what he should have been. If ever there was a good case study in the cost of adultery these chapters illustrate the price David paid for sex with Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 11-12. Finally the plan is executed and David springs into action and becomes decisive again on the retreat from Jerusalem and afterwards. 2 Samuel 15.

As he leaves the city he meets key people who either encourage or abuse him and it is the abuse that is recorded in 2 Samuel 16 that is responded to in the psalm before us. The thoughts expressed are a wonderful insight into the mind of a man who realises he has sinned greatly and yet received even more evil back from those who owed him allegiance, even though his behaviours had not deserved it. Evil people love it when a good man fails, and their abuse is always extreme, for it takes scrutiny off their evil deeds.

Psalm 3:1

"LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me."

REFLECTION

It is always a shock to realise that a betrayal has gone far deeper and more powerfully undermined you than initially was apparent. No matter how badly we have behaved we do not expect our closest friends and fellow workers to betray us, but if we have been distracted and they have come to believe we "have lost it" then the extent of the rebellion can be fatal to the organisation. It is a reminder to keep on task in all leadership roles, because untreated depression and any pattern of distraction from the key roles of a leader will always open the door to the narcissists like Absalom.

There are always people who think they have more brains and ability than they actually have, and who will try to overthrow you. At times good organisations are taken over by a "coup" and then fall apart because the coup leader has not the abilities their marketing machine told everybody that they had! Those who join Absalom are opportunists who see a way open for quick wealth to be gained and power to be achieved. There are many who seek revenge on David for the defeat of the house of Saul, and they will all pay with their lives later.

Many old scores are to be settled in this rebellion, and people's malice in such situations will surprise us all, for most who believe they are "special" will resent you if you have been a good manager who has seen that they are not special, just fat headed. When we exercise good leadership we eliminate or control narcissists, but when the coup occurs these people come out of the woodwork and try to "get even" with all who have treated them as they deserved to that time.

David is simply overwhelmed by the number of malicious men who emerge from the court and around about it and stand with his evil son, when they owed him their position and all they had to do was faithfully serve him to live and die with great rewards. Many have emerged to support his son against him and it initially overwhelms David.

APPLICATION

1. Malice is overwhelming when we have been fair and right in our dealings with people beforehand. We must remember the words of John in John 2:24-25. Jesus didn't trust the crowd for he knew what rebellion and self centeredness was in most people. We do well to remember the fallen Old Sin Nature of those around us and be ready for betrayal but keep serving in righteousness and justice.

2. It is OK to get overwhelmed at times, and it is OK to get depressed at times, for there are things that are depressing. What is not right is to stay in a paralyzed place when the Lord calls us to cast our cares upon Him and keep serving the Lord's people with focused attention. It is easy to get distracted from the crucial things by the apparently urgent things and thereby unhook an organisation. Let us be focused upon the task of the Lord and serve with our eyes fixed on Jesus not things or people.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

Psalm 3:2

“Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah”

REFLECTION

It is easy to label someone as “mentally unfit to govern”, or “mentally ill”, and let us be very clear David would have picked up a diagnosis in any good clinic of depression, but being depressed didn't mean he was unfit to rule and lesser men could replace him. David's depression became sinful because he didn't take definite action to deal with its cause, but he was still king and he could have expected good counsel and encouragement, but sadly none came to correct him.

As people looked at David's soul (his cognitive and social functioning) they believed that he was beyond help from men or God; indeed some may have felt he was being judged by God for his earlier sins. A key member of his cabinet (Ahithophel - grand-father of Bathsheba) will leave him and join Absalom and we can pause and understand that given David's great evil in that matter. It was easy to judge David, but the key point that the critics missed was that God had judged him and after his confession, Psalm 51, had forgiven him. As bad as he had been he was forgiven and what God says “forgiven” over, man had better say “amen Lord” to also. Psalm 103:10-17.

God had not forsaken David, and He does not forsake us, no matter what the sin we commit, as long as it is confessed and dealt with. God is forgiving, and so judgement is His “strange work”. Isaiah 28:21-22. The Lord had made it clear to the Israelites, from the beginning of their history on their arrival at the land of Promise, that there were two paths for them; the path of obedience and blessing, or the path of rebellion and divine discipline. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 27-30. Moses last words to them reminded them that God forgives, restores and then blesses again. God is not the thunderbolt throwing pagan deity, but the God of LIFE and HOPE.

Deuteronomy 29:25-30:5.

“25. Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt:

26. For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them:

27. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book:

28. And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.

29. The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

1. And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,

2. And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

3. That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

4. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:

5. And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.”

God does not forsake His people when they turn to Him in repentant prayer, no matter how badly we believe that person has been evil in our sight. We may forsake the Lord's path at times but He never forsakes us, and is always ready to forgive and restore us to living fellowship. John 1:12-13, 2 Timothy 2:13, 1 Peter 1:4-5. The prophet Isaiah would, three hundred years after David, give the same message of hope through repentance to Israel and salvation would be the result again for the remnant of the nation.

Isaiah 1:10-20

“10. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

12. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

13. *Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.*
14. *Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.*
15. *And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.*
16. *Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;*
17. *Learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.*
18. *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*
19. *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:*
20. *But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."*

David was not forsaken after he confessed his great sins. He was disciplined by natural consequences for the rest of his life because of the flow on effect of the evil he unleashed, but he was forgiven, and he was in the place of fellowship again.

We have God's promise in all such situations that the Lord will bring blessing from cursing once repentance is completely done before the Lord. Romans 8:28, Hebrews 6:13-15, 1 Peter 3:8-12. God's Promises are clear to us all, that there is always help with our God.

"Selah" means suspension, that is, to pause and is a musical notation but also a pause for prayer and to await the Lord's answer. It is David's way of saying – "I now await the Lord's answer to prayer and solution to my problem".

APPLICATION

1. Let us see things as God does, and if the Lord forgives us, then He will forgive our enemies, whose sins we may feel are "worse" than our own. Let us not be hypocritical in these matters but deal with others as God has dealt with us. Remember the Lord's Prayer believer, and forgive others as God has forgiven you! Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4.

2. We are never forsaken by the Lord, for He is our help and refuge; He remains our strong tower of strength once confession has cleared away any block to fellowship. We are forgiven and restored by confession of sin, and so let us never heed the doubts of those who do not understand the Father-heart of God. We are beloved of the Father, never forsaken. He will never fail us in any way, for His holy character is at stake in such matters. We ask for help on the basis of the holy and perfect character of God, with the assurance that comes from that truth.

Psalm 3:3

"But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head."

REFLECTION

The little English word "but" is often a negative presence in a sentence, but here it is a light in the dark place for David, for it contrasts the insulting and false words of his enemies, and the reality of God's shielding love and protection towards him. The Lord is the "strong tower" to which we can flee, the shield of faith behind which we can shelter. There are over 3000 promises in the Word of God and the Lord asks us to take up the "shield of faith" that these represent and get down securely behind the promises of the Word, for they are all backed by the holy character of God.

Psalms 18:1-6

1. *I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.*
2. *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*
3. *I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*
4. *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.*
5. *The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.*
6. *In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears."*

David was able to say, that the Lord was his shield of faith, and he was also the Glory of his life. The splendour and majesty of David as a king was dependent totally upon the glory of the Lord working through him; it did not come from David's character or human works. David understood something that many in Christian service today forget; that the Lord must lift us up, we must not lift ourselves up to any position. There is no room for politics in the Church of the Lord, only for humility and prayer. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and in His good time He will lift you up". 1 Peter 3:5-10.

David understood that he had been cast down from the kingship through his neglect of the kingdom and his slackness towards his son's behaviours, but he understood God's forgiveness and God's way of lifting men up again. He saw divine discipline as temporary, for it always is until repentance and humility restore us to the place where the Holy Spirit's power can flow again through our life. He rests in the Lord and trusts the power and plan of God to fulfil all that God wanted done. David places himself in the place where God can lift him up, and that is the place we need to be in ourselves every day.

APPLICATION

1. Let us get down behind the shield of faith today believer, and trust in the Lord's truth and rest upon the Lord's promises, for they are grounded within the security of His holy and perfect character.

Let us deal with fear, doubt, despair and great turmoil of spirit by cuddling into our shield and holding the promises of God's Word close to our heart and mind.

2. It is the Lord who lifts up and casts down. If we are cast down let us deal with anything that has separated us from our Lord, or let us simply cry out to the Lord for help in time of satanic pressure. Let us then confidently seek the Lord's "lifting up" of our lives back into powerful Holy Spirit anointed service. The Lord lifts up, and He alone lifts up without Satan being able to stop the process. Let us not politic, but rest upon the Lord.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD

Psalm 3:4

"I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah"

REFLECTION

The Lord hears our prayers and always answers them. Refer to the doctrine of Prayer below and be refreshed in the Lord, and remember that the Lord's character is our guarantee of being heard; He always hears His children! David can cry aloud to the Lord and know that his prayers are heard and answered. It is good to remember that we are loved and so when we cry out to the Lord we are assured of a hearing by our heavenly Father.

If we are to cry aloud we are to cry aloud to the Lord our God and cast our cares upon Him. 1 Peter 5:5-10. The Lord hears and answers David from the holy hill of Jerusalem where the Temple will be built by his son Solomon. It is David's way of saying that God's hearing is related to his plan and the plan is secure; there is a future for his house and for his nation. There is more than that; there is a future for man, even though we are hated by the enemy here. John 15:18-21.

APPLICATION

1. We are heard by God, Hallelujah! Like David we can have absolute confidence in the answers to prayer that will come from the Lord, for we are His children and are part of His eternal plan.

2. God hears us and the assurance that this fact provides will strengthen us in dark places as we advance in the Lord's work. Let us rejoice like David and give thanks for the provisions of the Lord within the Plan. It is only ever about obedience to the Plan of God. "Lord open our eyes to see your plan and empower us to advance into it daily." Amen.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

Psalm 3:5

“I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.”

REFLECTION

David had been on the run all that long first day, fleeing from his son Absalom and his troops. The foolishness of the young man was seen in his delay in the city of Jerusalem to have sex with all of the old king’s harem. It was an act that betrayed his evil heart of lust and it gave David the opportunity to flee across the Jordan River and find sanctuary there. David was able to lay down and sleep soundly for, I suspect, the first time since the day he fell into sin with Bathsheba. He could rest in the Lord’s provision for him, for he had seen that the counsels of his evil son’s advisors were foolishness and that the result would now be in the Lord’s hands for David.

The Lord had given him rest of body and mind and the Lord had lifted him up to serve again. He did not deserve to be delivered, but in grace he was and he gave thanks to the Lord for deliverance. He has walked with vigour, but even more importantly, he had rested in the Lord’s provision to vindicate him and to lift him up again. Ephesians 3:17, Hebrews 4:1-2. David understood that the Lord was his shield and his deliverer, and he rested in the Lord’s protection having done what he could to escape his son.

It is vital that we get things in the right order. First David had to flee and not stop walking until he had crossed Jordan, but once they were physically safe he could rest and sleep. There is a time to sleep like Peter did in jail, Acts 12:5ff, resting in the prayers of others, and a time to flee for your life. Acts 9:23-25, 13:13-17. David fled then rested, and he was relaxed in the Lord’s will for his life both times. The Lord sustained him as he ran down into the Great Rift Valley and across the Jordan and the Lord sustained him as he rested and slept and recovered his strength.

Proverbs 3:24-26.

- “24. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.*
- 25. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.*
- 26. For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.”*

Isaiah 26:3-8

- 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*
- 4. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:*
- 5. For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.*
- 6. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.*
- 7. The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.*
- 8. Yea, in the way of thy judgements, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.*

APPLICATION

- 1. Whether we flee or stand we need to rest upon the Lord’s Plan for our life, not be ruled by our fears for our life. We are the Lord’s and it is His responsibility to provide, protect and give power to win the battles that must be fought. Let us rest upon the Lord’s plan and serve with relaxed confidence in the Lord’s ability to keep us. He will sustain us as we advance to serve Him in spirit and in truth.
- 2. There is a time to sleep and rest and recharge batteries and those who cannot do that are not resting in the Lord’s provision, for He gives His loved ones sleep! There is a rest in the Lord that we all need often to recharge for greater service. Just as the Lord pulled aside and recharged batteries, so let us pull back and recharge our batteries when we need to for greater service.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH

Psalm 3:6

“I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about”

REFLECTION

When we realise the power that the Lord makes available to us as His children we can relax when against seriously high odds. There is no danger and no worries with the Lord, when you know the Lord has called you to a task at this place and time, for the Lord will move all obstacles to achieve HIS goals. For it is His Plan! When it is God’s will it is relaxing under pressure, for the “battle is the Lord’s”, the victory and joy is the believer’s as they trust and obey in the process. 1

Samuel 17:47. David learned again and again that he could rest in the Lord's provision for him. Psalms 27:1-3, 46:2-7, 118:10-12.

The battles in this life are not always to the strongest, nor the race always to the fastest runner, Ecclesiastes 9:11, but the victory is always in the Lord's hands, for the Plan is HIS alone. Our job is to orient ourselves correctly to what the Lord is doing, and serve on our assigned task with focused attention on the sole task the Lord has before us, and do it with all our heart and mind and soul. It doesn't matter how many enemies we have for the Lord will defeat them all if we are walking where the Lord directs. Whatever occurs on the Lord's path for our life is in His hands and He has a plan to bring it to victory; depend upon that.

APPLICATION

1. Do not fear when you are surrounded by enemies, ask only for the Lord's deliverance and rest upon His path for your life, for that alone is your destiny. You are the Lord's and He will deliver no matter what the odds men give you. One thousand to one odds are alright if you are walking with God and in His plan for your life.
2. Get your eyes off the enemies that are always around about and focus upon the Lord alone. The old hymn has it right when it says, "turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." Worship is the antidote to fear at all times.

Psalm 3:7

"Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly."

REFLECTION

David is confident of victory but he still asks for it strongly of the Lord, and this is the reminder to us that prayer is to be offered up every day on every subject that concerns us, with the expectation that the Lord will deliver in His time and in His way to His glory and our rejoicing. James 1:5-8. He is not asking God to "wake up", as if He is asleep, but to "stand up", which in this culture was the way a king exercised power and dominion over the situation. This is at the heart of all deliverance prayers; we seek the Lord's dominion over our life situation for the glory of the name of Jesus. We ask in Jesus name to bring glory to the Lord through all that occurs. John 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:23-26.

God's Plan for our lives calls for us to get the blessing and for the Lord Jesus to get the glory in all situations we face. That will always be the result of the Lord's work. Whenever anything occurs where there is no blessing to believers, and where the Lord Jesus doesn't get the glory, then something is wrong, very wrong! The Lord moves and defeats the enemy. The picture in this verse is a fist fight, where the powerful blow breaks the cheek bone and smashes the enemy's teeth out of their mouth. It is a violent image, but a powerful one that indicates the opponent is totally in the power of God, and at the mercy of God.

APPLICATION

1. Let us see the enemies we face as defeated by the Lord, and let us see them smashed before we say "amen" to our prayer for deliverance. We are to pray expectantly, for the Lord will get the glory in this life and we will be blessed in the path the Lord calls us to walk.
2. Let us cry aloud to the Lord and expect the Lord's deliverance in power. God delights in the deliverance of His saints on the path that He has directed them to walk upon. Let us praise Him for all He has given and will give and boldly approach the throne of grace with expectation of results to bring glory to the Lord Jesus through our life here. That is why we are here after all.

Psalm 3:8

"Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah"

REFLECTION

God is in the deliverance business. Saving and delivering is an essential part of the very nature of God. God is defined by His power to deliver and save to the uttermost all who come to Him and seek assistance. Hebrews 7:25. The Lord is our deliverer and our refuge in times of great trouble.

Psalms 37:39-40

“39. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.

40. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.”

Blessing is upon the people of the Lord through the work of the Lord on their behalf. We are to seek the Lord's path, the Lord's tasking, and the Holy Spirit's power, and then there is blessing in the work. The Lord delights in blessing His people and He delights in the performance of His will by His children.

APPLICATION

1. God is the deliverer, and so let us boldly seek the salvation we need in the situations He has placed us within. If we have doubts about the situation we still ask for deliverance, for the Lord delights in turning cursing to blessing to the glory of His Holy Name. The Lord's deliverance is always what we seek; we do not seek the answers of men.

2. The Lord delights in blessing us, and so let us expect His work in our lives to the blessing and worship of His Holy name. Let us see the delight of the Lord and not fear outcomes, but look for His blessing.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION

PSALM 4

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN ON NEGINOTH, A PSALM OF DAVID.

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is addressed to the chief of the musical department of tabernacle services, the Chief Musician. Authority and order characterised the worship of the tabernacle and later the temple. For there to be worship that honours the Lord there must be order and care-protection over the Lord's people as they worship. This was achieved through the High Priest, the King and the "Chief Musician, so that the entire worship service was co-ordinated in a manner that honoured and glorified God, and did not become a glorification of the abilities and talents of men.

NEGINOTH is a transliteration of the Hebrew word *negiyath*, taken from the root word *nagan*. *Nagan* means to thum or beat a tune with the fingers, especially to play a tune on a *stringed* instrument in a certain serious and reflective manner. There is debate on what this term actually means amongst even Jewish sources, but it appears to mean that the psalm is to be sung in the manner of an English "Ode", with serious beat and rhythm that makes the singers pause and reflect on every word as they sing, and draws the attention of the listeners to every word being sung by the singers.

It is the reminder that we are not to "lose ourselves" in worship, but rather find the Lord's presence and hear His Holy Word and reflect upon its application into daily life. Worship is not to be emotional alone, but involve every faculty, and bring the entire life into conformity to Christ's standard and holy demands. It is to be carefully controlled by one in authority so that no distractions occur and no false prophets or narcissistic "performers" can distort the process into the glorification of man, rather than total pre-occupation with God.

Psalm 4:1

"Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer".

REFLECTION

God hears us, but David always asks to be heard, reminding himself of his need to humbly request the Lord's mercy, grace and power, not just take things for granted. Many ask pastors why we mention certain things in prayer every day, and yet they are things relating to the holy character of God that we know well. Why do we keep repeating them every time we pray? The answer is illustrated here, for we take nothing for granted, nor treat any truth as one that is so well known that it no longer needs repeating or reminder. Every day we stand afresh upon the rock that is Christ Jesus, and every day we re-affirm in our prayers the truths that are His doctrines.

Prayer is to be offered often through every day, and doctrines constantly affirmed aloud that all might remember upon what basis we ask all things. David affirms, before he asks for anything other than being heard, the truth of the source of his righteousness. He is declared righteous because of the grace, mercy and love of God, not any worth on his part. The glory of God's Plan for man's salvation is that we don't have to be righteous to receive the free gift of salvation, for we could never be worthy of it. The Lord came to call sinners to repentance, for there were and are still no righteous men! Mark 2:17, Luke 5:32.

God is the "God of our righteousness", for it is His declaration of righteousness that makes us so. It is the doctrines of Imputation and Justification that we rest upon, and have the right to offer up daily prayers. David remembers that it is the Lord alone who makes/declares him righteous, for in him there is no good thing by nature. Psalm 51. There are "none righteous before God, no not one!" Romans 3:10. The glory of the Lord's provision for us is that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us! David stands in this expectation, for it was a reality for him 1000 years before the Cross, just as it is now nearly 2000 years after the Cross.

Romans 5:5-11.

"5. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

The Lord's gracious and loving work within us is to "enlarge us" so that we might be able to be used by the Holy Spirit to bring glory to the Lord, not be self centred, bringing glory to ourselves and distraction to others. Notice the meaning of "enlarged", for it is similar to the concept of the potter and the clay seen in Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18:4ff, Romans 9:21. The Lord "opens us up" and "breaks us down", bringing us to the place where we are able to serve in holiness and focused Holy Spirit power along the path the Lord calls alone.

It is often that we learn more in our distress than we do in our days of prosperity, and David reflects upon this truth, and has already asked the Chief Musician to make sure that the singers sing this psalm in a way that gets everybody pausing and reflecting upon this truth. We need to reflect upon the truths that come through suffering, for the "University of Pain" is the one with most gain for all who are "exercised by it". Hebrews 12:6-13. All things will work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to the purpose of God for their life alone! Romans 8:28.

David asks for the mercy and direction of the Lord into his life. He wants specific answers to his specific prayers (most of which we never hear, for they are none of our business, they are between David and the Lord, just as ours are between us and the Lord). He asks for these in accordance with grace and mercy, not his deserving or desires. David has been "enlarged" by suffering to the place where he seeks the Lord's path alone and the Lord's direction and power alone. He sees that it is not his plan but God's that alone matters.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be sure we are daily opening ourselves up to the work of the Holy Spirit, so that we might be His servants and walking as He directs and leads, in accordance with His plan for the church and our part in it. The Lord wants us "enlarged" by the work of the Holy Spirit and so ready to serve in His way, not our thinking patterns.
2. It is always about HIM, not about our desires, plans and power. Let us seek, like David, God's power to walk in God's Plan for our life, along God's path only. There is nothing else that has any significance at all in this life. Let us allow the Lord to open us up to His plan and remove our boundaries and restrictions, but have His way with us and thereby achieve His results, not the limited results we think are the plan in our own strength and reason.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION – ATONEMENT – UNLIMITED ATONEMENT

Psalm 4:2

"O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah"

REFLECTION

Jesus words in Matthew 7:13-23 haunt me daily as I contemplate the problems within many local churches. People have become so enraptured of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that they are following after falsehood and it is seen over time by its immoral and self centred fruits in the lives of those so deceived. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is peace, love, joy, patience, holiness, kindness and many others, but never immorality and things that bring shame, dishonour, embarrassment and reproach upon the Lord and His people.

Hear Jesus words ringing in your ears as we enter into the body of this psalm. David has asked that it be played and sung slowly and mournfully to encourage reflection and this is why; many deceivers have gone out into the world and we must guard against all false spirituality that produced disgrace to the Lord's name. 1 John 4:1ff. The Holy Spirit will never bring disgrace, shame, embarrassment or dishonour on the name of the Lord.

The great danger of satanic viewpoint is summed up in the descriptive word that explains it – "worldliness". Satan's viewpoint is pride based and self centred always. It magnifies the person involved and has some form(s) of list at its core. It is the worship of self, money, things, sex, power and/or the approval of men. All such things are "empty" of eternal significance, but worse than this, they act like a vacuum and suck in all forms of self centred vanity and immorality. The word translated "vanity" carries both the meaning of emptiness and vacuum, for things of no significance never remain alone; they always draw in more nonsense. Our life is either filled with meaning from the Lord or it will fill up with garbage from the world, the flesh, and the devil!

When believers become distracted and deceived by the things of this temporary world they will turn the grace of God into evil because that is what Satan does every time when he leads people away from sole focus upon Jesus. Be holy believer, for that is the Lord's clearly revealed will towards all His people. 1 Corinthians 2:17ff, Ephesians 1:4, 5:27, Colossians 1:22, 1 Peter 1:12-16, Jude 20.

It is easy to begin to “love falsehood”, for all you need to do is slip from your grasp of the truth. It is truth we need; the truth of the Word of God that grips our soul and in the Holy Spirit’s ministries in our spirit lifts us up to serve Him in focused power. It is easy to fall into Idolatry (the worship or anything other than the Lord our God) when we close ourselves down and hinder the “opening up” work of the Holy Spirit within. God seeks to open us up to truth and change, but the normal human (Old Sin Nature) tendency of man is to close this uncomfortable process down and remain in a zone we prefer. Let us not strive after falsehood and things that destroy our eternal life perspective, but focus our energy on the Lord alone.

APPLICATION

1. Be holy (set apart for the service of the Lord) in all you do seek to serve Him alone, not meet your own human and fallen “needs”. Let us be aware of the subtle deception of worldliness and resist it in the Lord’s strength and deal with all sin as it rises up to ankle tap our lives on the Lord’s path.
2. Flee idolatry believer in all its forms. Hold the Word close, and let it grip your soul and spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to “open you up” to all truth that is needed to walk the Lord’s path. Do not seek the “safe” road, but Jesus road for you in holiness, truth and Holy Spirit power.

Psalm 4:3

“But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.”

REFLECTION

The Lord has set apart (literally - made holy) all who seek to honour and serve the Lord (the godly minded) for Himself as His possession. Ephesians 1:3-14. We are the Lord’s and our holy service in His name gives evidence of that. We are to be quite consciously “set apart” in our life and interests for the glory and honour of the Lord. We are not here upon this earth to win the accolades of men, be wealthy, powerful or famous; we are here to serve the Lord in the path He has called us to walk. That attitude means that every detail of life (wealth, position, power, influence, education, talent) simply is seen as a “detail” to be brought into captivity to Christ’s plan and will for our life. 2 Corinthians 10:5.

It is on the basis of dedication to the Lord’s will for his life that David knows he will be heard, for there is no desire within him that is not in captivity to the will of the Lord for his life. David seeks the Lord’s path alone and the Lord’s power alone and he seeks the Lord’s glory through his life alone. This is the pattern for the spirit-filled Christian life today and it is the place of power and confidence. As Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, “nevertheless, not my will but yours be done”. Matthew 26:39ff, John 17:1-5.

Keep remembering that this psalm is likely one from the Great Rebellion of Absalom when for many weeks it looked as if David was lost and would be defeated by the far superior forces of his evil son. David finds these truths in the darkest days of his reign, and wants us all to reflect seriously upon their truths and be transformed in our own desires, seeking only the separated life.

APPLICATION

1. To be godly means to be set apart for the Lord’s glory, not the temporary glory that man gives. Let this be our daily prayer and constant desire. “Your will alone Lord!” “You will hear me Lord, for you hear me based upon my position as your son/daughter through the Lord Jesus Christ, and I can rest on your holy promises.”
2. When we lose our separate will and desires, and submerge them freely into the will of the Lord Jesus for us, it is then that we find His liberation and powerful direction forward in life. It is in total submission to His will for our life that we find the confidence we see in David’s prayer.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

Psalm 4:4

“Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah”

REFLECTION

Four direct commands are given to all believers in this powerful verse, and they are commands that are relevant and to be applied until the Lord’s Return at the Second Advent, and even then to be followed in the Millennial Kingdom by all who seek to honour the Lord. It is always good to reflect upon and be obedient to these commands.

Firstly, “stand in awe”. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom, and this well known truth is repeated here powerfully in association with the other commands to bring us to the place of power, which is the place of humility and awesomeness. Proverbs 2:1-5, 3:1-8.

We say today in jest, “be very afraid”, when we are trying to in a light hearted way remind people that there may be serious consequences if they do not get the truth we are speaking to them. Think of this command this way if it is helpful, for there are serious consequences indeed for all men and women who do not understand the awesomeness of God and bow in humility and reverential fear before Him. Too many speak with light hearted familiarity of “dear Jesus” and “father God”, and yet do not bow their knee in holy reverential awe at the majesty of the Almighty. Let us be reverential as well as loving and warm in our relationship with our Creator and Saviour; always let us begin with reverence.

Secondly “sin not”. We are saved to serve, and service is to be holy, not sinful. Sin is to be faced and defeated by confession and life change. We are to fight against our Old Sin Nature, not roll over and give in to every temptation. Strong feelings are no guarantee of any truth other than that they are strong feelings, and most likely temptations. We are to examine ourselves and deal with what the Holy Spirit shows us is sin to be confessed. 2 Corinthians 13:5, 1 John 1:9. We will sin at times, and we are to quickly deal with these things that crop up from our Old Sin Nature, and defeat them in confession. We are then to “make straight paths for our feet”. Hebrews 12:12-15. We are to walk through the devil’s world in holy fear with careful and thoughtful steps focused upon the Lord’s path for us alone.

Thirdly, “commune with your own heart upon your bed”. To talk with yourself in the ancient world was not a sign of madness but of sanity and a logical and thorough mind. What this command involves is debating the real issues deeply within and coming to the logical conclusion that ought to be followed through with. “Face the facts”, we would say today. Genuine faith is never escapism, it is a full confrontation with reality. See things you face God’s way and relax in His caring arms and do what He calls you to do.

Fourthly, “be still and know that the Lord is God”. Manic activity is not the answer to anything, but quiet faith will lead you to the answer to everything. It is in quietness and peace that strength will be found and power harnessed. The Lord is God and you are in the Lord’s hands. “Underneath are the everlasting arms of God”. Deuteronomy 33:27.

APPLICATION

1. Stand in awe before the Lord believer more often. Stand under the stars and reflect upon the Lord’s creative power and the future of the universe. Feel your smallness and then think of the immensity of the love of God for you that the Lord Jesus came and died for you! Stand in awe! Rejoice in the Lord.
2. Don’t just confess sin, forsake it and walk differently in different places to the old paths of temptation. Be intelligent in the Angelic Conflict and stop giving Satan’s team so many opportunities for an easy “point scored” against you. Reflect again on the love and gracious provision of the Lord for you even then and rejoice again.

DOCTRINES

SIN – OLD SIN NATURE

HOLY SPIRIT – SINS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

Psalm 4:5

“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.”

REFLECTION

To reflect salvation, or request salvation under the Levitical system that Moses instituted a person was required to bring a series of sacrifices. These blood sacrifices each spoke of and looked forward to a different aspect of the person and work of the Lord Jesus on the Cross. The entire sacrificial system looked forward to the sacrifice of the Lord “once for all

time". Before the Cross the way people expressed their faith in God's gracious plan was to bring the blood sacrifices which spoke of what God would one day complete in Christ. In effect the people of David's day still expressed faith in the Messiah, but its just that He hadn't come yet and so the blood sacrifices stood in His place, but their faith was in God's Plan and that was in Christ alone. Acts 4:12.

David challenges the men around him to confront their sins and sit with the consequences of their sins and evils towards him in the Great Rebellion, and deal with their sin before the Lord in and through the sacrifices. David has done exactly what he asks others to do and Psalm 51 is the result. This is our challenge; always to set the example in what we ask of others. David had dealt with his sins, but some of his men had not. One, old uncle Joab, would kill Absalom to make sure he didn't talk to David about their plot, and Joab's great sins. David appeals to all his men to make their peace with God and him before the battle is joined.

The order to do things is important, and firstly we deal with sins and then we place our trust in the Lord. Sin separates us from the Lord, so there is no point in trusting the Lord when you have separated yourself from fellowship through unconfessed sin. First confess your sins! Then rest in God's unrestricted power now available to save you and achieve what He can with your life.

Isaiah 59:1-2.

*"1. Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:
2. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."*

APPLICATION

1. Deal with anything that separates you from living fellowship with the Lord believer. Do not let the sun go down on unconfessed sin.
2. Having dealt with sin, throw yourself into the arms of the Lord and rejoice in His salvation and be restored by His loving care, and assured of His unlimited power.

DOCTRINE

GRACE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Psalms 4:6-7

"There be many that say, Who will show us (any) good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."

REFLECTION

David was over the Jordan River, 2 Samuel 17:20-29, but the matter was far from over. He was still gravely outnumbered by the forces of the rebels and many amongst his inner circle were worried, and "many" around him were expecting a "last stand and death" rather than victory. The escape had been divinely appointed and although a "close run thing", all David's entourage were safely at Mahanaim in a place where troops could be rallied and defence was strong. It will be a time when the nation would be forced to choose; their old king, the Lord's anointed, or the young handsome narcissist who was promising a new and exciting age.

Many spoke only doom and David knows that no speech he can make will rally his forces and make them a superior army to Absalom's mighty one. David desperately needed winning help from the Lord; not just minor help, but total and complete deliverance.

We never need a 40% boost, we always need 100% help from the Lord. "The battle is the Lord's alone". 1 Samuel 17:47, Ecclesiastes 9:11, Isaiah 28:6, Hosea 1:7. We are called to stand, fully armoured in the Holy Spirit's provision, Isaiah 59:16-20, Ephesians 6:18ff, 1 Thessalonians 5:8, but we are then called to "wait upon the Lord".

David truly casts his cares upon the Lord, 1 Peter 5:5-10, but his desire is that all his men may also cast their worries upon the Lord and rest in the Lord's certain victory. Philippians 1:20, 4:6ff. It is a very hard thing to "wait upon the Lord", but the Lord seeks for His people to look to Him alone to weave circumstances together to form the magic carpet of His provision and deliverance. Isaiah states this very clearly three hundred years after David's night flight across Jordan, and Isaiah will face far worse odds and what most would consider certain death at the hands of the Assyrian Empire. God will deliver them in one night. Isaiah 37:35ff.

Isaiah 26:3-4

*"3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.
4. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."*

Isaiah 40:27-31

*"27. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?
28. Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.
29. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.
30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:
31. But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."*

Isaiah 49:23-26

*"23. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.
24. Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?
25. But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.
26. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."*

Isaiah 64:4

"4. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."

I began writing this commentary, building on the work of my dear colleague in the ministry Brian Huggett, purely to keep myself in a circumstance that had become overwhelming in its power and serious worry. I have faced an impossible financial situation for over ten years now and yet the Lord has delivered all the way through these years and produced the best written work for pastoral ministry in my whole life. The worst soil has produced the best wine from the vine!

The final crisis is coming in this situation within the next days or weeks and so this written work is my preparation for the Lord's answer and like David I look to the Lord alone, for He alone can deliver me and my household. It is good to trust in the Lord alone. David wants his soldiers to see and feel this assurance, and by their day of battle they all do, and God gives them the victory.

There is joy in David's heart now, a joy that "passes all understanding" given what he faces, but that is what God does. Philippians 4:7. David wants all his men to have the same spring in their step as he does. They will discover this in the next weeks and when the battle begins they will see Absalom's general make the most classic mistake in military strategy and know that the Lord has delivered him into their hands. 1 Samuel 18.

David has seen that he feels more joy at this point of great extreme pressure than at any time of plenty and relaxation. When there is plenty of food and lots of wealth around us we can kid ourselves that "this is life", but actually we are made for battle and we need a challenge to meet or we grow slack and frustrated really quickly. David faces a challenge and the Lord has given him hope in the midst of it; he has something to really exercise himself for now and he has a new lease on life.

The darker the night the better the stars shine and we see their glory, the hungrier we are the better food tastes, the more well exercised our body the sweeter is the sleep of rest. Rest and recharge only feels like it when we have actually been doing something worth while.

APPLICATION

1. Let us keep our focus on the worthy work the Lord has called us to. It is in worthy work that meaning and purpose is found and true joy is the result of seeing the Lord working in and through our daily life.
2. Let us see the challenges we face God's way, and seek His direction and solution every day.

DOCTRINE

HAPPINESS – HAPPINESS AND EXPERIMENTS IN ECCLESIASTES

Psalm 4:8

“I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.”

REFLECTION

David sums up here the rest of the saved when they have learned to trust in their Saviour and Lord for their life as well as for eternity. It is a strange thing amongst men that we will trust the Lord for our eternal salvation and yet doubt the Lord's deliverance over our finances. I myself have been exercised on this matter with vigour over the last eleven years and seen the Lord deliver every time, and yet I still find fear will grip my soul at times, and I need to apply the balm of Gilead to ease my tortured soul. Like David I have learned through the university of hard knocks to rest my weary head upon this verse. It is in the Lord's power alone that we can rest our weary head each night.

There is peace of mind and rest for the soul only in the provision and deliverance of the Lord, and for this alone we must look day and night. It is the rest that comes through believing prayer that will calm our spirit and rest our soul down here in the pressures that come in the devil's world. It is his to rule only for a time and his hatred of mankind makes his work evil at all times. We are to be alert, fully armoured and walk in the Holy Spirit's power resting each night in the Lord's protection and deliverance from all his devices. Ephesians 5:18, 6:18ff, James 4:7-8, 1 Peter 5:5-10.

APPLICATION

1. Let us learn to trust the Lord in all things, rejoicing in salvation and daily provisions.
2. Let us lay ourselves down each night in prayer, for it is in the Lord alone that we can relax at any time in this world.

DOCTRINE

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD

Notes

PSALM 5

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN UPON NEHILOTH, A PSALM OF DAVID.

INTRODUCTION

As in the previous psalm, Psalm 4, we have this same title, just a variant spelling here, the words “upon Neginoth” or upon the soulful stringed instruments, to be played slowly and thoughtfully. This also is a Psalm of the Great Rebellion of Absalom and reflects David’s quiet learning to trust the Lord for ultimate victory. David will spend the first eight verses preparing to pray and the last four verses stating his specific petition in the situation he faces. It is most likely a prayer written in Mahanaim as he awaits the coming of the rebel’s army. David is preparing himself for the day when the “showdown” will occur. He is the “king of Israel”, but he recognises who the real King of Israel is, and seeks His total victory in the days and weeks to come.

Psalm 5:1-2

“Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.”

REFLECTION

David prepares his heart for the specific prayer he must ask by reminding himself of his absolute need for the Lord’s deliverance and the Lord’s alone. He seeks the Lord’s indulgence to hear all he asks and answer in grace, not on the basis of any deserving on David’s part. Three times, each in slightly different ways, he seeks the Lord’s attention and solution. He is reminding himself of the realities he faces well before he brings his petition to the Lord.

David is effectively resting his heart and mind in the Lord’s sole deliverance well before he asks for his petition. He is meditating upon exactly what is the right subject for this prayer, and is careful in all matters concerning the request he will later make. He meditates carefully about this and sets us a good example thereby. In the African Churches of Zambia that I delight to work amongst they spend twice as much time preparing to pray as they spend praying, and when the time comes to speak the Word aloud they want at least twelve mature believers praying for every pastor who speaks aloud the Gospel. This is biblical and we see David doing this sort of thing here.

David wants the Lord to truly “weigh and discern” all of David’s thoughts and feelings relating to the great matter before him, and then to clearly answer his prayers so that David knows with 100% clarity the path to take forward without any doubts as to the Lord’s will and purpose. That is my prayer as I write these words and the encouragement of David is strongly felt by me at this time. The Lord is “my King” and I seek His “Daily Orders” exactly as I did my Commanding Officer all those years ago as a Naval Officer. It is the Lord’s will alone I seek, and David encourages me to reflect upon my petition and rest in my King’s good will towards me.

APPLICATION

1. Let us spend twice as much time preparing for prayer as praying, and so let our petitions be thoughtful, careful and godly in petition and desire.
2. We seek the Lord’s “Daily Orders”, for we are His servants and it is in His will alone that we have deliverance and direction forward.

Psalm 5:3

“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.”

REFLECTION

A young man named also John saw me at church last night. He sought prayer and encouragement to help him walk worthy of the Lord each day, and he had identified that on the days he studied the Word and prayed, on those days he knew the Lord’s presence and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit. I encouraged him with David here to start each day in prayer and bible study, and then continue through each day with short conversations with God on all matters of interest that come up through the day. We are ordered to pray continually. Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

It is a good thing for believers to be able to promise the Lord that daily their first words will be directed towards HIM. It is the only way to start the day with power. I received great advice as a young believer from some choice saints of the Lord. I think upon and thank God for three great men. I think first of my old minister, Reverend Alan Finlay, who spoke truth into every situation with blunt and honest words. I thank God for Haydon Mellsop, the famous missionary to China and later South Africa with the China Inland Mission (Later OMF), as he quietly in wonderful humility, with great dignity, was encouraging us always to walk with Jesus in passionate faith that expected God to work His purposes out. I thank God for Les Rushbrook, the secretary for many years of the Bible Training Institute of New Zealand who faithfully set the example of hard work in the Lord and daily prayerfulness.

These men laid good seed in my soul and spirit and the Holy Spirit has blessed their deposit within me. I honour and praise the Lord who led such men to be my mentors, and I encourage each person reading these words to be a good mentor of grace and truth to others in the faith.

Each of these men began the day by "looking up" and I hear their encouragement still in the memory of my mind, for the "upwards look" before what we see around by way of troubles, distracts us into despair and anxiety. It is in looking upwards that we find the strength to help that we need in great trouble. When we look too hard around about at trouble we can get distracted by the problems, whereas God wants us firstly to seek His face, for it is in Him that we will find the solutions to all matters.

APPLICATION

1. The upwards look must begin each and every day in the Lord. It is in seeing the Lord's face afresh each day that we are restored to faith and hope. There is no other way to start a day in power than through prayer with the Lord who gave Himself for us.

2. Let us spend the time drawing near to the Lord so that the problems we face drift into the background and the presence of the Lord is in the foreground of every issue we face.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

Psalm 5:4

"For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee."

REFLECTION

The Word of God is clear, "If I regard iniquity in my heart then the Lord will not hear me!" Psalm 66:18. David understood the importance of confession and restoration of full fellowship before he asked for anything from the Lord. The pagan gods of the nations round about Israel all supported, encouraged and taught evil to their deluded followers because there were demons behind them all. Leviticus 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalms 96:4-5, 1 Corinthians 10:20ff.

The fruit of paganism betrays its source in the pit of hell itself. Matthew 7:13-23. It is "strong delusion" (2 Thessalonians 2:11) that is always behind every pagan "deity", because its doctrine and practises all come from the "father of lies", from Satan himself. John 8:38-44. Believers must absolutely separate themselves from all evil and sin that separates them from God's fellowship. We either separate from sin and evil or the Lord will separate Himself from us.

God will not allow evil to "dwell" with Him and neither ought we to do so. The challenge here is to deal with sin and evil before it takes root in the soul and defiles our being. One old pastor puts it well when he states that no-one can be blamed if a bird suddenly drops onto his head, but he is rightly blamed as a fool if he lets the bird build a nest in his hair! Sin will "pop into our mind" many times every day, but it is to be "knocked/batted away" with confession every time it enters conscious thought. We are to "give no place" to the devil in our head! Ephesians 4:27.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be an "evil free zone" because every time evil enters our mind we dismiss it with powerful confessional prayer.

2. God is holy, and we must be holy (set apart to His work) if we wish to be powerfully used of the Lord.

Psalm 5:5

“The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.”

REFLECTION

The person fooled by evil is made a fool of by the devil and his demonic forces, for they delight in the destruction and disgrace of mankind. Believers are especially hated by Satan. John 15:18ff. The “fool” is defined in scripture as the man who says “there is no God”. Psalm 14:1, 53:1. All who deny the reality of their own Creator and Saviour will have no lasting place upon this world, but they do have a place; it is called “The Lake of Fire”. Revelation 21:10-15.

God’s hatred is towards those who habitually work evil. We must remember that the Lord hates evil, for it is anti-God and anti-man, and its destructive power is to be opposed at all times. Evil is evil and it must be recognised and acted against or isolated or it will destroy all that is good. We cannot tolerate the things that modern political correctness demands of us. Evil must be called for what it is and opposed as Satan’s policy!

I do not want to appear “fanatical” in this matter but the truth must be told of the objectives of the UN and other groups that push their “Political Correctness” policies. They are deliberately designed to erode biblical values and undermine biblical standards; they are satanic in their origin and have his one world order as their objective. God hates these things and so must we, or we will be deceived and destroyed by them.

Do not doubt the temporary and incomplete victory of evil forces at times. Do not doubt that the “northern alliance” of Moslem states will invade the Middle East, for we have God’s Word on it in Ezekiel 38-39, and they will be wiped out! Do not doubt that the Anti-Christ will come and that he will gain great power, but also do not doubt that he is on the wrong side of history, and he and all who support him will fall.

APPLICATION

1. Evil people will prosper for a time, and in today’s world it is the Christian who stands for biblical values who will be attacked and abused for being a “fanatic”, but we must stand against evil in all its forms.
2. Let us hate evil, even while trying to witness to those who are deceived by it. We must not give way in any biblical matter to the devil and his forces. We are called to stand against evil, and fully armoured in the Holy Spirit that is what we are to do.

Psalm 5:6

“Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.”

REFLECTION

The Lord will deal with the liars/deceivers of this world, we don’t have to waste time and energy on them and their evil behaviours. We often spend much time on people who are not worth the effort. Once we can see “evil” in any form we are to politely and simply separate ourselves from that person and their activities. The Lord morally “detests” such people and so ought we and to keep ourselves as far away as possible. If evil is not separated from, you will always be affected badly by it in some way or other.

My wife has just called me in to speak with me on an allied matter. She has developed a cold-flu type reaction and she traces it back to a meeting with an unhealthy friend who will not ever consider others health, and will always turn up to a meeting sick, and will embrace and kiss you, and then tell you how sick they are. Such people are poor friends for they simply spread their bugs and misery; they never spread happiness and joy. Giving you the flu is a minor thing when we consider the “bloody and deceitful” people David has around him at this point. The worst of them is his uncle, the old general Joab, who will go on to murder Absalom to silence him! 2 Samuel 18:9-15.

Let us have the Lord’s attitude to evil and once we have seen the ‘fruit’ in a person’s life, let us quickly pull back and leave them to their evil with only words of rebuke, never social or business interactions. We are called to tell truth to people, but not to put up with their evil choices, for they are theirs alone and they must bear them before the Lord. “Touch not their filthy things”. Jude 22-23.

Those who practice “bloody and deceitful” behaviours are dangerous people and if we do not separate from them as soon as we realise what they are up to we ourselves will be implicated in their evils, or may be the victims of them. I have just recently seen one young man killed, but his death was made to look like suicide, and he died simply because he did not get away from the drug world people he was living with. He knew too much and they wouldn't let him go alive in the end. He did not take good counsel and flee when he could, and having left them at one point he made a fatal mistake. He returned to them one day to “catch up” and they strung him up! Do not ever doubt the malice of satanically inspired people. Ask yourself, “How many fatal mistakes do you need to make?”

APPLICATION

1. We are called to be intelligent in our assessment of people and assess the fruit production of their lives, and if it is bad fruit, we are to separate from them lest we be defiled by them and others get hurt badly.
2. Do not ever doubt the malice of satanically inspired people, for they will hate you if you stand for goodness and truth, and they will try to erode your morals and destroy your witness. Don't take it personally, just accept that this is Satan's plan, and do not be foolish enough to give him or his people a toe hold in your life! John 15:18ff.

Psalm 5:7-9

“But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.”

REFLECTION

David is determined to approach God in a manner worthy of the Lord, and to maintain his separation from evil thought, deed and people. He wants nothing to get in the way of fellowship with the Lord. He is focused upon the Lord's holy character as he draws near to worship, not on any people around him. David is determined to be in the calm place away from all distractions that is possible if we practise the biblical doctrine of Separation.

David is focused upon the “abundant mercy” of the Lord, and this is a good way to enter into worship, for it does not give any leeway for arrogance to enter the mind. If we remember the mercy of the Lord to us we are less likely to be judgmental of others. Now pause and reflect upon our previous discussions here, for we have seen the importance of discerning evil in other's lives and separating from them, but as we can see from this comment of David's, not to condemn them and look down upon them. David remembers his own sins and God's great mercy towards him. He boldly approaches the “throne of grace and mercy”, Psalm 57:1, Isaiah 64:4-8, Hebrews 4:12.

David has practised separation from evil, but is not arrogant towards those who are evil, for he sees how evil he has been and how great the mercy of the Lord has been towards him. David keeps himself and others safe from the evil people, but maintains a readiness to help them if he can, it is just that he will not fellowship in any way that risks danger to himself and others. He is not going to rejoice when they drop into hell at death, for he seeks their salvation if possible.

The holy and purifying “fear of the Lord” keeps David rightly related to the worship he is undertaking. David has deep reverence for the Lord and a real appreciation of the awfulness of his sin before the Lord, but a deep reverence for the amazing grace of the Lord. Psalm 103:10-17.

David's appeal in verse eight is an appeal we can all reflect upon and make our own. “Oh Lord lead us in your righteousness, not the relative and fake righteousness of men!” David wants to be holy before the Lord, not right with men but falling short of God's standards. His eyes are fixed in the right direction, and that is always towards the throne room of Almighty God.

David was aware that when we find ourselves surrounded by enemies our only security is in the Lord's protection and that is available only when we are walking with the Lord. Being in fellowship is crucial for survival for the believer. It is God's righteousness alone that keeps us in the right place before the testing and the assaults of the world. We are protected by the Holy Spirit and our own guardian angel, but only as we walk in the path of the Lord.

David's real concern is my own at this point in my own life; I want to clearly see the path forward. I don't want to miss the Lord's path, but see clearly where the Lord wants me and what he wants me to do. God's way is always “straight” but we need to see it “before our face” and not get distracted away from it in any way at all. Proverbs 5:24-27.

David sees these men for what they are and knows they cannot be trusted, especially I suspect he knows Joab cannot be trusted, although I don't think he saw at this point just how evil the old man was. He recognises that the malice that surrounds him is severe and the dangers real. These are devious game players in their speech and actions and he must exercise great care in their presence.

With such people you mustn't let on that you know their game, or they may be provoked to act, but by being wise in your dealings you can negate their plans and keep yourself safe also from their plans. They will kill if they can at times, but if

they are negated by clever defence these people will be rendered safer. They are never safe but they may be used, even though they can never be trusted. Old Joab is in this category, and David never judges him for the evils he did until the end, because he is simply too useful as a general, but his last plotting around the time of David's dying days seals his fate. Solomon takes action and kills him before more evil unfolds. 1 Kings 2:5-8, 27-34. Grace does have limits to protect others at times.

APPLICATION

1. Be very discerning about evil men and women and take appropriate action to keep yourself and others safe. Evil people may be useful in some business areas, but you must not ever trust them, and always establish firm structure to keep safety. You must be ready to terminate them without warning if required, for these are people who, if you warn them of any coming action, they will outplay you every time.

2. Jesus didn't trust Himself to people, John 2:24-25. We must not be foolish in this matter where the Lord was so strong in warning us to be careful of evil. "Smiling assassins" are more effective than ugly and bitter faced ones for they catch you off guard. Remember just how devious the satanic can be. Satan is called the "angel of light" after all, and his ability to counterfeit goodness is his ultimate deception. Be wary believer, or be abused!

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

Psalms 5:10

“Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.”

REFLECTION

It is bone fide to ask the Lord to judge evil people, although most present day pastors will suggest you ask the Lord's blessing on them, for the Lord cannot bless them unless they are convicted, repent, and are transformed by the Holy Spirit. Ultimate "revenge" upon an evil person is to see them in the local church, now spiritually active for the Lord who they tried to undermine before. Remember Revelation 6:9-11. The martyred saints ask the Lord to judge their murderers and they are blessed by the Lord in heaven. Do not be super-spiritual to any brother or sister who seeks justice and righteous judgment against an evil person, for these saints are blessed, not judged for asking that evil men be judged.

God will judge the evil ones who persist in their evil behaviours until the end. God is gracious and not willing that any should perish, but there is a time limit, and when the day of grace ends with their death, the day of judgment will unfold. 2 Peter 3:9. David's request for their judgment is a biblical one, and a very good one psychologically, which I have seen work out many times through my life time with evil men and women. When God judges the persistently evil person it is often by allowing them to implode in a plan of their design and making. It is almost as if the Lord takes His protection off them and their own evil designs come back to bite them.

David recognises that these people are going to face the natural consequences of their evil schemes over time, and he asks that they might be judged in the "multitude" of their evils, so that all who see them realise that God has been incredibly just and fair and that these people are only dead because of their incredible stupidity and persistence in evil. David also recognises that their sins, though directed at him, are actually against God. He had seen this with his own sin with Bathsheba. Psalm 51:4. We offend and abuse men and women, but in this we sin against God alone, and the Lord will require an answer of us relating to all our sins. We either deal with them by confession or they will unhinge us!

APPLICATION

1. "Be sure your sins will find you out!" If sin and evil is left unchecked it will always unhinge the fool who continues down such a self centred and destructive path. Let us ensure that in our preaching we remind those who reject the Gospel of the consequences over time, lest they accuse us before the Lord's throne of not making the truth clear.

2. Pray for the lost, and pray for the conviction of the persistently evil, for then you cover yourself with God and man, and whether you pray for their judgment, or their blessing the same result is achieved, for God can only bless after

judgment of evil and sin. Let us not back away from confronting evil and calling it for what it is. Let us also remember and preach the grace of God that can forgive even a David!

Psalm 5:11

“But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.”

REFLECTION

If we put our trust in the Lord we can rejoice and we can relax in the process, even if things are scary for a while. Don't be embarrassed at being scared at times, just recognise your humanity and confess your lack of faith! Romans 14:23. Notice David's point clearly. It is those who "put their trust in God" who can rejoice. To talk about it doesn't lead to rejoicing, to sing about it doesn't lead to rejoicing, but to actually "put your trust" in the Lord leads to peace and joy. These are true fruits of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the believer. Trust in the Lord is the sign of a genuine believer and in all who walk in the Holy Spirit's power, there are the fruits of the Spirit enjoyed.

When the Lord delivers us we are to be unafraid of open celebration. A polite and quiet "thank you Lord" is probably not good enough, and David's advice to shout aloud is good advice. As believers we need to be open in our love for the Lord and our appreciation of Him, and that means being ready to shout for joy at times. Those who do this all the time show they are superficial in their emotion, but at times we ought to be overcome with joy when we reflect upon what the Lord has done for us. Let us not be ashamed of emotion, nor backwards in coming forward to praise the Lord.

The Lord is our defender and our strong shield and His protective power is often not acknowledged or even recognised by many. The Lord keeps us safe in the most dangerous places and we need to thank Him aloud for His powerful hand over us. Thankfulness is not a strong point of the modern church and it needs to be, as David saw. Give thanks aloud and give thanks often. Enter His gates with praise and thanksgiving! Psalm 50:14, 95:1-2, 100:4, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 2:7, 4:2, 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

Love must motivate and stimulate praise, and if it does not we must ask why. What can be the problem in any believer who does not get overwhelmed by their love for the Lord and His love for them at some time? We are loved, and if we do not rejoice aloud in that at times the quality of our love must be questioned. What lover does not sing aloud of their love at some time every day? Let us not be cold and silent, for such is not the response of those who have received as much as we have from our Lord and Saviour. James 5:13. Over one hundred times in the Psalms the psalmists cry aloud that they will sing aloud to the Lord, and this joy overflowing is what makes the Psalms as powerful as they are. Let us be mentored by David and sing aloud to the Lord our God.

APPLICATION

1. Praise the Lord believer, praise His holy name often and loudly. Oh let us praise and give thanks to our Lord, for He daily protects and keeps us. Let all God's people say they are loved and kept, and let the world know it!
2. There is relaxation only as we rest in the provision of the Lord, and praise the Lord for who He is and what He does. Let us express our love for the Lord and praise His name, for He loved us and gave Himself for us.

DOCTRINES

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING OF THE BELIEVER

Notes

PSALM 6

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN ON NEGINOTH UPON SHEMINITH, A PSALM OF DAVID.

INTRODUCTION

As has been seen in earlier psalms, NEGINOTH is a transliteration of the Hebrew word that describes a form of tune that is mournful, slow and deliberately designed to make the singer and hearer pause and reflect deeply upon the sadness and seriousness of the subject matter.

Sheminith, again a transliteration from the Hebrew, of the word for the number eight. This may imply that the psalm is to be played on an eight-stringed lyre. Eight as a number in numerology means a new beginning, and there is no suggestion as to that being applied here so mystical meanings of these two terms must be restricted, and the obvious meaning of them accepted. This is an ode, a serious psalm, on a deep and sad theme, to be sung on an eight stringed lyre slowly and mournfully.

This is the prayer that possibly gives us a deep insight into the serious depressive disorder that David experienced before and during the Great Rebellion, and that the ending of it and his re-establishment brought deliverance to him. It is the most powerful picture of a man facing what we today would call "mental illness" in all the psalms. After reading and studying this psalm there will be none who would ever argue that David escaped consequences for his sin with Bathsheba, for here we see its terrible mental consequences. This man now knew that his great sin had brought all this evil upon himself and his nation and he pleads for the consequences to be ended by the Lord.

He could now see the great guilt he bore for loosing such evils upon his people and he pleads for the Lord's fierce displeasure with him to be ended and for release to accompany the process of God's forgiveness. David was forgiven when he prayed Psalm 51, but the terrible consequences had flowed onwards for ten years now, because in the year out of fellowship that he had lived after his sin, great evils had been let loose in the family and nation, and his subsequent inaction over moral issues in his own household led to more murder and greater and greater spiralling evils and sins that culminated in Absalom's rebellion. It was as if the Great Rebellion had lanced the boil finally, but the anguish of his soul is plain to see in this psalm as he pleads for the pain to be over.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Psalm 6:1

"O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure."

REFLECTION

David faces the pressures that Noah faced as he built the ark, and then entered it before the rains came, and then experienced the greatest tectonic event since the creation with that Ark more like a semi-submersible than a boat on any calm ocean. The waters literally raged all around them at times for day after long dark day. It seemed as if it would never end.

David has felt these things, as after ten years of depression following his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, he lost his grip upon his own mind, his own family and the nation itself. He had not been exercising his godly and kingly authority well for years by the day of the rebellion, hence the reason so many of his old friends joined the rebels. Read the EBCWA Commentary on 2 Samuel and see the many indicators of David's great depression after the Bathsheba-Uriah incident.

The political-spiritual storm has reached its greatest power at this final point as he fights against his own son Absalom, his favourite son. David's great sin in his family was favouritism but it simply reflected the other evils present there, for polygamy was never God's plan, and his many acts of disobedience had opened up the present disaster. Deuteronomy 17:16-17. David knows now that he is being punished and rightly so, but he pleads for himself and his people, who all also suffer these evil things. All the nation needed discipline, and that was proved by the extent of the rebellion and the split that would occur later after Solomon's death. Every man was "doing what seemed good in his own eyes", rather than seeing what God wanted. Judges 21:25.

Even though the great disaster of civil war that unfolded was terrible indeed, it was discipline upon a disobedient people and their king who had lost his grip upon his responsibility before God. David knows even more than the pain of this, he knows where to take the pain and the anguish relating to the events. He took his pain to the throne of grace, for he knew that even though the Lord had allowed these things to unfold, there was a path of grace through them. The “deep waters” would be parted for the Lord’s people, for the path was the Lords and he sought no other. Psalm 69:2, Isaiah 51:10-12. The prophet Isaiah, three hundred years after David, would build upon David’s prayers here and with the Lord’s prophetic voice, he would give additional encouragement to people in an even darker time.

Isaiah 54:4ff

- “4. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.*
- 5. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.*
- 6. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.*
- 7. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.*
- 8. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.*
- 9. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee.*
- 10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.*
- 11. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.”*

Isaiah 57:13ff

- “13. When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;*
- 14. And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people.*
- 15. For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*
- 16. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.*
- 17. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.*
- 18. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.*
- 19. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.”*

David pours his heart out to the Lord who has rebuked him and punished him in deep upset at what David has done and allowed to be done through the ten years before this Rebellion. David has accepted the divine discipline, and pleads for it to be over and for peace to return to his people, in politics and in their heart, as his is at peace with God. John 14:27.

God will always be absolutely righteous in any discipline we receive, but we may still ask Him to stop and restore our joy as we confess the truth to Him. Confession of sin, 1 John 1:9, involves simply agreeing with the Lord that we have sinned and acknowledging the reasons for our present distress and seeking God’s path out and through them all to the glory of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul would one thousand years after David warn the early church at Corinth about divine discipline because of their terrible behaviours at the Communion service. His words echo what we see in David and Isaiah’s words. They must face their sins and agree with God about them, and the Lord’s response (Confess them), and the Lord will restore them and bless them again. Let us be holy before the Lord, and let us be honest with God, and come before Him with confession and entreaty that we might be lifted up again in His holy power.

1 Corinthians 11:28-32

- “28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*
- 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.*
- 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*
- 31. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*
- 32. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”*

APPLICATION

- 1. Feel sorrow for David, but remember, he had worked hard in adultery and even murder, to feel this bad. There was hope however, for it was the Lord who had allowed these things to unfold around him, just as Noah and the

Israelites under Moses had been allowed to go through the waters of testing. Many of God's people are overwhelmed at times, and we have the Lord to go to in these times. Let us pour our heart out to the Lord as David does here. If David was restored, then we all have hope in Christ, even if not in ourselves! There is never hope in man, but Praise God, there is always hope in Jesus!

2. Let us examine ourselves and come boldly to the throne of grace and seek the Lord's power to lift us up again.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DESTINY OF BELIEVERS

Psalm 6:2

“Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.”

REFLECTION

David acknowledges that he comes before the Lord, not in any kingly dignity, but as a sinner in desperate need of a Saviour-Deliverer. He comes as a son to his father, who he knows has beaten him sorely, but who has still loved him dearly. He pours out his symptoms here and these are the list of things that daily I hear in my clinic with people suffering from stress and depression. Flu like symptoms and physiological debility are the normal associates of great stress and depression, as is joint and bone aching.

David does what we are urged to do, appeal to the Lord for mercy. It is never justice we seek, for our sinfulness makes such a request a truly dangerous prayer! I never seek justice, even when others have gravely wronged me, for I know my own sins all too well. I, like David, seek mercy, grace, love, and the Lord's hand to lift me up. It is the throne of grace I want to stand before, and praise the Lord, in Christ Jesus I am able to approach it boldly and seek the Lord's mercy. Psalms 57:1, Hebrews 4:16.

Paul later encouraged the church at Ephesus, as later the Hebrew believers in Jerusalem. As we face the great trials like those David faced, whatever the reasons, let us be encouraged to cast our burden upon the Lord, seeking His solutions alone. It is in spiritual recovery that there is political, financial, marital, and social recovery.

Ephesians 3:11ff.

- “11. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:*
- 12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*
- 13. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*
- 14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
- 15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*
- 16. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*
- 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*
- 18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*
- 19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*
- 20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*
- 21. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”*

It is the Lord alone who heals us. The doctors can advise and encourage and medicate at times, but healing is in the Lord's hands alone. We must cast ourselves upon the Lord, and be guided by the Holy Spirit as to what we are to do, for then alone will we be led to what we are to achieve while we walk this earth. David seeks restoration of health, not so that he is strong enough to take a holiday in the Bahamas! He seeks restoration so that he might serve the Lord in spirit and in truth! David seeks restoration that he might be the true “shepherd of Israel” and serve his people again. Luke 22:26, Romans 7:6, Galatians 5:13.

APPLICATION

1. We are saved to serve as the shepherd of the flock of God, caring for one another and feeding the sheep. Let us seek restoration in order that we might serve the Lord our God and bless His people.
2. There is only one throne to come before and that is the throne of grace where we may seek the Lord's mercy. Let us approach that throne today with the deep anguish of our soul. Let us take the Lord's promises seriously and come to Him to seek the solutions we need to enable us to face the challenges of the testing times in this world.

DOCTRINES

DIVINE DISCIPLINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

Psalm 6:3

“My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long?”

REFLECTION

David is experiencing emotional power waves that surge through his body at times. This is common for those in extreme pressure situations. Their adrenal system sends waves of adrenalin and the stress hormone cortisol coursing through their blood stream and they feel alternately surges of anxiety-panic and fear-depression; they go physiologically hot and then feel chilled as the cortisol wave hits them. These body chemicals are powerful and the sign of a person under maximum pressure.

The “soul” of man was the term used to describe the personality and thinking of the individual; it was the way to speak of the essence of the person. David is feeling the power of stress surging through the essence of his being; he is shaken to his very foundations. There is no aspect of his life that has escaped the terrible stress he feels. He is overwhelmed, but he is able to pour all this out to the Lord his God.

He cries aloud to the Lord. He is overwhelmed but he knows that God can deliver him, and God alone. He cries aloud, “O Lord - How long?” This is an indication of how wrung out he feels under the pressures he faces. This is great distress, and as we face similar levels of pressure we may draw help from David’s encouragement as he pours his great distress out. Being overwhelmed in David’s case was the sign of the crisis filled end of the time of divine discipline that had flowed from the great sin with Bathsheba-Uriah. That is not always the case and we must not “jump to conclusions”.

Our times of great stress may not be a sign of divine discipline at all, and we need to pause and reflect upon our decision making and past behaviours, and be sure of this, for great evil can be unleashed against us by the enemy (with the Lord’s permission) but not to discipline, but rather to bring glory to God through His solution, not to punish us at all. On a battle field the soldier does not look at the death around him and believe that this is punishment, it is just “battle field”. We must discern the reasons for any suffering we are going through, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us through it. It will often be from the other side of it that we get the answer. Some things will only be known in eternity itself!

As I write these words I am in the crisis filled end of the greatest time of testing in my life, with eleven years of impossible financial pressures coming to its crisis. I am sitting with the pressure, seeking, like David, the Lord’s path through and out the other side of it. I have confessed all sins that the Holy Spirit has convicted me of and cleared my deck before the Lord and at its heart I cannot see that this situation I face is solely the result of any arrogance and stupidity on my part, although I have plenty of both, but rather that it is the Lord’s way of bringing glory to His Holy Name in some way yet to be seen. Only the solution will clarify this finally, but I find peace at the throne of grace alone, even though the power surges will occur at times.

Let us sing with the psalmist in **Psalm 77**. It is the Lord alone who is great, and able to save us.

1. *I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.*
2. *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my soul ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.*
3. *I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.*
4. *Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*
5. *I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.*
6. *I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.*
7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever and will he be favourable no more?*
8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever and doth his promise fail for evermore?*
9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.*
10. *And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.*
11. *I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.*
12. *I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.*
13. *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?”*

APPLICATION

1. Being stressed out totally is not a sign of sin, but a sign of humanity under maximum pressure. Such times **may** be the result of past sin, but equally they **may be opportunities** to show the power of God to man. Let us be discerning in our walk, and passionate in our prayers at all such times with ourselves and with others in their distress. Let us pour

out our hearts to the Lord. Let us ensure that distress is not “sat on” but cast at the foot of the Cross, for we will always be heard by the One who went that far to save us, and He will lead us through all the valleys of darkness that may come.

2. “How long Lord?” I have prayed that off and on for eleven years now and each time I didn’t think I would last the night, but each night he brought me through and the Lord’s grace was renewed every morning. Psalm 30:5, Lamentations 3:23.

Psalm 6:4

"Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake."

REFLECTION

There is no other reason for the Lord to save us, but for His glory through the expression of His loving mercy and grace. It is the Lord alone who saves us and He does so on the basis of His own character, not our deserving. It is always grace, mercy and love, and we thank God daily for this great love wherewith He has loved us.

David needs rescue, not just a “little help”. Let us examine ourselves in this matter also, for we all need the Lord’s total rescue in all things, not just a “little help”. It is God’s path alone we seek and need to walk, not any other. Our soul is in turmoil and distress and David seeks restoration and assurance and peace in his soul. He wants to know the Lord’s complete deliverance. I have just returned from my morning walk around the park behind us and after sixty minutes of walking prayer my soul and body is recharged, but my prayer remains solidly with David. “Save me Lord – for your mercy’s sake – for I have hope in no other”.

Notice the meaning of the word for “save” here. The whole focus of biblical deliverance is for an “open door” of service. There isn’t a concept of being saved to be left sitting still somewhere; God’s plan calls for momentum forward all the time in the path that the Holy Spirit directs us along.

Psalm 79:8-9

*“8. O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.
9. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.”*

The Lord shows us mercy and He gives us grace abounding. Let us rest upon His provision for us today.

Ephesians 2:4-10

*“4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
7. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
9. Not of works, lest any man should boast.
10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”*

APPLICATION

1. Let us come before the Lord for His 100% help. Let us kid ourselves no longer that we are able to handle our own problems, but see that it is in the Lord alone that we have deliverance from trouble. Let us seek His mercy and abundant grace, for in His grace alone there is deliverance.
2. Mercy is the need of man, not justice or deserving pity, but loving mercy. It is the blood soaked ground we all need, not the marble halls!

DOCTRINE

MERCY

GRACE

Psalm 6:5

“For in death *there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*”

REFLECTION

In death there is nothing but the end of this temporary life, but remember as we enter this verse, that we are not destined for death, but for everlasting life. We see what this means in the death of Stephen, and I have known it in the death of a number of saints, where they do not see death, nor even appear to notice it, for they see Jesus and their saved loved ones waiting for them on the “other side”. Acts 7:51ff. Death is a doorway to a believer, for the “angel of death” has no power over us. He takes the lost alone to hell to await their judgment. Even before the Cross and resurrection there was a completely different experience of death for the believer and the unbeliever as Jesus illustrated. Luke 16:19-31.

David is facing here the fact of his death at some future point and he wants it to be godly, timely, and a testimony to all of God’s grace, mercy and power over fear. He doesn’t want to die at this point for the rebellion is not over, and righteousness has not been restored in the land. David seeks, like Hezekiah will 300 years later, more time to bring glory to the Lord to make up for his recent time of slackness. David wants his death to be a blessing to all around him, not the cause of more distress to the nation. He wants praise to the Lord through it, not testing times for his people.

Believers go to heaven now upon death. 2 Corinthians 5:6-9, 13:12. Death is simply to be “absent from the body, and face to face with the Lord”. Now we see spiritual realities as if through a cloudy and imperfect mirror, but once we have gone through the barrier of space and time (death) we enter eternity and see all things clearly. The best preaching, and the clearest inner voice of the Holy Spirit is still limited here and now, for we remain creatures of space and time, but then we are freed from it. We enter into the glory that the Father has prepared for us since before time was made. Romans 9:23, 1 Corinthians 2:9.

In the grave(Hades) there is no praise of the Lord, for physically the body is dead and lifeless, and the soul of anyone in Hell is waiting for judgment. It is in heaven alone that there is praise and that is our destiny. In David’s day, before the Cross and Resurrection, all the dead went to the same area after death, but there was a separation there as is detailed in the Lord’s parable in Luke 16:19-31.

After the Resurrection the Lord led all the saved of previous ages into heaven in a great and glorious triumphal procession. Ephesians 4:8. David was 1000 years waiting with Abraham for that day and rejoiced in it then, but he knew there was time alone in which he could bring glory to the Lord for his people’s benefit. He seeks that time and the Lord’s deliverance to enable more blessing to be shared.

APPLICATION

1. Let us share in David’s desire for a life to be lived to the end with passionate concern to bless others and bring glory to the name of the Lord in all ways we can.
2. We will not face death, we will see Jesus and we have His solemn word upon that. John 5:24, 8:51. Let us preach and teach this hope in Jesus, for He waits to welcome us home.

DOCTRINE**DEATH****Psalm 6:6**

“I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.”

REFLECTION

When we feel that we are under a bit of pressure it is good to read of David’s heart here, for he is totally exhausted in his struggles and is at the point of collapse. I have felt that at times through my last eleven years of pressure and like David I find that worship alone carries me through to the other side of despair and opens the door of hope again. As I walked around the park this morning the sun rose through the trees and I praised the Lord that His grace and mercy is truly renewed every morning. Psalm 30:5, Lamentations 3:23.

David is in true agony here and he feels it in every sweat pore of his body, with perspiration making his bedding wet and with tears making his couch wet. By day and night he experiences these great waves of emotional power. The way God has made us we release the stress hormone “Cortisol” only through the tears, sweat glands, or our urine. As people experience “night sweats” (a hallmark symptom of depression and stress – especially at 1am and 3am) they are

releasing the stress hormones that otherwise would course through their blood stream and suppress their Immune System. Tears are the Lord's way to take pressure off our Immune System.

Do not ever consider tears a sign of weakness, but rather of God's provision to rebuild strength, for as hormonal and physiological pressure is released through tears so we are rebuilt within for Immune challenges and renewed thinking and emotion. We always feel better after a good cry and that is the reason; this is how God has made us. Be encouraged by David and release the pressures from within through tears. Tears are to be released in faith and prayer, for the Lord values our genuine emotion when it is poured out to Him. Malachi 3:16-17.

The day will come when the Lord will wipe away all tears, but that day is not yet come, and so until He returns we are to pour out our tears to the Lord and praise His name in the process. Isaiah 25:8, Revelation 7:17, 21:4. We know He hears our prayer and He honours our tears, which are precious in His sight, as is the death of His saints. Psalm 116:15.

Psalm 56:8-13

"8. Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

9. When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.

10. In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word.

11. In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12. Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

13. For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"

APPLICATION

1. Do not ever doubt the faith of those who weep before the Lord, for there are things in this fallen world that must bring us to our knees and make us weep at times. We are called to comfort the broken hearted, and at times we will experience this ourselves. Let us receive comfort from the Lord as we pour our heart out before Him.

2. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14. The very tears we release take pressure off our Immune System. Let us release all the pressure we feel and draw close to our Lord and Saviour, for He will bring us through the dark night of the soul if we keep walking forward with Him in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – REPENTANCE

Psalm 6:7

"Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies."

REFLECTION

Grief is powerful when the soul is hit by great loss. Once again it is a reminder that grief is not sinful, but a reflection of the normal human condition when we face great losses. As Paul would later remind the Thessalonians, we "grieve, but not like those who have no hope". We still grieve, but just without the hopelessness. 1 Thessalonians 4:13. I personally love the reminder that the late Dr Viktor Frankl gives us concerning grief, and he had been through Concentration camps and experienced his friends and family's death there. He notes that, "There are some things, that when they happen to you, if you don't lose your mind, its only because you didn't have one to lose!"

Grief is a sad reminder of the fall of Adam and Eve, for death enters the world at that time. It is a shock to many, but the Bible has taught it since the beginning, that sin and death "enters" the world, and through Christ death and sin are defeated. There will be abolition of death totally in the new heavens and new earth, Revelation 21-22.

Man was not made to die, but to live forever and glorify God, and in Christ this destiny is restored to us. In this life however we face the loss of those we love and so grief overwhelms at times.

I personally define great grief as our personal sadness at the loss of what we would rather have with us until we leave this earth. Be it a person or things, we experience grief as the very personal loss and sadness; we are sorry for ourselves and such self centred feelings are normal and natural, and the reminder that we are still creatures of space and time. David really encourages me here, for I have grieved deeply for friends who have died, even though I know I will see them again in heaven.

I also understand his deep sadness at the hurt and losses caused by enemies. I have wept over wasted time, resources, lives, and opportunities because of the actions of the enemies of truth, and it is right to pour out our pain regarding such things to the Lord. The Lord sees our heart and feels our pain over such things and it is right that we leave the solution in the Lord's hands.

APPLICATION

1. Grief is grief, and it is a reflection of the human condition since the fall. All grief will be washed away in the Millennium and finally in the New Creation, but until then let us pour out our heart to the Lord.
2. Sin and death entered the world through Adam and Eve's sin. We were made for eternity and that is now in Christ our destiny again. Let us celebrate this truth, but still sit with our fellows as they grieve over early separations from loved ones, even though there is no "early or late" in the Father's Plan. We will still feel pain at times and have questions over some deaths, some of which that will only be answered in heaven.

Psalm 6:8-9

"Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping. The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer."

REFLECTION

As we have seen in earlier psalms, it is crucial to separate yourself from negative people who will otherwise drag you down into despair. David has made his prayer to the Lord and so now he clears his office/court of all time wasting negative people who persist in being negative. At times we must simply tell complicated thinkers, and other time wasters to "go away now!" Sadly many believers think that they must put up with negative people and try to show love to them, but actually the best way to show love is to tell them the truth and try to shake them out of their disordered negativity. It is not loving to lie to people who thereby remain in a confused or depressed place that will kill them over time.

Notice also David's description of those who are negative as "workers of iniquity". He has described these people in earlier psalms and of course we meet some of them in 2 Samuel, for they abuse him from the side lines and we can only imagine the others who "put their ten cents" worth of false wisdom in at times. Notice again, if you are making negative comments rather than encouraging a fellow believer to pray and trust the Lord, then you are a 'worker of iniquity'. Whatever is not of faith is sin, and whatever advice you give that leads people away from faith is sinful! Romans 14:23.

David wants all people who do not share his faith in the loving mercy of the Lord out of his vicinity. He wants only those who share his faith and hope around him so that they encourage each other. Let us be sure we are refreshments to our brethren, not disparagers of faith and hope. Let us build hope and encourage faith always. David is confident that he has been heard, whereas these negative people are casting doubts on his being heard. David knows he is heard and that the Lord has graciously answered already all his prayers, for that is how God is, and he wants all men who doubt these realities cleared out of his court.

Let us show the same lack of tolerance for those who doubt the truth and cast doubts upon spiritual realities. Once you recognise people as negative towards the things of God, and always casting doubts upon spiritual realities, then mark those people and eliminate them from your social network. Help them if you can as a spiritual adviser, but be direct and biblical with them. Such people however must be kept away from your fellowship group, for they will act as giant syringes, and simply suck the life out of your group.

The approach David takes will certainly appear "mean and tough" to many, but if you want to achieve things for God you must eliminate from your social circle all who will hinder this, and negative people slow you down and distract you from God's path. If you don't want to do much for God then keep negative people around you for they will certainly ensure that you achieve nothing! God calls us to work in the Holy Spirit's power and we are to "strip away every hindrance" to letting the Holy Spirit work. 2 Timothy 2:3-10.

We are here to fight for the Lord in the Angelic Conflict and anything or anyone who slows us down may prove fatal on the battlefield of this life, and so eliminate all dangerous activities and people. It is dangerous on a battlefield to have a "friend" who is always "joking around", because such people get you killed! It is also dangerous to have people who are always distracting you into activities that are not "core" to your task, for they lower your readiness and guard and so open the door to fatality also. Life is just too short for fools, distracters, and time wasters, and David has had too many around for too long, but he has snapped out of his depression now and wants nothing around that slow him down again.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be careful in our advice to others, and ensure we do not become "workers of iniquity". Let us be sure to amplify all prayer and faith and so settle our brethren back into the Word with hope, confidence and a focus forward. We are here to fight in the Lord's Army and anything that slows us down is to be shunned. We do not have time for energy leeches, or negative thinkers who lower our morale. We are to be morale boosters and we do not allow anyone to lower our morale, and we do not lower other people's either!
2. Let us separate from all people who are distractions from the task at hand. We are to encourage them to get their life on track, but we do not wait for them to catch up if they are determined to just dawdle along the path of life. We call to them, exhort them, and then we leave them behind if they slack around. If they heed the Holy Spirit they will catch us up, but the battle is hot around us, and we cannot be distracted by those who are not switched on to God's power.

DOCTRINES

SALVATION

SALVATION – IMPUTATION

SALVATION – JUSTIFICATION

SALVATION – PROPITIATION

SALVATION – RECONCILIATION

SALVATION – REDEMPTION

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION

Psalm 6:10

“Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.”

REFLECTION

People who are negative towards what God is truly doing in your life are truly “enemies” of your soul and ministry. David is clear in his thinking towards all who would rob him of certainty and assurance, and he not only will separate from them, but he wants them to be dealt with by the Lord and “judged to their knees”. David’s desire behind his words here is that these people might be convicted of their sins by the direct discipline of God and thereby transformed, or eliminated (so they don’t hurt anyone else). John 16:8-11.

He doesn’t just want them quietly regretting their actions, but seriously distressed and disturbed enough in their minds for there to be genuine change. Often we think that people will change with “gentle persuasion” but serious negativity can only be shifted by serious distress that shakes them to their foundations. There is often what psychologists call “secondary gain” to people’s dysfunction whereby they gain from their negativity with attention or distraction from some issue they really should face. This is often why such people never change, as there are just too many benefits to be dysfunctional. The only hope is for the shaking that occurs to be so foundational that they shift their entire life around.

David is clear; he simply wants these people dealt with by God. He wants them to retreat from their previous position and be totally transformed. He wants them ashamed of themselves, not just “sorry that they are caught”. He wants them to be unable to keep avoiding the issues but have to confront their dysfunction and alter everything in their lives. Too often I see people who have been “shown lots of love and acceptance”, and the result is they carry on in their dysfunction believing that they are ‘accepted’ and that they are “OK”. This is deception and yet it is being marketed as Christian love, when the truth in love is what they need.

APPLICATION

1. If someone needs truth, give them truth, no matter how they hurt in sitting with it. Encourage, exhort, support, but do not tell people they are “OK” when they are not! Do not let people be deceived when the truth alone will save them from disaster.
2. It is OK to tell the truth, even if it hurts. It is always wrong to lie to people to comfort them. Only the truth delivers from hell, deception tranquilises people to their death!

Notes

PSALM 7

SHIGGAION OF DAVID, WHICH HE SANG UNTO THE LORD, CONCERNING THE WORDS OF CUSH THE BENJAMITE
Read 2 Samuel 16:5ff.

INTRODUCTION

'Shiggaion' (*shiggayon*) is a *dithyramb* or "rambling poem", but the reference here isn't to a rambling subject, but an irregular meter. It is taken from the Hebrew verb *shagah* (shaw-gaw') meaning to *stray*, to wander. It is a psalm of irregular meter to emphasise the powerful and disruptive emotions that are being expressed within it. I suspect this "Cush" is actually the descendent of Cush, that is of the family of King Saul, and we have a major candidate in Shimei who meets David and throws stones at him on David's flight from the city. 2 Samuel 16.

Psalm 7:1

"O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:"

REFLECTION

As David left the city, for what many thought would be the last time, men like Shimei rejoiced and looked forward to the rising again of the house of Saul (Cush). They supported Absalom because of what they believed they could achieve down track when he proved himself too weak and the Benjamites could rise again. It was power politics, and little men thought and plotted when they should have been praying and seeking the Lord's will for their life and their nation.

David is grounded again upon the Rock that is his faith in his Messiah. He seeks the Lord's path and the Lord's power and the Lord's plan for his life alone now. He has been distracted for nearly ten years now, but his spirit is back and he rests upon the Rock of Salvation alone. Psalms 13:3-6, 30:1-3. This prayer is repeated with variations again and again in the psalms and that fact has been a great encouragement to me in my great distress over recent months. With David I have learned through prayer to say, "The Lord my God will lighten my darkness." Psalm 18:28.

I had been taught to pray once and leave it with the Lord, and while by way of principle it is a sound one, it is not the biblical example the great saints of the past set us. David daily agonised in prayer and so ought we to do, not being fearful of saying the same thing to the Lord again and again, as we educate ourselves in what we really do want from the Lord. Prayer is as much about clarifying our own desires before the Lord in discussion with Him in our prayers as it is about laying hold upon the Lord's answers. Our confidence is built by daily and hourly prayer, and as we cast ourselves upon the Lord daily and hourly we learn more of ourselves, and we learn of Him and we rest more within His loving arms.

Psalm 43:3-5.

*"3. O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.
4. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.
5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."*

It is "in Thee" that we put our trust, not in any men, although men may be our encouragers and supporters. We are challenged to draw refreshment from spiritual believers, and be refreshment to others, but we are to rest upon the Lord's power alone as we advance in our service along the dark paths that the Lord can ask us to walk at times. Psalm 119:105. The Word is a lamp to our feet, not a search light into the distance, and we need to walk by faith one step at a time, without clear direction further forward for that first step many times. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

"Open up the path before me Lord". This is David's prayer and it has been mine through recent months, and it needs to be our constant prayer, for as we grow in Christ our sole desire ought to be to serve the Lord in more power and more precision.

David seeks salvation in his situation for greater service. He also seeks deliverance, and note the meaning here of the Hebrew word used. He wants the Lord to "pluck him out of harms way", even if it is last minute deliverance. It is resting in the Lord's power that is at the heart of both prayers of David and needs to be in the centre of our own heart. Psalm 35:1-3.

Peter will encourage the believers in his own day as they face great pressures by saying, "Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.....casting all your cares upon Him for He cares for you." **1 Peter 4:19, 5:7.**

APPLICATION

1. Let us be frightened of playing politics or playing church when we should be on our knees seeking the Lord's will for our lives. There is so much self deception about today, but this is just as it has been all through history amongst those who follow their own lusts. Let us be careful as we walk through this world and avoid all self centred and lust driven plans. Let us centre our lives in God's Will and seek nothing else, for nothing else matters in light of eternity.
2. Let us "turn the light on" upon our path through daily bible study and prayer and so allow the Holy Spirit to guide us along the path that God wants for us in this life and into the next.

DOCTRINE

PERSECUTION

Psalm 7:2

"Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending *it* in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver."

REFLECTION

There is danger from all enemies and we can err in under-estimating the enemy as often as we can err in our fears by over-estimating him. We are called to be discerning and thoughtful. It is a reminder to walk carefully in ministry and not presumptuously enter into ministries that are not ours, or go to places without the prayer covering of the local church behind us. Our enthusiasm for service is no reason to enter into areas to serve without a clear call and directive from the Lord. We will be "torn in pieces" by the enemy if we have gone beyond our prayer cover and our divine orders.

At times the forces of the governments of man can be like a violent lion (2 Timothy 4:17) and through history evil rulers have persecuted and "torn" the saints. Peter refers to the great adversary of mankind, the devil, the chief of all persecutors, as a "roaring lion" (1Peter 5:8). We are given very specific instructions on how to conduct ourselves in the presence of the enemy, and we need to remember that this is everywhere! We are hated remember, and the malice of the enemy is bounded only by the prayers of the saints and the protective covering of the Lord on the path He has called us to walk. John 15:18ff.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you." **1 Peter 5:8-10.**

James backs this advice many years before in his letter to the earliest churches.

James 4:6-8

6. *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*
7. *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."*

APPLICATION

1. We are to be absolutely obedient to the Lord to His call upon our life and only enter into service where the Lord has very specifically called us. The Lord will call us into areas where we are covered by prayer and protected by His power, and we are safe in that place and that place only. Believers need to be used to walking close to Jesus and only where He directs, not where we may desire! The enemy is a lion and will tear apart all who wander away from the path of God. Let us ensure that all ministry is covered by believers prayer on our behalf for the Lord's protection and glory. We are not to function isolated and alone, for then we become lion food in exactly the same way as isolated animals are defined by lions as "lunch".
2. We resist the enemy by prayer and spirituality in our service on the Lord's path for our life. We have no other path that provides power and is in accordance with His purpose for us. Let us walk the Lord's path only, for there is protection and power in no other place. God gives "more grace" but only as we walk His path, not as we step into things we desire but that He has not specifically called us to accomplish.

DOCTRINE

SOUL AND HUMAN SPIRIT

Psalm 7:3-5

“O LORD my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.”

REFLECTION

David does something here that we need to do, and something that is demanded/commanded by the Word of God. We are told to “examine ourselves”, and we need to be sure in times of pressure that we are not carrying a hidden sin that will undo us in the coming crisis. Psalms 4:4, 26:1ff, Proverbs 17:3, 2 Corinthians 13:5.

David wants to be sure that he is not guilty of any sin against the house of Saul before he takes any action to defend himself in the eyes of any man. He seeks out the Lord’s judgment upon himself to sort any sin out, for he knows that he cannot face the testing days ahead if he is laden down by unconfessed sin. 1 John 1:5-10.

Notice David’s concerns, for they cover sins of commission and sins of omission. He is reflecting upon any evil he has done, or any good that he ought to have done and did not do. Let us be as careful and thoughtful as David is here. Let us be sure that we do not leave a good that can be done undone, and let us be scared of doing any evil act, and if we do foolishness, let us quickly get to our knees. With the malice of Satan our enemy we cannot afford to be carrying any weight that will affect our survival in the battles to come.

2 Timothy 2:4-10

- “4. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*
- 5. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*
- 6. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.*
- 7. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.*
- 8. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:*
- 9. Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.*
- 10. Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”*

APPLICATION

1. Are you “stripped down and ready for action” on the battlefield of the Angelic Conflict, or are you carrying extra things that do not help you fight for the Lord? Believer, please pause and reflect, and drop any distractions, any sins, any foolish thinking patterns, and any friendships with the world that will slow you in any way, or hinder your fight.
2. We are here to fight and the battlefield is dangerous to all who walk carelessly upon it. Let us walk carefully in the holy and purifying fear of the Lord and so fulfil our ministry before the Lord here upon this temporary planet. It is the Lord alone who can deliver us and the Lord alone who will do so as we focus upon the fulfilment of His will alone in the battles He has called us to fight.

Psalm 7:6

“Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.”

REFLECTION

David seeks the Lord’s power in direct proportion to the angry power of the enemy; as they have used violence towards him so let the Lord return upon their own heads so that even the enemy can see the justice of events. In direct proportion to their rage let the Lord’s righteous rage be seen and let them be judged. They have not just attacked David, they have attacked God and insulted the Lord’s path, and so let them face this and the full consequences of such evil action.

David does not want to tell God what to do in this case, and in this we need to learn to follow him. So many believers are so busy telling God how to answer their prayers that they do not sit with the facts long enough to see what God is actually trying to show them and direct them to do. We are soldiers under our Commanding Officer, The Lord Jesus Christ, and we take orders from Him, we do not give Him orders. We may ask for all things, but we are called to wait for the answer, not just rush into our own desires and sanctify them with an “amen”.

David wants what the Lord has commanded, and he seeks no other path now for his life. He erred so greatly with Bathsheba that he is in holy fear of making the same error again. He needs the Lord’s assurance only and that is all he

seeks. What has the Lord commanded here? In the insults that Shimei gives he rests in the Lord's justice, for he knows that if he deserves even a fraction of the insults then he will take them all and leave his vindication in the Lord's hands.

"Vengeance is mine saith the Lord, I will repay". Deuteronomy 32:35-36, Hebrews 10:30. David has learned this principle and he rests upon it. He knows that the Lord's judgment is just and can be relied upon, and that it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God". Hebrews 10:31. He can leave the justice of Shimei's words to the Lord alone and trust in Him for vindication. We do not need to defend our reputation, for our Lord made Himself of no reputation to save us, and we can leave our "reputation" in His hands, and our vindication there also.

Hebrews 12:28-29

"28. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29. For our God is a consuming fire."

APPLICATION

1. Let us be fearful of stepping into pride based actions. We do not need to defend ourselves in any way, for the Lord is our defender. Vengeance is the Lord's and He does such a better job than we can ever do. Let us get our eyes off people and onto the Lord alone. Let us "have grace" and serve in "godly fear of the Lord".

2. Those who attack us as the Lord's servants, have actually attacked our master. It is the Lord that they must respond to and answer for any insults or assaults upon us. Let us leave our case in the Lord's hands and focus simply on our service for the Lord.

Notes

Psalm 7:7

"So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high."

REFLECTION

David's focus is upon the blessing of the Lord's people, as is appropriate for the Lord's shepherd, which was his role as the king. Deuteronomy 17:14-20. The servant of the Lord as king in this day, or pastor-teacher in our own day, is truly a servant of the Lord when they serve the Lord's people. The nation was not David's, it was God's, and the church is not the pastor's it is Gods. **Matthew 20:25-28.** We see these words of Jesus worked out in David's prayer here.

"25. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The role of the king and the pastor is the same; the care of God's people for God's glory and the people's spiritual blessing. God's purpose in all His working amongst men is that men might "gather around" and worship together in spirit and in truth. The Lord seeks for holy worship and rejoices in its expression of love towards the Creator-Saviour, and repays all worship in Holy Spirit power and joy in the heart and life of the worshipper. God seeks to bless us, and the king in Israel and the pastor today is to facilitate that.

For the sake of the people's blessing David wants the Lord to "return on high", that is to exercise judgment and ruler ship over the kingdom and so bless him in victory and the people in the peace that follows.

APPLICATION

1. Pastors, let our hearts be as David's was. Let us seek the blessing of God upon the Lord's people. Let us walk in all our ways seeking their blessing alone in all we do to serve them as faithful shepherds under our loving Saviour.

2. The Lord always seeks to bless us. Judgement is always God's "strange work", never His preferred work. Let us judge ourselves and deal with any sin we discover, then the Lord will not need to judge us and discipline us. If we judge ourselves often we save time and wasted energy. 1 Corinthians 11:31. Let us deal with sin, not bury it within.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

Psalm 7:8

“The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity *that is in me.*”

REFLECTION

God will always judge in time and David knows that the command of scripture is to move ahead of this and judge yourself first, and he has done this and continues to do this. David does not want to have outstanding accounts open before the Lord. He does not want to have any sin or evil thought not dealt with, for he knows that there is no blessing unless he is righteous before the Lord, and that can only be achieved by God's gracious forgiveness.

David is not being arrogant here, claiming that he is righteous and has absolute integrity in his own right. He can claim righteousness however, even though he has sinned so greatly in the past, for he knows God and knows he is forgiven through his confession, Psalms 51, and Psalms 103. He rests upon the gracious forgiveness of the Lord and is relaxed in God's presence as he wants his entire life now to be an open book before God with no secrets and no unconfessed sin getting in the way of the spiritual and physical battles to be fought.

“Lord – examine me and convict me and lead me in the paths of righteousness alone”. This is David's desire and if we would serve powerfully and be known as a “friend of God” like David and Abraham, then we need to have this “open heart” policy before the Lord also.

APPLICATION

1. Let us open our heart and mind to the Lord and “bring every thought into captivity to Christ”. 2 Corinthians 10:5.
2. Let us be reminded daily that anything that separates us from living fellowship is fatal to our walk and is to be dealt with by confession. Let us keep very short accounts with God and deal with everything whenever sin rears its head.

Psalm 7:9

“Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.”

REFLECTION

David aches at the impact of evil, even though he knows and takes responsibility for unleashing it by his own actions, he still desires its end. Even when we have created a situation, we may pray as David does here and seek the Lord's deliverance. When we have confessed our sins, and when we have sought the Lord's path through the problems that have unfolded around us, then our heart is as God desires, and the answer to our prayer will come. Our past sins are of no significance at that point, for God sees us as a completely transformed person and our sins are remembered no more. Psalm 103 10-18.

David was “wicked” and worked great evil in his year out of fellowship, but once he did business with God and confessed his sins and evil heart he was forgiven. The evil consequences of that terrible year continued to unfold around him, but he was able to seek the Lord's path through them at that point. He had been delayed in doing this for nearly ten years because of the great depression he felt as a result of his sinful actions, but the Great rebellion had triggered his spiritual life back to high gear and he was now forging ahead through the carnage with confidence in God's forgiveness and solving power.

God will “establish” the “Righteous/Justified” ones. We are righteous and we are justified by our acceptance of the salvation of the Lord; these are gifts of God through faith, not the reward of good works we can do. Ephesians 2:8-9. God will establish us and strengthen us in His power as we obey His commands and rest in His provision of spiritual power and guidance. John 15:7-17, Ephesians 5:15-20.

God examines our thinking processes and our emotional patterns and He wants all our thoughts and feelings brought into captivity to His will and Word. "Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." Do not look for any short cuts in spirituality, for there is only walking with God in the power of the Holy Spirit, and that means opening your whole life up to the Spirit's scrutiny. This achieves the results God wants within us and with us, for we then are able to serve and rejoice in the Lord in all ways and at all times.

APPLICATION

1. Let us walk before the Lord in Righteousness and Joy, and love for the lost. We will always ache for the day when the wicked shall cease, but that day arrives for every wicked person when they bow before the Lord, and so let us pray for the salvation of the wicked and so see their transformation from enemies to brethren. John 16:8-11.
2. Let us open our heart and mind to the Lord every day, allowing the Holy Spirit free rein within to achieve His results to the glory of the Lord. Let us devote ourselves to bringing all thought, feeling and desire into captivity to Christ.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MENTAL ATTITUDE

WAR

Psalm 7:10

"My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart."

REFLECTION

The hedge around us is the Lord's power, and there is no other force that can save us other than the Lord's power. Elisha saw that and his servant got to see it also. 2 Kings 6:16-17. The fire/hedge of the Lord surrounds his servant and his work to ensure we are safe while we are focused upon the Lord's service. Isaiah 5:5, Hosea 2:6, Mark 12:1ff. Divine Discipline alone pulls down the hedge of protection around about us, and that is due to unconfessed sin and disobedience alone.

John expressed this confidence in the protection of God over the saint wonderfully in 1 John 4:4, when he reminds us, "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world". Elisha comforted his servant with the same basic message many years before. "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them....and the young man saw, "and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around about Elisha." 2 Kings 6:16-17.

God delights in saving us from impossible situations, and He does it to bring glory to His holy name. It is never about our worth, but always about His Grace, Mercy, Love and Plan. The Lord alone is our shield and our defender, and He will always defend those that stand in "uprightness of heart", with their being devoted to the Lord's will for their life.

God said to Abraham that he was "your shield", Genesis 15:1, and David understood this strongly. 2 Samuel 22:3, Psalm 3:3, 28:7, 33:20. In the Proverbs of Agur this truth is emphasised. Proverbs 30:5. "Every Word of God is pure. He is a shield to them that put their trust in Him".

APPLICATION

1. Let us put our trust in the Lord, for in the Lord alone is there hope for deliverance. My defence is in the Lord's Plan, Power and Person alone.
2. Let us ensure that there is no barrier in our life to the Lord's powerful deliverance. Let us strip away every thing that will stop blessing flowing through us.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION – JUSTIFICATION

Notes

Psalm 7:11

“God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked every day.*”

REFLECTION

God will deal with His own, and judge all our deeds and thoughts and emotional responses, so it is wise to deal with all things before God does and takes us into discipline. God judges us as His children, and we are beaten at times when we have failed to judge ourselves, but there is no anger at us, for He disciplines us as a Father a stupid child.

Hebrews 12:5-15

- “5. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*
- 6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*
- 7. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*
- 8. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*
- 9. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?*
- 10. For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*
- 11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*
- 12. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;*
- 13. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*
- 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*
- 15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;”*

Will we be “exercised by” the work of the Holy Spirit, or will we wait until we are seriously disciplined or even injured/killed in the Angelic Conflict? God deals with us by conviction so that we might deal with sins that will otherwise destroy us in time, and when we deal with them we are delivered and able to serve 100% again.

We may feel God is angry at us, but there is no rage and wrath towards the believer by God, for we are children and the Father loves us. He loves us enough to discipline us however, and that is to be remembered. The unrighteous however must expect the Lord’s anger towards them, for they have insulted the Cross, ignored the reality of the incarnation, and insulted the servants of the Most High God. As believers we are secure in the love of God and we need to stabilise ourselves within this reality when we face discipline or difficulty.

APPLICATION

- 1. We are loved and we need to celebrate this fact in power. We may feel the Lord’s displeasure at our sins at times, but we are not in a place of anger, but discipline to lead to repentance. Never doubt the love of the Father towards you.
- 2. God’s wrath is upon those who insult the Cross and all who stand beneath it. Let the unsaved know why their life is under judgment and appeal to them to shift their ground before it is too late for them.

DOCTRINE

JUDGMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE

Psalm 7:12

“If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.”

REFLECTION

In modern advertising they often say, “This offer is for a limited time”. Salvation is freely offered to all mankind, but it is for a “limited time” and if man does not respond they will face judgment. John 3:16, 36, Acts 4:12, 1 John 2:1-2. Mankind needs to know that the Lord’s bow is bent ready to fire and judge sin and evil.

Many walk carelessly through this life acting as if they have eternity to wait before facing their sins and their Maker. We walk upon a shallow crust of earth over boiling magma, and this very real physical fact ought to give us pause regarding our lives here now. We do not have any mortgage on life and it may end at any point. I have seen three friends suddenly die without any warning and the shock of many was interesting to observe, for they “expected”, even felt

“entitled” to have their friend with them forever. We all stand under the will of the Lord and do not know when this life ends, so let us spend our time here in godly fear and holy work. 2 Corinthians 7:1, Philippians 2:12, Hebrews 4:1ff, 1 Peter 1:17.

It is not servile “fear” that we walk in, but a holy and loving reverence towards the Lord that is expressed in our focused desire to do everything the Lord has called us to achieve, and waste no time at all. As part of this mental attitude we seek the best for those around us and we desire that all might be blessed in Christ, and that means we warn the lost of the eternal consequences of their unbelief. Jude 24-25.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be honest with the unbelievers who would be careless in their lives and warn them of the consequences of their unbelief.
2. Let us remember that we are here for a very “limited time” and let us work to achieve all that the Lord wants of us. Proverbs 4:23-27, Ephesians 5:15-17, Colossians 4:5.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – REPENTANCE

Psalm 7:13

“He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.”

REFLECTION

The “instruments of death” (swords and axes) were the executioners’ tools of trade and they were always formally laid out by the throne of the king, which was his judicial bench. The king reminded all, by the presence of these execution tools, that they would suffer the ultimate penalty of death if they violated the laws of the land, or insulted the king in any way.

The Lord wants all the unsaved to understand that they will not escape the judgment of God, but will suffer the penalty that God’s justice demands. There is no escape from the justice of the Almighty. Revelation 20:10-15.

The Lord will deal with the persecutors of believers and they will find the Lord’s arrows reach them where-ever they try to hide. There is no escape from the justice of God. Hitler believed he could do all he desired with no chance of defeat, but he was found out in his evil and his world collapsed around him. All who stand against the Lord will discover the same.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord will judge the lost in His time in His way and with eternal results.
2. The lost are to be warned, and especially those who practise hatred of the believers, for they are never going to escape the justice of the Lord.

Psalm 7:14

“Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.”

REFLECTION

This verse describes the lost who are determined to remain away from God. It is the deliberate malice of these people that is always baffling to those who think logically and consider their Creator. Hitler and his henchmen are in this category in the Nazi world of WW II, for they, in their godless arrogance, ignored all the facts and lost a war they could, even should have won by sheer power and military ability. Evil is always baffling in its chaotic actions and motives.

The path to the Lake of Fire is one that men and women must walk deliberately rejecting every grace offer that is given to them. They must seriously work hard to end up there, practising hatred of God and God’s people at every turn, for if they bow their knee to the Lord once they are on a different path. **ISAIAH 14:9-11**. Satan asks for nothing except be distracted until you drop into hell, but the Lord asks a “little thing” of us, that we bow our knee to Jesus as Saviour and King, and in grace HE provides the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to do that very thing, if we will reject pride.

To end up in judgment you must work at evil and sin, think evil thoughts and live a total lie. Do not feel sad for those in the Lake of Fire, for that is where they choose to be, and they have worked very hard to avoid the grace, mercy and love of God for them. Such are those who have hated all that God has given them.

APPLICATION

1. Preach the truth to all men, but warn all who reject it of the eternal consequences of their hatred of their Creator.
2. There is a limit to God's love, and that limit is man's complete and final rejection of it.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – REWARDS AND CROWNS

Psalm 7:15

“He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.”

REFLECTION

This is a very easily observed truth over time. Again and again in life you see this very thing being worked out in the lives of others. So often people who plot and plan to catch and trip up others end up falling into their own plots and plans. I have learned over time in my practise, that as people do evil to others, so they receive in their own lives later.

There is a sense of justice in this fact, for the Lord is seen to be absolutely just and fair, for as the evil have dealt with others so they are dealt with and hanged on their own gallows like Haman. Esther 8-9.

APPLICATION

1. It is a foolish thing to plot and scheme against God's people and plan, and yet even believers fall into game playing politics at times. Let us walk away from all such strategies and through prayer alone walk with God.
2. Leave Justice to the Lord, for the Lord works out all things well. We can never do better than God will to set an evil right, and HE does it in time and in eternity.

Psalm 7:16

“His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.”

REFLECTION

This verse reflects the principles we have seen in the others above. In the Old Testament Law the principle was stated very clearly that a man's sins would come upon his own head, and they always will unless confessed and forsaken.

To deal with others in self centred malice and violence is to open the door to violence falling about your own head. Matthew 26:51-54. AS we mete out to others, so we can expect the same to land about us.

APPLICATION

1. Evil may be resisted by legitimate and legal exercise of force, so that the innocent might not suffer evil, but the use of violence must be very circumscribed, and we must always be cautious in exercising violence for it tends to return to us in greater power.
2. God is honoured by truth not violence. Finally the Lord Himself will violently end man's rebellion, but that is the last judgment and we have no personal mandate to execute it now; we are tasked to show and give grace and announce mercy. No matter how angry evil makes us we need to keep on offering grace, mercy and love.

DOCTRINES

DIVINE DISCIPLINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

Psalm 7:17

“I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.”

REFLECTION

What is our response to being surrounded by evil men and women, and finding ourselves under attacks from them? It is to be to worship the Lord in accordance with His righteousness, and not pay any attention to the evils of man. God will deal with the evils of men, but our job is to focus upon worship and service, and ensure we are focused upon Him alone.

Let us worship as David worshiped with our eyes on the Lord’s righteous dealings and in the midst of our troubles praise His holy name, for the Lord will bring us through. Let worship and praise be the antidote to all pressure situations. Isaiah 61:3, Hebrews 4:1-12.

APPLICATION

1. Worship the Lord believer, and let your praise eliminate the problems that will otherwise slow you down and hold you down.
2. Encourage others in worship and praise, for in all worship we strengthen our spiritual life and that of others.

Notes

PSALM 8

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN UPON GITTITH, A PSALM OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is attributed to David and addressed to the Chief Musician of the Tabernacle worship services and so this was a psalm that we know was used in regular worship. It was to be sung on a harp that may have had its origin in Gath. David had very loyal Philistine troops from Gath and he had spent time in their king's service while he hid from Saul. It may be that this sort of harp had a special melodic quality that David wanted for this psalm.

It is important that when we sing a song that it really "hits the notes" that the song writer intended and has the power that he/she wanted. Let us be careful in our singing in worship so that everything about the singing brings glory to the Lord and encouragement and challenge to the saints. We are not to "lose ourselves" in worship, rather we are to find our voice to praise God intelligently and passionately.

Psalm 8:1

"O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens."

REFLECTION

Worship begins and ends with the correct assignment of glory to the Lord as God. When we begin and end prayer with the recognition of God's true character and plan we are on the right track in what we seek from God. To ask intelligently of the Lord we need to always begin by reflecting upon who God is, how He works, and what His Plan requires of us. Then what we ask is going to be correctly oriented to the reality of theology. Let us remember the glory of the Lord God is shown in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:9-11.

"9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The excellence of the Lord is a great subject to begin any prayer with. The Lord is wonderful, and to be praised, and His glory is our starting point, for all he does and is centres on glory. The glory of the Lord is above the heavens and above all the creation. The focus of prayer is to bring glory to God and blessing to ourselves and all who are with us and for whom we care and are making petitions.

APPLICATION

1. How often do we praise the Lord as we ought, simply for who He is and for His wonderful name. A short study of the names of God can give us great subjects for prayer and praise, for as we reflect upon the names of God we learn more of the character and plan of God, for every name gives us a subject that helps praise find wings. Let us lift up our voice and praise the Lord.

2. Let us see that the Lord's name is above the creation, and that the creation is "finger work" of God, (refer below verse 3) but the plan to win our salvation is mighty work indeed. All that is awesome to us is simply a side show, and the glory of God is far greater than that. Let us praise His holy name, for the glory of the Lord is greater than we have ever recognised.

Psalm 8:2

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."

REFLECTION

The youngest children can speak truth and pray powerfully, even confounding the wisest and strongest atheist by their prayers. The baby in arms is a silent refutation to those who say, "There is no God", for the wonder of birth is evidence of design and a plan. The very life cycle, (of baby, suckling, toddler, infant, teenager, mature, elderly, dead), is a reminder that we are designed to "go somewhere" and that the very directional nature of growth indicates that the Creator has a plan that goes beyond death.

We often under-value babies and in the ancient world they certainly did, considering them commodities to be sold or “exposed” (left outside to die) if they were in any way not required by the community. David reminds us that the smallest baby, and most helpful breast feeding infant will grow if allowed to, and may become the greatest warrior the world has seen. They may also become the greatest prophet or preacher, and as either warrior or preacher they may confound the wisest sceptic. We can just never know until we see the child grow and yet they are known by God well before time and are woven into His plan.

APPLICATION

1. God has a plan and it is far bigger than anything we could ever hope or think upon, and we need to pause and reflect upon what God is doing, for we often will not have all the facts and need to be careful of presumption. The smallest baby may become the greatest leader, and God is to be glorified that from the smallest things the greatest can emerge. Let us always through prayer see things and people as God sees them.
2. Let us reflect upon our walk through space and time and never cease to thank God for the glory that is before us daily and the wonder that the plan involves each of us all, and that we have a part to play even now. Let us praise the Lord and play our part, not seeking any other person’s role. Let us honour and praise the Lord for how He has made us and for what we are called to do.

DOCTRINE

ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT

Notes

Psalm 8:3

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained”

REFLECTION

God’s creative power is awesome indeed and yet it is just His “finger work”. It is always good to stand under the heavens in the country and look up on a dark night when background city lights are absent. It is helpful to feel overwhelmed by the smallness of man and the immensity of the heavens and then reflect that this is just “finger work” of God, and that the best is yet to come with the new heavens and new earth. Revelation 21-22.

We need to actively “consider” these things, for they are otherwise just “background noise” to our busy lives and the power of the created universe doesn’t overwhelm as it needs to. All the things that are made by God have been put there for a reason. They were erected for a purpose, and that purpose may be simply for man to go “wow”. When I look at the photos that have come back from the Hubble Space Telescope I stand amazed at galaxies that we didn’t know existed before Hubble and that we now have awesome photos of and they contain several billion stars!

APPLICATION

1. God has ordained a universe that is way bigger than it needs to be for man, and much of it may not now even be there, just the light from the now dead stars is still travelling towards us. The immensity of the universe is beyond our fathoming, and yet it all has a purpose in the creative purposes of God. We do not say “wow” enough, and we do not pause and reflect enough on what God has done as the Creator.
2. There is a purpose, and as there was a beginning, so there is an ending, and we are on a journey that ends one day down here. Let us reflect more and get more people reflecting on these things and feeling the awesomeness of it all. Let us praise the Lord as we ought. God’s Plan is written in the heavens (Book 142 on the flash-drive). God will wind up this present universe one day, and will give people a dramatic warning of this fact in the Great Tribulation.
3. Let us keep remembering the end of this present space-time universe. It is implosion into the Lake of Fire, as Peter sees. 2 Peter 3:10-18. We are to celebrate this, not be fearful of “black holes” and the end of space-time. Even 1000 years before this time, at the start of the 3 ½ year Great Tribulation period, on one specific day, one third of the stars will fail (be seen from earth to have ceased to exist). These star systems must have been extinguished millennia before, but only be seen to fail as the light fails to arrive at earth on this one day. Revelation 8:12. Let us have God’s perspective of things, not our own.

DOCTRINE

GLORY

Psalm 8:4

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? “

REFLECTION

This is one of my favourite verses to recite aloud as I stand under the heavens. We back into a large park of several hundred acres and the light from the surrounding city is subdued enough at times for the stars to be able to be seen from my backyard. I love standing there, looking up and saying this verse aloud and letting the tears of joy and awe flow down my cheeks. I am looking into the “milky way” and I remember Revelation 8:12 and the temporary nature of all this.

Systematic Theology teaches that Man is here to prove Satan and his demons were wrong, but in the eternal purposes of God we are here for so much more, most of which we will not even comprehend until we pass through space-time and can see the things that we but glimpse here a little. Psalms 144:3-4, Isaiah 40:17-22.

What would the Creator see in mankind? Why would God bother with mankind in the midst of this awesomeness? There is something very powerful in the fact that God not only is interested, but this is the “visited planet” where the Son of Man came and gave Himself for His creatures. The greatest thing isn’t the stars, but the incarnation, and the Cross, and the Empty Tomb, whereby we know that the Lord has given us life eternally in Christ Jesus and it is just too wonderful for words to capture. Hebrews 2:5-10. We are destined for well beyond the temporary stars of this space-time universe! The best is yet to come! Revelation 21-22.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be overwhelmed more by awesomeness in the creation than we have been to date, and let us take time to pause and reflect upon the greatness of God’s creative power, and remember that we haven’t even seen the best of it yet.
2. This universe is here for more than just a backdrop to the drama of redemption, and there is much more for us to understand about the creation that we will see once we are ourselves through space and time at death. Let us see over this world written, “The best is yet to come – and what you see is a fraction of the awesomeness of your Creator”.

DOCTRINE

ADAM – THE FALL

Psalm 8:5

“For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. “

REFLECTION

Man’s creation as “a little lower than the angels” is significant for the Angelic Conflict and sets up the Drama of Redemption as it unfolds through time. We are made lower than the angels to prove a point about angelic and human free will. It appears that after Satan’s fall he argued with God about the justice of his condemnation, and that man was made to prove that he was rightly judged. The reason being that if man, as a lower intelligence than the angels, could respond to the Gospel and bow their knees before God, then Satan and a superior creature should have done so. This explains why Satan’s malice is so bad towards us, for we are in effect the main evidence for his prosecution.

The great glory of the Lord in the creation of mankind is that we were not only created lower than the angels but that we were lifted up in Christ Jesus to be higher than them. John 15:18ff, Romans 8:33-34, 1 Peter 3:21-22. The Lord in His humanity is now superior to all angels and we, as members of His body the Church, are also lifted up to this place. We are actually served by angels in time now. Hebrews 1:10-14. There is far more glory in this verse than we realise now also. The glory of the Lord is in His provision of salvation in a way that is way above all we can comprehend at this point, but what we can see is that the angels serve us, or hate us.

APPLICATION

1. We are at war with the fallen angels and served by the elect angels. Hebrews 1:6-14, 12:1. We are caught up in something that is presently beyond our full comprehension. We must realise one thing clearly however, the angels are intimately interested in all we do and say that has relevance to the unfolding Drama of Redemption.
2. We have all been “crowned with glory and honour” because of what Jesus did on the Cross. He has won honour for mankind and we will receive crowns eternally through Him and our service of Him. Praise God the Father for the Plan that unfolds here before us, for it is far greater than we realise.

Psalm 8:6

“Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet: “

REFLECTION

Man was placed on the earth and in the Garden of Eden to have control over this creation and he exercised rulership for some time. Man was placed in charge and angels were excluded, but Satan deviously enters the Garden and deceives the man and his wife and they fall into his trap. At that point I suspect Satan felt it was “game over” with man condemned as he had been, but then something happened that shocked him. The free offer of Salvation was provided by God, and man took the free gift and accepted the blood shed for him, and entered the new post-fall world in sadness but in salvation, with restored relationship with God through the Redemption of the blood shed.

Ever since that time the blood that has been shed by the Lord Jesus has been accepted by some, but not by others and the great divide of mankind has opened up like it did between the two categories of angels also. Free will was played out, and is still being played out as I write this, and will be until time ends at the Great White Throne at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. All was still left under man’s feet on the earth and Satan has been “hell bent” on destroying man and the earth ever since. He will come close to his goal in the Great Tribulation period, but he will fail with the Anti-Christ, just as he did with Hitler and every other deluded servant of evil.

Man has dominion and exercises rulership of the earth well only ever when he recognises that the universe is “made by the hands of God”. At all times when men take God out of the equation they destroy and kill what they claim to be stewards of. Only a created worship filled world is a world that works, and man can only rule if they accept that there are basic laws put there by the Creator that allow rulership to work. Atheism has never accepted such logic, but that is because it violates the logic of the creation and is motivated by hatred, as is Satan himself.

APPLICATION

1. God made this world and it is made with rules and laws associated with it. We can have predictability only because the world is made. Let us rejoice in this created universe, but not be deceived into thinking it is eternal, for it is not. God made it and God ends it, and then HE unfolds for us the even better living place that is fit for eternity. John 14:1ff, Revelation 21-22.

2. Let us recognise the hatred of the enemies of mankind for us as believers for it is going to run all through history. Satan hates us and we need to factor in all his hatred and that of his demons daily, before we walk through this world or else we will stumble into dangers.

DOCTRINE

DEATH

Psalm 8:7-8

“All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.”

Psalm 8:9

“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! “

REFLECTION

Everything that is made upon this earth is made to work for the glory of God and the purposes relating to man being here to prove Satan and his demons wrong. Everything is woven together in a fabric of creation with a purpose that sings of God's glory and God's creative power and purpose.

We are here in a framework that works and that speaks of God's purposes. Let us join David in praising God's holy name and honouring His creative purposes and power, for that purpose is our own and that power is available to us here and now.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord's name is excellent upon the earth and to be praised under the heavens by all who glory in the truth of what we are all here for. Let us be people who worship the truth.
2. Everything has a purpose and nothing is to be treated badly or lightly on this planet. We are to honour all that God has made and give glory to Him, not worship the creation.

DOCTRINE

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

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