

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



PSALMS 58 – 72
(THE EXODUS PSALMS)

BY

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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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PSALMS 58**INTRODUCTION**

When you lead people you will find that many people don't like being led! You may have passion, focus, energy, righteous intentions, and a clear purpose, but there will always be people in your "congregation" who will think they know better and resent being led by you or any other person. What you will discover over time is that the weaker the individual, and the less abilities they have, the more they will often think they are capable of.

Do not expect Holy Spirit inspired leadership to have fewer opponents than pagan leaders, for in the church we often come under even harder pressures than the pagans, as Satan really attacks us and our churches. Opposition must be faced, and we see David doing that in this Psalm. We have even greater promises than he had, one being, 1 John 4:4, "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world". Let us read and learn as leaders, and if we are followers, let us ensure we are good ones as a result of reading these words. We are responsible to the Lord for our reactions to biblical leadership.

PSALMS 58

1 Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? 2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth. 3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. 4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; 5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. 6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD. 7 Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. 8 As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. 9 Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath. 10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. 11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

REFLECTION

**1 Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?
2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.**

Many people have been talking about David behind his back. Most have been offering opinions about his leadership abilities, and commenting upon his poor decision making. The king's job was to make righteous judgements, and through those to win the favour of the people, as they saw the hand of God work through the hands of the king. Deuteronomy 16:18-20, 2 Samuel 23:1-7, 2 Chronicles 19:5-7, Psalms 72:1-4, Isaiah 11:1-5. The model for the truly righteous king is the Lord Himself, the Branch of Judah. Refer to the BTB study THE BRANCH.

David is flawed but he seeks to follow the Lord, and when he falls he deals with his sins. He is a man who sought to be the "friend of God", for in spite of all his sinful deeds he dealt with sin and sought the Lord's face, and sought holiness in his life more than any other man other than Abraham. All later kings will be measured against David, and the Lord will delight in the title of "Son of David". 2 Chronicles 34:2-3, Nehemiah 12:24-45, Psalms 89:3-35, Acts 13:22-36, Revelation 22:16.

The people have been judging David but they have been judging him unrighteously. They have maligned his motives and his actions. David is a frail human being who makes some serious errors of judgement, and some terrible sinful decisions, but his people are in error when they abuse him. David calls upon them to re-assess their own judgement process before they are themselves judged. They are not upright in their judgements. This word "upright" here is an interesting one. It means that they are "not even or straight" in their decision making. They are not cutting a straight line in their judgements, but are using different standards to judge their own actions and those of others.

David is easily maligned for his past sins, but he is a forgiven man, and his heart seeks the blessing of the Lord. His love for God and his determination to serve the Lord brings him back from every sinful decision, and in God's sight when we are forgiven, we are cleansed totally and our sins are seen no more. "As far as the east is from the west, that far is our transgression removed from us". Psalms 103:8-12, 107:3.

When we are forgiven, God does not see our sins any more, and men must realise that this reality is to be factored into their assessments of forgiven people! Refer to the BTB study on CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS, SALVATION – SIN. While there are some sins that in the Church Age ban a man from leadership later they are still forgiven by the Lord if they have been thoroughly confessed, and we need to recognise that and accept that person.

Sexual sins permanently excluded men from pastoral roles in the Church, and financial dishonesty excluded people from all deacon roles where money was handled. The standards for the church were and are higher than they were in Israel.

These exclusions were permanent in the church, but the individual was still to be accepted in the fellowship if they had dealt with their sins, it was just that those sins affected their future areas of service. 1 Timothy 3:2-13, Titus 1:7-11.

The best example of judgement and then forgiveness is the case of the immoral Corinthian church member. He is to be cast out of the church until he confesses, and when he does he is to be taken back in, but his disgraceful behaviour has rendered him incapable of fulfilling any rulership role later, as he has lost his good standing in the community. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

The lack of forgiveness towards David on the part of some of his people is understandable, given his great sins, but those who judged him harshly were wrong. These people are violent men and women themselves and yet they accuse David of violence. They are guilty of “wickedness” in their judgements. There are people we will find hard to forgive when they become believers, because of their great evils in the past.

Paul found acceptance and forgiveness slow in coming from some because he had persecuted families within the church and possibly killed their family members and friends. Barnabus had to work hard to get him accepted. Acts 9:26-31. David had likewise done some terrible things to his enemies and to those who sided with Saul in the Civil War and many held a “blood feud” mentality against him. They are challenged to see David as God does, and we are challenged to see all believers as God sees them. We are all forgiven sinners, and so let us see others as God sees us – covered by His Great Grace, Mercy and Love through the blood of Christ shed for us.

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

David identifies that the inherited OLD SIN NATURE of man ensures that we all go astray after our sinful weaknesses very soon after we can walk and talk. Children are not born innocent, but are born sinners. We need a new birth to walk with God; no child walks with God naturally, but only after God has worked within them. Refer to the BTB study on the HOLY SPIRIT – EFFECTIVE CALLING, SALVATION – REGENERATION (BORN AGAIN). We all must be born again. There is no hope for any person unless they are born again. John 3:3-16, 36, 1 Peter 1:18-25.

The only exception to this is a child which dies before reaching the age of accountability, and this is illustrated by David when his baby dies. This child is the result of the adultery of Bathsheba and himself, but when it dies David affirms his confidence in seeing this child in heaven. 2 Samuel 12:17-23, Matthew 18:10. The two truths about children must be held together; that all children need to come to their Saviour, but if they die at an age when they have not had opportunity to do so, the justice, righteousness, and mercy of God meet them and bring them into heaven directly. No child is condemned because of the sins of its parents.

**4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;
5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.**

These people of David's have spoken terrible things about him, and abused him seriously. Their lies about David have been terrible and wicked. Their words have been like the fatal poison of the adder, and they have been deaf to all correction by the truth. They have heard neither God's correction, nor their fellow man's correction. Their minds are made up and their minds are set in poisonous evil. They are simply like unpredictable poisonous snakes. There are snakes that bite the snake charmers, even though the snake handler is careful and thorough.

There are many stories from the modern world, as from the ancient world, of snake handlers who have been bitten by snakes they are “charming” or handling directly. Poisonous snakes are always dangerous. There is no such thing as a safe poisonous “pet snake”. Only in the Millennial Kingdom will all snakes be safe. Isaiah 11:6-10. Just as all poisonous snakes are dangerous now, so are poisonous people. David challenges them to acknowledge the truth and forsake their poisonous ways.

**6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.
7 Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.**

David is right in his prayer, so do not think he is too violent and that he should just forgive them. It is too dangerous to forgive “snakes” until their fangs have been removed or destroyed. Until sin and evil is faced by a person and there is the genuine fruit of repentance in their life we are not asked by the Lord to forgive them, we are challenged to convict and rebuke them. Matthew 3:8-10, 12:33, Luke 3:8, 17:1-4, 2 Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:13, 2:15, Revelation 3:19. Read each of these passages and be really sure in your mind on the subject of forgiveness, for if evil is forgiven quickly, without repentance of the evil person, there will be greater evil done.

Those who persist in evil and sin are not forgiven by God and join Satan in the Lake of Fire forever. Revelation 20:10-15. We are not asked to forgive those who the Lord does not forgive! Remember these truths and keep the Lord's people safe from evil false brethren and the servants of Satan who will otherwise make carnage amongst the children of God. Those who are determined servants of Satan will not repent, and so they are not to be forgiven, for they are determined to serve the enemy. If foolish believers forgive such people and let them loose in the church, then they will maim and kill young believers. Do not be a servant of the enemy in such foolishness.

Unbiblical teaching about forgiveness has caused great harm in many places. Read Jesus words and be corrected! David calls for the Lord's thorough judgement upon those who persist in hateful attacks upon him, and he calls upon the destruction of their evil weapons that have been used with such malice against him.

8 As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.

David wants the persistently evil men thoroughly judged by the Lord. One of the things that all gardeners try to do is kill slugs and snails before they eat the crops. The eco-friendly way was to use stale beer or fermented sugar of any sort, as the snails drink it and cannot retract into their shells and the sun kills them, or the birds eat them. David sees the snails "melted" by the sun and he wishes these evil people might also be melted by the fierce sun of God's righteous rage.

He mixes his metaphors a little in verse eight as he ends with the hope that they might not "see the sun"; that is, live any longer. This sort of mixed sentence is a reminder that he is passionate about this subject and is feeling deep emotions as he pours his thoughts out, and so the metaphors are mixed. The next image of verse eight is an awful one to us in our squeamish culture. Like an aborted foetus he wants them destroyed; dead before they have had any more chance to live and cause any more harm to others.

The fastest form of fire in David's day was to use the dry thorn bushes of the desert. The Israelites would use a fire lighter flint and then try to catch the sparks on grasses which would then catch on the dry thorns which burn fiercely hot and will catch larger wood on fire and so the cooking fire is hot, strong and sustainable. David wants their cooking pot of evil to go cold quickly. He wants their fire of malice to be put out by the wind of God. He wants their fierce heat to be extinguished by the blast of God's judgement. He wants them to feel the wrath of God and know that they are judged as they are extinguished. Numbers 16:28-34.

10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

While David's sentiments here may appear blood thirsty and inappropriate for a Church Age believer, he is absolutely right before the Lord and so we need to meditate upon his feelings and our own when we face naked evil. David recognises there is a deep human longing to see justice done upon the evil and malicious people who abuse the weak, the elderly, the innocent, and the sick. We ought always to pray for the lost, but it is also correct to pray that evil people who are abusing the weak and innocent be judged by the Lord and brought to their knees.

The righteous will indeed rejoice when finally all who have rebelled against the Lord God are cast into the Lake of Fire. We will rejoice when the rebels against the grace and mercy of God are dealt with by God in absolute justice. Earlier, when the Lord returns to the earth, we will rejoice in the destruction of the enemy armies that are besieging Jerusalem and have murdered two thirds of the Jewish people. Even though the blood of the evil ones will reach the horse's bridles in places we will rejoice in that blood shed, for those who die at that time have committed such evil deeds, and will not repent or accept the Lord as their King or Saviour. Revelation 14:20.

We will see clearly in that day the absolute legitimacy of the justice of God, and the rightness of His taking vengeance upon those who have done such evils through time. Psalms 73:13-20. It is important to the Lord that every believer is able to see by the end of time what all this great drama of redemption has been about. It is crucial that we are able to see the truth, and understand righteousness and justice fully and finally before the Universe is wrapped up and put away. All mankind will see that God does indeed reward the righteous, and that God does indeed judge the ungodly. Malachi 2:17, 2 Peter 3:1-13.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Let us challenge ourselves to see each other as the saved sinners we are, not the saints we may not openly appear to be. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God at times, but if we have confessed our sins we are forgiven and lifted up by God to a place of honour again. Let us see our believing friends as God sees them, and let us affirm daily the wonder of forgiven sins in each of our lives.

2. Jesus calls us to recognise people by the fruits in their lives. Matthew 7:13-23. If we are surrounded by poisonous people we must recognise the truth quickly or we will be "bitten" by them. There are people who behave like snakes, and we must spot them quickly, and avoid their poison. We must challenge the "snakes" in the church to deal with their terrible wickedness. Let us be blunt in our role as pastors and deal with the snakes before they strike the baby lambs of the flock. Refer to the BTB study PASTORAL DISCIPLINE.

3. We are not asked in this life to forgive those who are unrepentant in their evil. They will not be forgiven by the Lord, but will be assigned their eternal place with Satan and his fallen angels in the Lake of Fire. Those who persist in evil are to be seen for what they are, and called out for what they are; they are servants of Satan himself. Such people remain poisonous snakes upon the earth, and are not ever to be treated as anything else. No mercy is to be shown to those who show no mercy, or they will simply do greater evil.

We have seen in my own country the stupidity of liberal Christendom in this issue. They keep speaking of “forgiveness” towards evil men, and they argue for the early release of evil and totally unrepentant men from jail. The result has been more murders, rapes and other evils. We have reaped as a nation the stupidity the liberal judges and false believers have sown. If there is no repentance, there is to be no forgiveness. Such evil people are to be left to the justice of God. Luke 17:1-4.

4. God will judge the persistently and determined evil ones. The wicked will receive all that they deserve, and it is not wrong to pray for their judgement, when it is clear that they are determined to reject the Gospel message. Now that last point is the challenge, for we cannot really know this until we have really prayed for the lost thoroughly. Let us pray for the lost to be saved, John 16:8-11, but when they are determined to oppose the work of God’s people, then let us pray for their judgement and their elimination from the Lord’s earth for that is their destiny if they persist in their active rebellion against God.

DOCTRINES

CHRIST – BRANCH: A PICTURE OF CHRIST

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

SALVATION – SIN – MAN’S NEED FOR SALVATION

SALVATION – SIN – BARRIER BETWEEN MAN AND GOD

HOLY SPIRIT – EFFECTIVE CALLING

SALVATION – REGENERATION: BORN AGAIN

CHURCH – PASTORAL DISCIPLINE

PSALMS 59

INTRODUCTION

As we see again and again in the Psalms, the ANGELIC CONFLICT figures greatly in the affairs of believers. The enemy Satan and his demonic and human forces take every opportunity to launch attacks especially upon key believers. David was the leader of Israel and as such a prime target for Satanic attack, and so are all leaders of believing organisations, and this will be the case right through until the end of time. The enemy will try to discourage, distract, dismay or destroy all powerful believing leadership. Refer to the BTB study SATANIC STRATEGY AND TACTICS. Satan has not had a new idea for several thousand years, and he doesn’t need to develop new ones, for many believers keep falling for his old ones due to their ignorance of “his devices”. 2 Corinthians 2:9-11, 11:13-15.

David’s Psalms are a good case study of just how often, and how vigorously the leaders of believing organisations can expect to be attacked, but it is an excellent case study in how to defeat such attacks through prayer and walking in the power, armour, and light of the Holy Spirit. We are on a battlefield in this present world, and we need to recognise that fact and walk through each day in Holy Spirit guidance and power. Carnality is simply not a safe option for any believer; SPIRITUALITY is the only way to advance through the challenges of each day upon this earth. Refer again to the BTB studies at the end of this Psalm.

PSALMS 59

1 Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. 2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. 3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD. 4 They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold. 5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah. 6 They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. 7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear? 8 But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision. 9 Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence. 10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies. 11 Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield. 12 For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak. 13 Consume them in wrath, consume

them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah. 14 And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. 15 Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied. 16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. 17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.

REFLECTION

1 Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.

2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

The enemies of a believer are the enemies of God, and they must be defeated in God's power, not our human power. If satanic attack is launched upon a believer and leader in the Church they must first remind themselves as to what they are, and who the enemy is. This means remembering that we are ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD, and that we have POSITION IN CHRIST. Once we remember who we are we can claim the promise of 1 John 4:4, that "greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world".

We then remember who the enemy is, and that like the "raging lion" he will tear us apart if he can. James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8-11. By failing to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit each day we give the enemy opportunity to attack us successfully. Spirituality is our defence. Romans 8:1-13, Galatians 5:16.

There are people who are indeed "the workers of iniquity". It is hard to accept at times, but it is crucial that we understand this fact; there are people who literally sell themselves out to the enemy of mankind. These people may be demon possessed at times, but are more often simply deceived and blinded to the truth, and so they hate God, God's people, and God's Word. Refer to the BTB study BLIND MAN AS A PICTURE OF THE UNSAVED, DEMONS. Demon possession is rare in many countries, simply because Satan doesn't have to use demonic forces there, as the people who hate God and God's Word are so negative towards believers that they will do all they can to destroy spiritual work without any help from satanic forces at all.

Satan doesn't waste his forces where there is no need to deploy them, but even if we are facing powerful demonic forces we are safe when we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the light of God's Word. 1 John 4:4. We need to cast the enemy over to the Lord seeking the Lord's power to protect us from evil forces and deliver us from their human allies' malice. They will seek our life blood if they can get it, but we cast ourselves upon the Lord and He will always lift us up. John 15:18-27, 1 Peter 5:5-9. We are the Lord's and we are his alone, and none harm us without his permission, and if it is given, then we can be sure that there is glory in it. Romans 8:28-39, 2 Corinthians 12:5-10.

3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD.

4 They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.

David is being seriously plotted against again. 1 Samuel 19:11-18, Psalms 10:9-10, 37:32-33. These people are literally "lying in wait", possibly to try to assassinate him, but more likely to assassinate his reputation by their gossip and malicious lies. Those involved in the plotting are senior members of the government and aristocracy of the land. They are "mighty" people; at least they are mighty in their own eyes. Judges 17:6, 21:25. Isaiah 5:15-21, Acts 4:24-31.

We pass all such things over to the Mighty God who will restore our spirits and bring us through to victory in His power and plan. It is often that we will feel that the Lord has not heard our prayer, nor seen our plight, but the Lord sees and hears all things, and His eternal plan has factored in all things and the answer to our need is there in heaven awaiting our prayer to connect with it.

David recognises that he has done no harm to them, nor has he been evil or sinful in any way that would justify their malice. This episode of attack may date from his days as the son in law of King Saul. We have no idea with certainty, but David is able to claim innocence for sin and the Lord does not rebuke or correct him for it. He has no fault towards any of these people.

This is what makes it hard at times in ministry, for when we are viciously attacked by some people we look for reasons, but there are in fact none at all, other than their hatred of God. We don't need to do anything to be attacked by the enemies of God; we just need to be doing our work before the Lord and the enemy will attack us.

David is not asking God to "wake up" at the end of verse four, but for the Lord to act decisively. It is as if the Lord has not seen these things, nor acted at this point, and so David requests intervention immediately on his behalf from the Lord. Isaiah 51:9-16. We are able to come boldly to the throne of grace, Hebrews 4:16, and the Lord will always be gracious with us, even though we may have started to doubt our place with Him.

5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

6 They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

David pleads for the Lord to arise now and judge the heathens who have attacked him, or plan to do so. He seeks the Lord's action in judgement, not any showing of mercy. David knows that mercy is the Lord's preferred work and judgement is God's "strange work". Isaiah 28:21. The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all might come to salvation. 2 Peter 3:9. It is not common for the Lord to judge and destroy, for He seeks the salvation of the lost, and only moves to judge when there is no other option. That is what David is arguing at this point; that these evil people have placed themselves by their persistent malice beyond the place where mercy can be safely shown to them.

The Lord will judge and show no mercy eventually to all those who have persistently opposed His plan and person and power. Revelation 20:11-15. God does not seek their destruction, but their breakthrough to truth and salvation, but if their persistence in evil leaves the Lord with no other option, then they will join Satan in the Lake of Fire. These people are "wicked transgressors" and they wander about like wild demon possessed animals and seek their prey like the wild dogs that the Jewish people so despised in the rubbish dumps outside their cities.

The people attacking David are likely demon possessed people from the contents of verse six. They prowl like malicious and malevolent wild animals. These people are scary and many believers get very scared when attacked by such people but we are to see them as the servants of evil they are, and bring the superior powers of God against them through believing prayer. Bind the forces of evil by believing prayer. Mark 3:27.

**7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?
8 But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.**

These are people who pour venom from their tongues and are crude and obnoxious in their behaviours. They believe that God does not hear or see their evils. They are people who act as if they are a law unto themselves. They sincerely believe that God either doesn't exist or doesn't care, but they are sincerely wrong! These people delight in mocking those with genuine faith and abusing those who stand for holiness and service to the Lord their God. They laugh at God and are "mockers" of all that is holy and good, but the Lord will have the last laugh upon them.

Just this week I read of a planned concert by the pop star "Madonna", who is holding a concert on a holy day in the country that she is visiting that honours the Virgin Mary. This pop "icon" is mighty in her own eyes and deliberately has set out to insult the biblical God and God's Plan that includes the VIRGIN BIRTH. She will receive her reward for her evil. Recognise that more and more mockers will come as we near the end of this present age. As they mocked the Lord so they will mock all who stand for truth. Luke 18:32, 22:63, Acts 17:32, Galatians 6:7, Hebrews 11:36, 1 Timothy 4:1ff, 2 Timothy 3:1, 1 Peter 2:1ff, Jude 18.

**9 Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.
10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.**

David knows that the strength of the enemy is such that he cannot defeat them in any power other than that of the Lord. The Lord alone is his defence against this level of power and malice. We need to be sure ourselves of this fact; for we are not able to stand alone against the enemies we confront. We are not meant to stand alone, but only ever stand in the Lord's power. Psalms 62:5-12, Isaiah 12:1-2, 26:1-4, 58:11, 14. The Lord is a God of mercy towards His own, and David can depend upon the mercy of God towards him to the same extent that he can depend upon the judgement of God towards his enemies.

11 Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.

David shows great insight in his request in the first half of verse eleven. If the Lord slays the enemy quickly and eliminates them too speedily from sight permanently, then the people will forget the danger such people posed, and may forget the lessons those people and their evils have taught them. With a danger quickly and completely over we can forget the bad times and the habits that kept us safe through them may drop away. The importance of not forgetting the testing situation is paramount for the believer as they advance. If we forget lessons we are doomed to repeating the lesson again, and may possibly be defeated the next time.

David seeks the judgement and scattering of the enemy, but not their immediate and sudden elimination. He wants the people to know that the Lord alone is their shield. As Abraham had to learn this lesson when he faced King Chedorlaomer, so David's people needed to remember that the Lord alone protects them. Genesis 14:17-20, 15:1. The shield of faith is the weapon we need in front of us at all times. Ephesians 6:14-18.

**12 For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak.
13 Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.**

David wants every lesson that can be learned about the mechanics and dynamics of sin and recovery to be taken on board by his people. He wants them to see their enemies scattered but an on-going threat for a time, so that the believers might remain in the correct state of faith and vigilance. He wants his people to see the enemy's pride for what it is, and understand that cursing and lying are judged by God. He wants them to see that the Lord will, over time, "consume" his enemies as a fire consumes wood, but understand the process and their need for on-going application of the doctrines that he has taught them.

He wants the enemy to be consumed in God's time, that all might know that the Lord is truly God over all the earth, and especially He is the God of Jacob. He wants the judgement to be gradual, so that the evil people may serve a good purpose, as educators in righteousness and judgement. Some people are of no earthly use, except to be lessons for others, and in that role they still serve God, even though they may hate God. This is what David wants to see with these implacable and malicious enemies of the Lord; that their very rebellion and its judgement might become a cause of rejoicing, glory, and education for the believers.

**14 And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.
15 Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.**

He wants the survivors of the rebels against the Lord to be scattered about the land and to creep around the city rubbish dumps, sounding and looking like animals. This may seem mean, but it is godly and correct. As believers see in the spent lives of the evil and wicked the cost of sin and evil, so they understand why the Lord's Law is as strict as it is. As we see the increasingly hollow, bitter, and blighted lives of wicked and persistently evil unbelievers we can affirm the truth of the Word and will of God even more in our heart.

We still see this in our cities today. We see the blighted and unhappy lives of the drug addicts and alcoholics as they shuffle along the dirty streets amongst the rubbish seeking food scraps. Those who persist in rejecting the Gospel message become a walking sign-board of what Satan will do with a life given over to him; they become a living picture of a life without God. The presence of the empty, pointless, hopeless, and awful lives of the persistently evil amongst us is our encouragement to persist in holiness and spiritual growth.

We need compassion upon the lost, and we need to focus upon giving the Gospel message whenever we can, but we also need to point to the hollow lives of the persistently evil and explain to young believers that this is the satanic alternative to life with Christ. We keep on delivering the truth to such people, but we do not pull back from telling the truth about the obvious consequences of their evil choices up until this point.

**16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.
17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.**

David ends this section with praise for the power and majesty of God. David first sings of God's power, and that is a good place to start, for when we face difficulty we need to know that the power of God is sufficient to deal with whatever we have come up against. David begins by giving thanks for the power of God that knows no limitations to deliver him, and has done so. It is good to remember the power and majesty of God. 1 John 4:4. We have superior power in the Lord to that of Satan who opposes us.

The night of testing may be severe but the day dawns with hope and mercy is seen in the actions of God to deliver. David sees clearly that the Lord is his deliverer and his shield in all future conflicts. God is his refuge, and when he faces troubles David can see that all he needs to do is rest firmly in the CHARACTER OF GOD and settle his mind with the doctrines of God's Word. God is his strength, his defensive shield, and his source of mercy. God remains our strength and shield today, and the wise believer finds their rest in Him. Deuteronomy 33:27.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Walking in the power of the Holy Spirit is not an optional extra for spiritual life upon this earth; it is an absolute necessity for all believers who wish to keep themselves safe. Let us preach the vital need for the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer, and let us preach about CONFESSION OF SIN and SPIRITUALITY-CARNALITY so that every believer has the facts they need to keep safe and remain active in the Lord's work in spite of the attacks of the enemy.
2. The Lord alone is able to intervene and assist us. It is to the Lord alone that we must turn to secure the help we need. There is no power that can protect us from the malice of evil other than the Lord God. Let us walk close to the Lord and depend upon His power alone through the inner ministries of the Holy Spirit. The malice of the enemy may be great at times, but the superior powers of God will always defeat the enemy; let us urge the Lord's people to walk in God's power and cast their cares upon the One who can deliver.
3. Faith and vigilance is the correct state for us as believers. We need to be alert to danger, ready for attack, and assured of victory in the Lord's power. It is trust in the Lord and holding tightly to His Word that protects us. We need to be assured of His judgement of those who persistently rebel against His will and purpose for them. Let us teach these things well to God's people so that they might recall the lessons of history that they need to understand.
4. Let us not be afraid of pointing to the empty and awful lives of the wicked and proclaiming the truth about them; they are there in that awful state as a result of their evil choices. Let us show compassion by means of the Gospel message, for it alone will deliver them, and if they reject it, let us refer to them as living examples of the alternative to the truth. Let us proclaim their fate that all may hear, and let us remind all mankind that these blighted lives illustrate how Satan pays his people! Then let us offer the truth again that any who can be saved might be delivered from their satanic darkness.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS – SATAN’S STRATEGY AND TACTICS

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY-CARNALITY

CHRISTIAN LIFE – ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD

CHRISTIAN LIFE – POSITION IN CHRIST

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SOLDIER: CHRISTIAN SOLDIER IN EPHESIANS 6

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMING BY FAITH

BLIND MAN AS A PICTURE OF THE UNSAVED

ANGELS – DEMONS

CHRIST – VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD

HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

HOLY SPIRIT – OPERATION

PSALMS 60

INTRODUCTION

Hard times are never pleasant at the time, but if we walk in the plan of God for our life, then there will be a source of rejoicing somewhere in the midst of the difficult times. David reflects in this psalm upon the amazing lessons that come from hardship and difficulty when the testing situation is taken to the Lord and the Lord's path is sought through the hard places. He doesn't speak of cutting back his plans and goals, but of expanding them and advancing to control all the Promised Land. Hardship hadn't made David think of stopping his advance, but speeding it up and seizing all the land the Lord had promised to Abraham. Genesis 12:6-9, 15:1-21, 17:1-8.

Adversity does not mean we are on the wrong path and should retreat; it may mean the exact opposite in the Lord's Plan. Severe adversity may mean that we are exactly on target and the enemy is not happy about it. We are not to halt under pressure but having strengthened ourselves with prayer and Bible doctrine, advance with more vigour.

PSALMS 60

1 O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again. 2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh. 3 Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment. 4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah. 5 That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me. 6 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. 7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; 8 Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me. 9 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? 10 Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies? 11 Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. 12 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.

REFLECTION

1 O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.

The adversity David faces here is military defeat and treachery on the part of his enemies. The events behind this psalm appear to be found in his Syrian and Mesopotamian campaigns. 2 Samuel 8:13-14, 1 Kings 11:15-16, 1 Chronicles 18:12-13. While David was with his army in the far north-east fighting the Syrians the Edomites took the opportunity provided and attacked the undefended southeast of Israel.

The “scattering” spoken of in the psalm is reference to the scattering of the Israelites before the Edomites and the terrible destruction they wrought amongst the undefended southern cities and townships. Joab was dispatched with speed with part of the army to fight them, and he met them in the Valley of Salt (Dead Sea area) and defeated them, killing twelve divisions (eleph’s) of their army. As a nation the Edomites didn’t recover from that defeat and were absorbed into David and Solomon’s kingdom as a result.

This psalm appears to have been written after Joab has left to fight the Edomites, but before the news of victory is brought back to David. David recognises that the Lord has allowed this defeat and turned away from Israel to enable the enemy to have victory. This defeat is a judgement as far as David is concerned, as he reads in the Mosaic Law. Refer to the BTB study ISRAEL – NATIONAL DIVINE DISCIPLINE. Whenever a nation is defeated in battle it is because of some level of disobedience within the people. Leviticus 26:1ff, Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15ff.

David doesn’t complain about the attack, he just weeps before the Lord at the loss of life and disgrace of God’s people being in such a state where they couldn’t defend themselves and win against pagans. He recognises the truth of the Mosaic Law; that discipline has come only because they are clearly guilty. He prays for the Lord to turn again and bless them through deliverance from the attacks of the pagan Edomites, and he is in effect asking for total victory over their murderous army.

**2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.
3 Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.**

David reminds himself of the creative power of God. It is always good when facing trouble and pressure from satanic enemies to remember the power of God, which is always well able to overwhelm any force that Satan can put up against us. David stabilizes himself in the truth of God’s creative power, and is assured before he goes further, that the One who made the universe can sort out the Edomites and anyone else.

The earthquakes that shake the land at times are the reminder of Gods creative and destructive power; the Lord has made the earth and He breaks it up and reforms it at times. Man is a creature and the shaking of the earth reminds him of that fact.

David reflects upon the fact that the people have suffered “hard things” as a result of their sins over recent weeks. They have been forced to drink the wine of astonishment; they fear the Lord and are surprised about the things that have happened. They are guilty but shocked still. Nehemiah 9:29-38.

4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

The banner of the army is the rallying point. The Lord gives us His banner to rally to; that banner is the truth of His Holy Word. Bible Doctrine is our banner. If we walk in the “fear of the Lord” we walk in a safe place. If we have a holy fear of the Lord we will never need to fear any man. Psalms 19:9, 23:4, 25:14, 118:4-6. Fear of the Lord means a real respect for the truth about God’s person, plan and power. It is not servile fear, for the perfect love He has for us casts out such fear. Romans 8:15, 1 Corinthians 16:10, 1 Timothy 1:7, 1 John 4:18. The banner over us is His love; not our love for God, for that is unstable, but His perfect love for us. Song of Solomon 2:4, John 15:9-19, 1 John 4:7-19.

5 That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me.

David makes the deliverance personal; it’s not about his people, it’s about him. He feels his people’s pain as his own and seeks deliverance for the people on the basis of his being beloved and able to ask for it personally. His people are to be blessed by their association with David. David is recognising that one believer may act as the SALT for his people, and that he may deliver them and bless them through their association with him. David wants his people delivered by the awesome power of God’s right hand. The “right hand” was the way of saying the absolute power of God. David is asking for total power to be expressed to produce the victory. He doesn’t want God to hold back from judging and he himself will not hold anything back from God in obedience himself. This is our challenge.

**6 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.
7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;**

This passage has a parallel passage in Psalm 108:7-13. It appears that David sang of this situation twice around this time. He has what we now call a “word of the Lord” about the fate of his army and the victory it will gain for the kingdom. God has given him the assurance of rejoicing in victory. He will see the areas of Ephraim and Manasseh that have been pillaged restored and recovered fully to the kingdom. From the southernmost areas of Ephraim, Judah and Manasseh the

enemy will be driven out. These areas that have been over run and their people locked up in their fortified cities will be free again, for the Lord has decreed these areas are his and the enemy will be put out.

The areas of life that the Lord has power over are declared “God’s own places” and they will be protected by the Lord. When the areas of the Lord’s work are over run by the enemy, we are to pray and then seek God’s way to recover those areas. The Lord has said, “they are mine”, and we will have the power and the plan to achieve their return. Let us advance with focused power and purpose.

8 Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

9 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

The lands from where the raiders have come are now mentioned and they are under God’s judgement. Moab will become the wash pot of God, and their people will be “washed out” like dirty linen. They will be cleansed of their evil people. This is legitimate “ethnic cleansing” because it is based upon the spiritual status of the people, with only the people who have actively and persistently defied the Lord being excluded from their lands. These countries have been cleansed through the centuries with none from their original inhabitants left to live in the ruins of their once great cities. They defied God again and again and they rejected God’s work and ways, and so they were destroyed. The ruins of the ancient world are a warning to us all of how thorough the Lord is when He decides to judge a people.

10 Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?

11 Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.

12 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies

David is expressing confidence here, not doubts about the Lord’s ability to judge the enemy and deal with them. He knows that the Lord will answer his prayers and cast off the enemy’s power. God is with Joab and the army as it heads out to defeat the Edomites. He prays for the Lord’s total victory, and recognises that the help of men is feeble and ineffective. Through the power of God the army of Israel will “do valiantly”; they will excel in their work and defeat the enemy thoroughly.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Adversity does not mean we are on the wrong path, it may mean we are on the exact path for us and the enemy does not like our success. Adversity means we pray for the Lord’s assurance and strength, and then, when sure of our path forward, throw all our energy into the path ahead of us.
2. The truth is that we are loved by God. We are loved by God without deserving it. We are recipients of His grace, love, mercy and forgiveness. Let us proclaim the love of God for man, and announce this good news to all who will hear it.
3. When we ask for deliverance by the power of God let us ask for the full power of God to be exercised and let us not hesitate to express the full power of God in our own life and give over all our power to serve the Lord. Let’s be whole hearted, not half hearted in our service. The army of Israel headed south to fight, and they did so with all their might. We are called to act with the same confidence that David and Joab’s men showed here. They all fought like lions and were tough and committed to their tasks. Let us be thorough and courageous.
4. When we visit the ruins of ancient civilizations in the ancient world we ought to bow our heads and remember the grace and the judgement of God. All these great places fell and were destroyed and our own great cities will themselves be destroyed by God for the same reasons the ancient ones were. It is man’s disobedience that brings judgement upon mankind. Let us warn the Lord’s people and preach the Gospel to the unsaved that they might be saved from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

DOCTRINES

ISRAEL – NATIONAL DIVINE DISCIPLINE

SALT

PSALM 61**INTRODUCTION**

This psalm may date from the period of the "Great Rebellion" of Absalom. The ancient commentators believed it dated from after the battle in the forests of Ephraim where Absalom was killed. 2 Samuel 18. This psalm is clearly written before David knows his son is dead. David's petitions are bracketed by his reference to the grounds for his confidence, which rest always in the character of God. Our confidence in prayer is always based upon the holy and dependable CHARACTER OF GOD. Refer to the BTB studies at the end of this Psalm.

The lead up events to those of the Great rebellion are awful to read about. There is David's adultery, Amnon's rape of his sister Tamar, Absalom's murder of his brother Amnon, Absalom's flight, David's weak response to the need for genuine repentance by Absalom and forgiveness by David, and Absalom's pride filled response to his father's weakness. The whole story is a terrible indictment upon David's poor parenting. 2 Samuel 12-15.

PSALMS 61

1 Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. 2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. 3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. 4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah. 5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. 6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations. 7 He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him. 8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

REFLECTION

1 Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

David is humble in his judgement, for he is facing great judgement in this rebellion. He faces the terrible consequences of his sin with Bathsheba. David knew that he was in for trouble as a flow on effect of his sin, but he didn't dream in his worst nightmares of just what level of evil his sin let loose. David is forgiven for his sins with Bathsheba and for ordering the murder of Uriah. Psalms 51.

His forgiveness is complete before the Lord, but the consequences of his year out of fellowship in evil are unable to be stopped and the flow on effect of his sexual immorality leads to the rape of Tamar, the murder of Amnon, and the rebellion of Absalom which all flow from the chain of events David started with his sin. It is a reminder to us that even though we are forgiven for confessed sin we may experience the flow on effect of some sins that have borne evil fruits before we have dealt with them.

David is emotionally overwhelmed by the impact of his sins, and rightly so, for they were awful and the nation saw and others followed his evil example. Once this chain of evil events is started it is allowed by the Lord to continue, but David's confession turns cursing into blessing as he walks with God and deals with each in turn. God tells David that he is judged because of this evil that he has let loose in his house. 2 Samuel 12:9-14.

David recognises that he may be driven to "the ends of the earth", and even if he is, he will cry unto the Lord from there. His heart is overwhelmed at times in this Great Rebellion, simply because of what it means; his own son has raised rebellion and he as his father is responsible for it, due to his poor parenting and even poorer life example. David knows he is guilty and he looks up to the Lord who is his only hope.

3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

The Lord alone has been a shelter to David as he faces the great evils that he has let loose in the world as a result of his sinful life style. God has been his strong tower of protection against the enemies that could have swept around him. There is no other strong tower, other than the power of the Lord God. Fame is temporary, riches and false friends are deceitful, even armies may flee from you; only the stable presence of the Lord God is our secure place to be strong and safe. Psalms 18:1-3, Proverbs 18:10-12.

David's promise to God is that he will remain in fellowship with the Lord (as it were living in the Tabernacle itself) all the remaining days of his life. To "abide in the tabernacle" was a way of saying that he will stay in a close relationship of living daily fellowship. Psalms 15:1, 23:6, 27:4, 90:1, 91:1, 92:13. This is the relationship that the Lord wants us to have with Him at all times. The covering of the "wings of God" brings in the image of the great eagle overshadowing its young for protection. Psalms 17:8, 57:1, 62:7, 63:7, 91:4. We are to take refuge under the "wings of God"; resting under the secure shelter of the person, power and plan of God. There we are lifted up in spirit. Isaiah 40:27-31.

**5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.
6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations.**

Under pressure David has made "vows" to the Lord, and he is a man of his word and will keep those promises made when victory is won and he is restored to his throne. David has made real promises to God and he will be real in his keeping of them. Let us remember this principle ourselves in our work. If we promise to do something to the Lord, then we are under serious obligation to keep that promise.

David is aware that he lives and moves and has his health in the grace of God alone. He knows that the Lord will preserve him to a good age and expresses the confidence that he will reach a "good old age". David will not reach a "good old age", but will die at a similar age to King Saul, in his sixties, not in battle, but in bed with heart disease (1 Kings 1:1-3). His war like life style coupled with the rich life of the palace caught up with him and he dies worn out by his active life. David's prayer for very long life is answered but here it is answered in the negative. Remember prayer is always answered, but the answer maybe "no". Refer to the BTB study PRAYER.

**7 He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.
8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.**

These prayers are answered in the affirmative. David will rejoice in the Lord's grace and truth all his remaining days. He will make one great and terrible mistake after he returns to the throne after the Great Rebellion, but he will recover through the ministry of the prophet Gad quickly and with doctrinal clarity of thought. This was the sin of numbering the people. Exodus 30:11-16, 38:25-28. It was a normal thing for a king to do towards the end of his life for accounting purposes, so that his son and heir might know the taxation base and the army reserve numbers.

It was "normal" but wrongful for David at this time as a believer, for the Lord wanted David and his people to trust in Him not in the nation's human resources. He quickly sees his sin and acknowledges it, and the kingdom will be spared further judgement as a result of his confession, and the very place where the judgement stops will become the site of the new Temple. 2 Samuel 24, 1 Chronicles 21:1-4, 27:23-24. David's response to the Lord's answers to prayer is PRAISE AND WORSHIP again.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. The Lord is our strong tower of defence when troubles and doubts and fears sweep through our life. The Lord is our tower of strength through the dependable promises of His Holy Word. As we know the Word of God, believe it, apply it and praise God for it, so we grow in our confidence. Through Bible study and worship we grow in the Grace and the Knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The purpose of resting is that we might be refreshed for the on-going battle. God's rest is provided for us in order that we might be lifted up in His strength and be restored to active service through the inner working power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Let us keep our word to the Lord. If we have promised service to the Lord as our sacrifice of praise for rewards received, or healing enjoyed, then let us pay our debt of thankfulness in happy service. Let us rejoice in the Lord as we serve, and as we honour our debts to the Lord.
4. We are to pray about everything, and praise God for all things received. Casting all our cares upon the Lord is the Lord's command to us as His children, and by doing this we rest upon Him, not upon any human resources we have. This is the Lord's will for us.

DOCTRINES

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD

GOD – PLAN OF GOD

GOD – NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

PSALM 62**INTRODUCTION**

David reflects upon the restfulness of waiting upon the Lord in time of trouble. David knows the power and certainty of the plan of God. Waiting upon the Lord is not easy at times, for in our distress and need we see only our problems, and we seek early intervention by the Lord.

God's challenge to us as mature believers, who wish to become more mature in our walk, is that we might be able to rest upon His Person, power and plan and wait for His time for our answer to arrive. Resting on the wisdom of God's timetable, not our own, is the challenge of maturity, and there is no spiritual growth without it. Refer to the BTB studies on spiritual growth, MATURITY, CROSS TO CROWN, SIGNS OF MATURITY, WALKING AND LIVING IN THE LIGHT.

PSALMS 62

1 Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. 2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved. 3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence. 4 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah. 5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. 6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. 7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. 8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah. 9 Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. 10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. 11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. 12 Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

REFLECTION

**1 Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.
2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.**

David understands that deliverance from anything comes only from a power that is superior to the one holding us under bondage. There is no deliverance from superior powers by inferior forces. God alone is able to deliver us from spiritual bondage and lift us up when we have been attacked by demonic and satanic forces. David has been under significant assault by his enemies. He has learned to wait upon the Lord, for he has seen that from the Lord comes his deliverance every time. Psalms 37:1-7. The Lord alone is the source of eternal salvation and earthly deliverance.

The Lord is his "ROCK" of stability and strength in these difficult times. David knows he needs the power of God and the rock that will give him a safe place to hide, and upon which to stand. He needs a strength that is greater than his own, and a position that is unassailable. The only position that can be stood upon with absolute certainty and strength is our POSITION IN CHRIST.

We have our strength in our walk through this dangerous world only through our relationship with the Lord. We may be moved at times within by emotional waves of power. We may be buffeted by incidents that upset and distress us. The Lord through all things is our defence, and although hit by the enemy at times, we shall not be "greatly moved". We are in battle and we may pick up some wounds, but we are in the Lord's care and under His power and protection. Micah 7:7-9, 1 Corinthians 10:11-13, 2 Corinthians 4:8-18.

**3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.
4 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.**

David appeals directly to those who have played Satan's game and acted on his behalf in attacking believers. He asks them how long they will tempt fate. If they plan and plot mischief against God's people they will fall into judgement eventually. It is only God's grace that they still live. Their fate is sealed unless they move in a different direction in their lives, and that means bowing before the Lord. As they serve the enemy of mankind at present they are indeed "bowing" down to him and that creates instability in the very life of the person.

Mankind is made for God and those who choose to serve the Devil will become unstable, unbalanced and be unhinged over time. Much of my work as a counsellor involves working with people who have been under satanic deception of some sort. Many have fallen into drugs, or alcohol, or immorality, or false religion, but all have had their minds unhinged over time. Satan does not reward his servants with anything except misery!

The servants of evil are like a bowing wall or tottering fence; they are ready to totally collapse at any time, and without any warning. David warns these people that they will be slain, every last one of them. There is no escape from the justice of God when they have consistently opposed God's people, plan and purposes. The justice of the Lord's actions against them is seen clearly in the catalogue of their own consistent deeds. They are liars and hypocrites; they have pretended friendship and yet plotted evil and spread lies. They have foolishly thought that they could dethrone God Himself.

This is the ultimate satanic deception; that a mere creature could dethrone the Creator is foolishness indeed, but Satan deceives his followers into thinking that he has the power and the resources to do this. Remember, Satan is a limited creature; he has no power to create, just manipulate what is already made. He manipulates well, but those who are fooled by him will pay a terrible price for their foolishness. Psalms 2:1-5, 52:3, Hosea 8:7. Refer to the BTB study RELIGION.

5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

It is advisable to tell our soul what we wish to do, for at times our emotions will rule our mind and we may not end up doing the things that we know are right. Romans 7:14 – 8:2. Notice that in Paul's words in the letter to the Roman Church that he keeps on writing the scriptures even though he is battling with sin in his soul. This is the model we see in the psalms and in Paul's letters; believers will be in conflict within, but the mature ones keep on serving through their doubts and even their despair at times. It is not feeling doubts and fear that disables us; it is listening to them rather than hearing the Word of God.

David affirms again his source of stability. The Lord is the source and ground of our stability and strength in this world and the next. David affirms the strength that he feels in the love and plan of God. He knows God's power and plan and seeks God's protection in all his ways. Solomon would later sum this principle of his father's life up well in the Proverbs. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct thy paths". Proverbs 3:5-6. David ends this verse by stating aloud that he will not be moved from his doctrinal position. This is the place where we all need to stand; feet planted firmly on the rock of the person and Word of God. Proverbs 10:27-30, John 3:36, 10:10.

7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

David continues singing of the grace, glory, and goodness of God. God is his salvation for eternity and his deliverance in time. God is the rock of his strength, and upon the Lord he rests and finds power to refresh his soul and energy to return to the battles of this world. God is his refuge for soul and body from the assaults of evil men in time. Once we understand the Lord's perfect character, His infinite love, and His amazing plan for us, we can do nothing else but relax and rejoice in the Lord.

David looks up in praise and then around to his people and he urges them to find their peace of mind and refreshment for their bodies in the Lord's person and plan. Believers need to trust the Lord at all times and find their stability in him. Believers also need to pour their hearts out to the Lord, recognising as they do this that it is He who keeps them and uplifts them. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. "The eternal God is our refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms". Deuteronomy 33:27.

9 Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.

10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

The arrogant poor and stupid people are mocked with vigour by David. He is not being mean to the poor and simple, but being correct in his criticism of the arrogant. These people are of "low degree" because they do not have the ability to rule and succeed in business or politics yet they mock others who are successful. Many people believe, in their arrogance and stupidity that they have abilities that they clearly do not have. Many simply need to open their mouths and you can tell in a millisecond that they have no brains! Satan delights in deceiving such "fools" and making them oppose those who have the intelligence to lead God's people.

Fools will always abound upon the earth while Satan has freedom to deceive, for many will believe the lies of the enemy rather than the truth of God. If we are called to serve in a humble place in the church then we are fools indeed if we attempt to be the Elder who rules. We must find our role, in accordance with our abilities, spiritual giftings, and spiritual growth. Native intelligence is no limitation in the Christian life, for through spiritual growth believers may build their IQ but there is a limit set for all of us.

David is not mocking those who grow spiritually, but those whose foolishness causes them to mock all spiritual and intellectual abilities. I have personally seen intellectually very simple men and women become wise and useful in the church through their determined spiritual growth by means of doctrinal Bible study. People who the world despised have been lifted up to leadership through their spiritual growth, but arrogance always disables whatever brains a person has to start with. The worst attacks upon pastoral leadership in our local church recently have been those by men who have no spiritual leadership ability, have failed in their own business lives, and yet believe they can run the church.

The danger we all face in this life is trying to achieve what we are not fitted by birth, training, giftedness, or special abilities to achieve. This is foolishness and the person attempting the impossible is rightly called by scripture a "fool". The Bible is very blunt regarding all who are defined as arrogant "fools". The real "fool" is firstly the person who denies God, or denies the power of God over them. Psalms 14:1, 53:1, Proverbs 10:8-23.

What we today call a Narcissist the Bible simply calls a fool; they are self centred, and will not be corrected by any inconvenient truth. The fool is right in their own eyes, and so they are self deceived. Proverbs 12:15, 15:5. They do not learn from experience, and will not be corrected by others, for they consider themselves superior to others. It is this arrogance that destroys them in the end. Proverbs 17:7-28, 26:4-12, Ecclesiastes 10:3-14, 2 Timothy 3:7.

Having dealt to the arrogant lower classes of people, David then equally slams the arrogant "upper classes", for all their advantages of birth, intelligence, training and money are nothing to them unless they walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. If they do not have spiritual power and discernment they have nothing, and they will achieve even less!

These people are like Belshazzar; they are weighed in the balances of God and they are found wanting. Daniel 5:25-30, Isaiah 40:6-17. All the good works of man apart from God is as "filthy rags" in God's sight. Isaiah 64:6. Refer to the BTB study GOOD WORKS. The rich and the poor, the smart and the stupid are all the same without God; they are lighter than a feather in their significance. 1 Corinthians 3:10-17.

Many of these rich and powerful people have become rich and powerful through illegal or immoral means. Many have been oppressive in their treatment of others, and stolen money from the weak, stupid or vulnerable. Now it is a biblical principle that the fool and his money are soon parted, but God judges the con man and crooked businessman/woman who does the financial surgery! The entire books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes speak of the reasons behind this fact.

God hates crooked business people who steal from others and use the law and their family trusts to cover their thefts. The big challenge for all people is not to have our head turned by great wealth. Poverty brings its challenges but great wealth can bring more in many ways. Refer to the BTB studies, MONEY, WEALTH, OLD SIN NATURE. Let us be content with what we have and face the temptation to lust after other's goods squarely and strongly.

11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.

12 Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

It may be that David is quoting the book of Job in this first verse here. Job 33:14, 40:1-5. The Lord has spoken to man through prophets and revelations of different kinds, but the message is always the same when it is truly from God. The message from God is absolutely consistent through history; power belongs to the Lord alone and man must come to terms with that fact or be judged.

It is not in the hand of man to direct his own path. We are not the "playthings" of God, but we are creatures under a Creator, and that means we are answerable to the Creator. Jeremiah 10:23-24. The revelation of the Lord is consistent, and the way to tell false prophets and preachers is to compare their words with the dominant revelation. Refer to the BTB study REVELATION, PROPHET.

We live upon this earth, courtesy of the Creator's love and mercy, not because we deserve things to be good for us. The entire creation is a giant puzzle to us, and yet David correctly affirms that there is justice and righteousness at its heart. We do not see all the pieces moving on the chess board at this point, and we cannot know the beginning of the great drama that is unfolding around us, but we can know the end of the game. We can study the Word of God and know the Plan of God, and from these revelations we can praise the Character of God. The Lord has revealed enough things to us in order for us to praise and honour His name and worship Him appropriately within His plan. Let us do so with all our heart and mind.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Deception is the main tool of satanic counter attack upon believers. Satan wants to deceive us that he has more powers and abilities than he actually has. Our knowledge of the teaching of scripture about his person, plan and limited power is vital to our clear thinking when under attack. We have the obligation to teach these things to others also. Pastors, let us teach the truth about our enemy and about our superior position in Christ Jesus. Let us walk in the Spirit and teach others to do so as well.

2. Let us take our stand upon the rock that is Christ, and upon the solid rock of assurance that is His Holy Word. We have all the promises of the Word of God to stabilize us under pressure and so let us take them and embrace the certainties we have in the Word.

3. Stability of mind and health of body is the permanent need of mankind. We seek all manner of tricks, techniques and habits to get peace of mind and health of body. Millions are spent weekly to secure this blessing in carnal ways. God's Word teaches us the truth about this, and reminds us that the truth is simple and blunt. We must obey the Word of God and serve the Lord in holiness and truth. Let us tell the Lord's people this truth and remind them that they need to serve the Lord in holiness and with submission to the Word of God. Only in the PLAN OF GOD is there safety for mankind.

4. Let us learn to be content with what we have, for the Lord will always give us what we need, and we need to rest in the Lord's provisions and embrace the Lord's will for us. Philippians 4:11-13. Let us take our genuine needs before the Lord and leave them laid at the foot of the cross.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY – CROSS TO THE CROWN

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY – SIGNS OF MATURITY (ROMANS 15:1-15)

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING AND LIVING IN THE LIGHT

CHRIST – ROCK: CHRIST AS THE ROCK

CHRISTIAN LIFE – POSITION IN CHRIST

RELIGION

GOOD WORKS

MONEY

WEALTH

SIN – OLD SIN NATURE

REVELATION

PROPHET

Notes

PSALM 63**INTRODUCTION**

This is a song from David's wandering days in the wilderness of Judah, well before the cares and stress of being king had taken their toll. It is a song of pure joy in the Lord; a song that expresses his satisfaction at being a believer in the Lord in the midst of the wild lands of Judah. It is a song of the satisfaction of the believer in their vital relationship with the living God who cares, loves, provides and protects His own. We often need to get out in the wild places and just praise the Lord, and this psalm is an encouragement to do just that.

PSALMS 63

1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. 3 Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. 4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: 6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. 7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. 8 My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. 9 But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. 10 They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. 11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

REFLECTION

1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

Have you ever felt like saying these words believer? It is good to stand under the stars, the trees, or the open sky and bless the name of the Lord who made all things. David longs for the living fellowship of the Lord and he knows that fellowship daily. It is a joy to celebrate our relationship with God as creatures in the creation and David does this; and so let us join him daily also. It is good to affirm that the Lord is our God; that we have a vital living relationship with the Lord through the blood of Christ shed for us. It is important to affirm that we are in a living relationship with the One who put the universe together, as that settles our mind and emotion in the reality of the creation. If the Lord put all this together, then He can hold us together in our present distress.

Early will I seek thee! It is important to start each and every day with praise to the One who has given us a new day to serve Him within. Early will we seek the Lord and praise His holy name. It is always good to rise early and pray and study the Word of God. I was greatly influenced by godly pastors in my early Christian life, and all said that they rose early and studied the Word of God and praised God in prayer well before the telephone started ringing.

One great pastor of the United Kingdom said that he felt he could not look his congregation of coal miners in the eye on Sundays unless they saw his study light on at the time they were walking down the road to the coal pits at 4:30am on Monday to Saturday. He was always at work by the same time his congregation were. This is a good principle.

Whenever I go to London I try to visit the home and church of John and Charles Wesley at Bunhill Fields up from the Barbican Rail Station. It is an important place for believers to visit if they go to London, for that place was the home of the greatest preacher of his day, and this man with George Whitfield who lived and worked up the road, are credited with stopping a revolution sweeping the United Kingdom into anarchy as it did France.

John Wesley's study is just off his bedroom on the upper floor and there you can see his Bible open and his prayer stool set up. He rose and prayed and studied from 0400 through until 0600 when he got the breakfast ready for his staff. This man is an example; and all great men and women of God that I have met rise early to pray and praise the Lord and I myself have copied them to the joy of my soul and productivity of my spiritual life.

David longed for fellowship with the Lord and it is good to reflect upon this passionate desire of David's also. How deeply do we long to be with the Lord in rich and personal fellowship? How hard is it to stay away from a church service? How hard is it to resist going to Communion? How many times do you need to be told about a Bible study before you go along? All these questions test our passion, and David was passionate about learning of and worshipping the Lord his God. His soul thirsted for the Lord as a person thirsts after walking in a desert. Is this where we are in relationship to our hunger and thirst for Bible study, prayer and fellowship in worship with others? Does your very flesh crawl in your desire to serve the Lord and worship His Holy Name? It is this level of passion that the Lord seeks of us. Isaiah 32:1-4, 35:3-10.

**2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.
3 Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.**

Do we feel that the Lord's loving kindness is better than life itself? This is a big statement is it not? What David is saying is that his love for the Lord is so strong that the love of God is more powerful than anything else in his life. He is overwhelmed by the Lord's love for him and he must just praise the name of the Lord. David delights to see the Lord's power and glory. He delights in his time in the sanctuary of the Lord, which at this time was just a makeshift tent.

There was nothing really grand about the old worn out tabernacle, but it was the worship of the Lord that David loved there. Just being close to the place of the sacrifices was a joy to this young believer. He was now a fugitive on the hills of Judah, but he thought back to the times, as a young courtier in the court of King Saul, of just how wonderful it was to be there and worship the Lord. Psalms 66:16-20, Hosea 14:1-2, James 3:5-10.

4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

David seeks to bless the Lord with all his strength. While he lives he seeks to bless the Lord. He sees his very life as a gift from God and praise is to be rendered to God every day for his bounty. Has this joy gripped your heart today believer? Have you lifted up your hands to praise God today? We do not need to wait until the formal worship service in the church to raise our hands and praise the Lord; it is a good habit to get into to lift up our arms in private prayer at home and thank God aloud for His grace, His mercy, His love and His peace.

Hearing the words expressed in praise of God is like food for the soul. Worship and praise are meant to be like a reticulating pump, each cycle constantly recharging the entire process, building power with each revolution of the wheel of praise. Just praising the Lord should have a physical impact in firing us up within. Ezra 3:10-15, Psalms 118:14-15, 135:1-3, 149:1-4.

6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.

7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

David reflects upon the goodness of God through his young life, and how the Lord has kept him through all the challenges as a boy on the hills around Bethlehem. He had faced each of the major large wild animals in his time as a teenager looking after the flocks of his father Jesse. 1 Samuel 17:32-37. David is now on the run from Saul, but he can look back and reflect on his words that day before he killed Goliath, for the Lord has kept him until that point, and so the Lord will keep him until he has completed the assigned task that he has to finish in the Plan of God for his life. As God has kept him, so He will continue to keep him.

If the Lord so loved us that He gave His only begotten son while we were His enemies, can He do less for us now that we are His children? This is the logic of Grace, and it will always defeat the doubts and worries of Satan. Paul especially argues this way, building upon David's spiritual insights. Romans 5:9-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17-20, Ephesians 2:1-9, Colossians 1:19-23. God gives us "more grace" daily as we walk with Him. James 4:6. There is no end to how much grace God can give us; it appears to be limited only by our lack of faith in failing to ask for more.

David uses his quiet times as he lies awake at night and looks at the stars, and he meditates upon the creative power and gracious provisions of God for him. Psalms 8:1-3, 19:1, 89:1-5, 108:1-5. Peter goes even further than David, in noting that the same God who made the heavens will unmake them one day and create an entirely new universe. 2 Peter 3:5-13.

Sitting and reflecting upon the heavens is one thing, but the outworking of our speculative and meditative moments is what really matters and the result should be, as Peter sees, in a holy life, given over to worship and service of the One who is our Creator and Saviour! David can see as he reflects upon his past life, that the Lord has been there as his shield in all situations, keeping him safe from wild animals and mad men like Saul. He rejoices in this place of safety, and sets his heart to worship his protector.

8 My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

9 But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

The right response to any meditation upon the grace provisions of the Lord over us is to walk closer to the Lord. David expresses his thanks in his vow to the Lord to press closer and closer to the presence of the Lord. David realises that the closer he is in fellowship with the Lord the closer he is to the place of safety in his life. The power of God, his "right hand" upholds David. David recognises that the entire creative and judgemental power of God is available to us as we serve the Lord.

He recognises an important theological point here; that God's care of others in no way diminishes His power to care for us. David understood, as many did not in his day, and have not since his day, that the eternal nature of God means there is no diminishing of His power through caring and protecting us. God cannot lose any power, even in the using of it. We think in terms of space and time, and when we use power we lose it and must rebuild it, but God is the Creator of space and time, and is way beyond our limitations.

David can see that he is protected by the power of God and that this same infinite power is used against those who have rebelled against their Creator. The protection of the believer is assured, and the judgement of the unbeliever is equally

assured by the Character and Plan of God. The fate of those who try to kill David is in the Lord's hands, just as David's protection is in the Lord's hands.

They have an appointment with their Maker and they will keep it after spending some time in Hell/Hades awaiting that last judgement of men and angels before being cast into the lake of Fire. Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 20:2-3, 11-19. Hell, Sheol, Hades, the Centre of the Earth are all simply terms covering the waiting place for the last judgement of fallen angels and men. Refer to the BTB studies HELL-HADES, GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT.

10 They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

David knows that the fate of those who stand against him is sealed, for he walks in the Plan of God, and the Lord's mighty right hand of power is over him for protection day and night. Those who oppose David oppose God and so they will fail and fall by their own swords. Whatever they raise up against God will be turned to be used against them. They will be food for the jackals, foxes and Hyenas. They will become carrion food for the wild animals. A battlefield in the ancient world was a terrible place, as wild animals and birds feasted upon the dead and dying.

David pictures the defeated enemies of God lying being eaten, for they have gambled against their Maker and lost, and their bodies are devoured by the wild animals and their soul awaits eternal judgement in Hell with only mutual torment to be experienced until they all drop together into the lake of Fire. It is a terrible picture, but a holy picture, for all who stand against their Creator must be eliminated from the creation in the end or the new one will not be perfect.

David speaks of judgement, and he sings of the gracious glory of God who lifts him up and brings him through to glory within the provisions of the Plan of God for his life. The unbelievers had the opportunity to sing like David but they plotted and schemed like Satan and so they must accept the righteousness of their sharing his fate. David rejoices in the Lord and he affirms that he is king because the Lord has lifted him up and he will give honour and praise to the One who has given him everything. David has no doubts about the issue facing all men and women; will they sing with God and rejoice in grace, mercy and peace, or will they plot with the devil and share his terrible fate? Let us reflect upon this fact, for it is the truth behind the Gospel message. Lord teach me to sing like David sings in these desert places!

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Are we as passionate in our love of the Lord as we need to be to be fully spiritually productive? We are all too often so polite and staid in our church services when the Lord seeks our abandoned love to be expressed towards Him. He has given His all for us, and yet we hold back our expression of love for Him. Let us encourage the Lord's people to be active and passionate in their worship.

2. Let us praise the Lord so that we are fired up by the very action of lifting up our hearts, voices and arms in praise. If we are not physically recharged we are not worshipping as David worshipped. One of the discoveries of the new field of health psychology is that activities like praise and worship seriously recharge the Serotonin levels of the body. Let us praise the Lord in Holy Spirit filled power, and open our hearts to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

3. There is no set posture for prayer, nor any set times for prayer. Passionate prayer will occur at all times and from all postures and positions. The Lord seeks our fellowship in prayer and we are urged to rejoice in the Lord in prayer and worship. When we lie upon our bed, drive in our cars, sit at our tables and study desks, or walk in the great outdoors, let us lift up our voice and praise the Lord.

4. Let us set our hearts like David to give praise to our protector and Saviour. The Lord is our shield and our safe place in troubles. Let us praise His holy name for our glorious position in Christ Jesus where we receive more and more grace as the years roll by. Refer to the study GRACE.

DOCTRINES

HELL AND HADES

JUDGEMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE

GRACE

NOTES

PSALM 64**INTRODUCTION**

Fear of the enemy is a common theme of David's Psalms and it is a reminder that great people still experience fears, self doubts and worries. We are often encouraged to believe in the "invincibility myth" of the great heroes of faith, when they were all men and women just like us. It is encouraging to remember that David had fears, worries, anxieties and doubts, just like us. David's greatness was that he faced his emotions and dealt with them by the application of biblical truth; he was not ruled by his emotions, except when he sinned.

David's great sin with Bathsheba was a result of being ruled by emotion rather than ruling over emotion. He finally recognised his sin and confessed it thoroughly, Psalm 51, and in this psalm he deals with the emotions of fear associated with the verbal attacks upon him of evil enemies. The evil and sin of gossip and lies are abominations to God, and many believers will find themselves facing verbal attacks from evil people. Refer to the BTB study on the ABOMINATION SINS.

PSALMS 64

1 Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy. 2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: 3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: 4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not. 5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? 6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep. 7 But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. 8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away. 9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. 10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

REFLECTION

**1 Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:**

David has heard the voices of evil men attacking him and he does the right thing immediately, he comes before the Lord and asks for the Lord to hear his voice, and hear the evil men also. He wants the Lord to judge and deal with these people. David needs first to know that he is heard by the Lord, and that the Lord will also hear the insults of the enemy, and then that the Lord will act to defend him and protect his life from the evil of others. David knows he depends upon the Lord's actions alone to deliver him, for he is unable to act to save himself from the malice of others actions.

We can only respond to unasked for and unexpected malicious attacks, but we are always free to respond, and prayer is our best response. These people work secretly to undermine the good works of God's people. Don't be surprised by this; it is simply Satan's policy and his attacks upon you are a back handed compliment; clearly you are a nuisance to Satan and that is a good sign!

At times we can oppose false words about ourselves, but at other times we cannot answer the lies, but must wait for time to prove our case. At such times we need to be hidden from harm until we can be vindicated. I have been seriously attacked by malicious men twice in my ministry life. On each occasion they were pastors who attacked me as I had placed my finger on a problem they had and they refused to deal with it biblically. In each case the Lord made me wait for vindication; in each case around seven years was required before the attacks were eliminated by the Lord. In one case by the death of the evil false pastor, and in the second by his exposure for the very sins I had suspected of him.

Like David we cast our cares in this matter upon the Lord who cares for us. The sheer extent of the malice of the evil followers of the enemy will surprise at times, for they are "wicked" indeed. They are "workers of iniquity" and will raise "insurrection" against legitimate authority in all organisations they are members of. Once again, do not be surprised that the main assaults upon the church come from within by insurrection and rebellion, for that is Satan's main focus, and will continue to be. Just take the rebels before the Lord in prayer and bring down God's power upon them for conviction of sin, or elimination from the church. Refer to the BTB studies on the CHURCH.

**3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:
4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.**

These people are warlike with their tongues. They are really determined to destroy David and all God's work through him. This level of hatred is a surprise when we discover it, but we need to be ready for this. Those who become Satan's servants are filled with his venom and have his hatred of all who love God. John 15:18-27. These people hate the truth

and all who stand for it and will quite happily destroy a church in order to justify themselves. They see only their own rights and privileges, for they do not have the Christ-centred lives that believers are called to.

Jesus' words in Matthew 7:13-23 are important to know by heart, for we need to quickly be "fruit inspectors" of these evil people to correctly ascertain their nature and their danger. They target the people who are mature believers (the perfect) for they hate those who honestly follow after God. They attack without warning, and they open fire without any advance notice, and they do not fear consequences. Psalms 10:1-11.

David really knew these evil people; their character, their motivation, and their strategy and tactics. We must remember that our POSITION IN CHRIST is one of perfect grace in God's sight, for our forgiveness means that our status is now totally and completely, children of God. We are perfect in God's sight through the work of Christ for us. The enemy hates this fact above all others! We are forgiven, and yet he is judged! We are therefore hated. Relax and recognise this believer and take action to defend yourself against the attacks of the enemy; put on the full armour of the Holy Spirit each day! Refer to the BTB study – SOLDIER.

5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.

These people work in groups to plot and scheme against the work of God in a church and para-church organisation. You will notice that those who plot and scheme evil always gather around them a group of malcontents who they stir up, so that the most evil person of the group is hidden behind the more stupid ones who act as the spokespeople. They speak openly about their plans, so confident are they in their stupidity, and they lay open traps to ensnare the pastor or leadership.

They do not think that their traps will be seen, and this is why the believer needs to be alert as they walk through the maze of deceit that is all too often the "daily stuff" of church government. The main tool in their tool bag is any unconfessed sins on the part of the leadership; they love to find a "scandal" and expose it and destroy the leadership with it. These people will not let the truth get in the way of their accusations; if a lie suits they will use it.

They will search out "iniquities" and then broadcast them to bring down the individual by true or false witnesses, and often destroy the church in the process. These people are often thorough private detectives and seek even into the minds of their targets. They try to find weaknesses and then exploit them to destroy their target. This level of wickedness is to be found in nearly every active and openly evangelical church. Do not expect Satan to sit by and say, "Aren't they wonderful servants of Jesus – I will leave them alone". He will attack with all the malice and deviousness that the Bible teaches us to expect.

Any church that is a danger to Satan will come under this level of attack at some point. Their malice and their plots will be "deep". If you are a pastor, be ready for this, and if you are a church member, be ready for these evil people, and support your pastor as he stands against their wickedness. The entire church needs to be called to prayer to deal with this level of evil, or it will destroy the church. We always need to be in prayer for protection over the Lord's work, for the enemy will seek ways to frustrate, upset and annoy us.

Just last weekend I arrived at 5-30am in our local church to set up the Saturday breakfast Bible study and found that 2 inches of water had swept through the entire front of the building with a "water bomb" thunder storm breaking overhead at midnight. With one of the pastors we began our study on sodden carpet at prayer, claiming Romans 8:28, that the Lord might bless and bring glory out of the chaos in the midst of the enemy's malice.

7 But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.

8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.

It is a seriously dangerous thing to attack the servants of the living God. If a pastor is standing in the will of the Lord, then he or she will be protected against all who attack them and the attackers will be dealt with directly by God. I saw this dramatically in my early ministry when another pastor's wife attacked me slanderously in the town I was working in. She was a believer, but a very bitter one apparently.

I was working to re-open a church that had been closed for over twenty years, and my ministry there was no threat to her husband's, and I was not even aware of her attacks until told of them by the new congregation. She was struck with a terrible cancer that killed her in three months to the surprise of all the doctors. Her attacks had been vicious and destructive, but the Lord took action without me even being aware of them. What was happening in that place was clearly spiritually important and she stepped out of God's Plan into the enemy's camp, and she paid the price of the SIN UNTO DEATH.

I learned a great deal in that town about how to walk in the Holy Spirit and not get distracted protecting myself from slander, as the Lord does a far better job than any man can ever do of protecting us. When people walk away from the path of God, and attack those on the path, the Lord will deal with them. That lady's death woke up the town to the reality of the Angelic Conflict and the importance of being on the right side, walking in the Holy Spirit's power, not your own opinions. It didn't end the assaults, for the legalists and cultists were next, and on it went. Welcome to battle!

The challenge for the believer is simply to keep their hearts and minds set upon the things that God wants them to do and just do them! We are not to waste energy on those who viciously attack us, we are to sing like David of God's grace and power, and cast the enemy and their foolish allies into the lap of God for whatever they need to be dealt with. David asks for the tongue of evil that has been expressed towards him be turned back upon those who have spoken slander against him. All that see the Lord act to judge will certainly flee, for when the Lord judges, he does so dramatically, and all know that it is the Lord.

9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

The purpose of God judging these evil people is not for David to feel smug and satisfied, but for the people around him to be impressed enough to change their behaviours. When you have seen God move and judge a person you do not feel any self satisfaction, only a sense of godly fear yourself and a desire to walk with the Lord far more respectfully and carefully. David's concern is not self vindication, but that all might know the truth about the power of God and not walk away from the plan themselves. David is not worried about being seen to be justified and vindicated, but that the name of God be glorified and the truth about God be magnified so that all meet and worship the Lord God.

David wants the unbelievers to be impressed by the actions of God, and for the believers to also be impressed and transformed. David wants all categories of men to be brought to their knees by the Lord's actions. He wants unbelievers to be silenced and convicted and hopefully saved. He wants believers to praise the Lord more, as they ought to praise Him. He wants them to see the power of the Lord and trust the Lord more and rejoice in the plan of God for their own lives.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Casting all our cares upon Him for He cares for us. 1 Peter 5:7. This is the principle we see again and again in the Psalms. Let us preach and proclaim this truth to all who will hear us. No worry is our own, for we are all saved with the precious blood of Christ, and so we are not our own, and our problems are not our own, they belong to the One who gave Himself for us. Let us apply this truth in and through prayer.

2. The malice of those who side with Satan is significant. Let us remember the biblical teachings regarding satanic strategies and keep ourselves safe from worry and upset about the vehemence of the malice of the evil one and his henchmen. Hatred is normal from Satan's people, and prayer is to be normal for us, as we pass them over to the Lord for solution.

3. God will deal with our enemies, and if they are believers we need to pray for them especially hard, as they are in danger of the "Sin Unto Death". Let us leave all those who oppose the plan of God in the hands of the One whose plan they are insulting, and let us stand well back from them. If the Lord is moving in a place then anyone who opposes the Lord's work will pay a terrible price for their stupidity. Let us preach this truth and quietly encourage all believers to heed the scriptures and apply their truths and so keep themselves safe from divine discipline.

DOCTRINES

SIN – ABOMINATION SINS TO THE LORD

CHURCH – PASTORAL AUTHORITY

CHURCH – PASTORAL DISCIPLINE.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SOLDIER: CHRISTIAN SOLDIER IN EPHESIANS 6.

SIN – SIN UNTO DEATH

NOTES

PSALM 65**INTRODUCTION**

This is a true psalm of praise and glory to the wonderful gracious providence of God towards mankind. This is a psalm that rests upon the foundation of what we call Systematic Theology. David reflects upon the person, power and plan of God in this psalm, and thanks God for all these things. He reflects that the God who forgives mankind upon repentance is the God who made the heavens and the earth. The God who stabilises us in our spiritual walk stabilised the hills and the seas under His plan when He made them. He also reflects that God is the God of history – indeed the story of time is “His-Story”.

David ends the psalm with what has been called a “harvest psalm” giving thanks for the bounty of the fields and farms. David wants us to see in nature a hymn of praise to the Creator. He wants us to see that even though we have destroyed the world in many ways, and the world is in a fallen state since Adam and Eve sinned, we have the daily opportunity to reflect upon the creative power of God in many aspects of the world where the Lord’s hand has not been obscured by the further sin and evil of man. Let us praise God for every aspect of the natural world that we can rejoice in. Let each leaf move you to sing praises to the Lord.

PSALMS 65

1 Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed. 2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. 3 Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away. 4 Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple. 5 By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea: 6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power: 7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people. 8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. 9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. 11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. 12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. 13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

REFLECTION

**1 Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.
2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.**

Does praise await the Lord in our church services? Are our services centred round the praise, honour and glory of God? David knew that everything about the tabernacle services was centred in the person, power and plan of God, and that all Israel was there to praise and worship. Psalms 21:13, 62:1, 115:1-2. When all good things happened to godly Israelites they would immediately make a vow to worship specifically to render formal praise and thanks to the Lord.

This concept was carried into the early church that would have special services/Masses for thanksgiving to the Lord. Let us be ready to do such things and let us call special services for every opportunity we have to give praise to the Lord for his goodness. Many today do not want the church to take up too much of their time, and they don’t want extra services through the week, and yet look at David here!

See and feel the contrast between our faith and David’s faith, and recognise that our lukewarm and polite faith is an abomination to the Lord. Let us be abandoned and spontaneous in our worship. Let us see special services for thanksgiving and for revival held every year at least! David praises God because He is the One who hears his prayers. God is the One who hears, who answers prayers, and to whom all mankind will come if they seek salvation. Psalms 66:17-19, 102:16-18, Jeremiah 29:11-14, Daniel 9:17-19, Luke 11:5-13. God knows how to answer our prayers and always give us what we need.

**3 Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.
4 Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.**

We are left wondering what the “iniquities” are that prevail against David. It may be his own iniquities, for he was clear in his words in Psalms 66:18, that “if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me”. This is an important reminder that confession of sin is not an optional extra to faith; it is an essential component to having prayer heard and answered. I suspect that David’s reference to iniquity in this verse covers both his own sins and those of others which are directed against him. I suspect it does refer to his own sins because he refers to the cleansing of sin by the Lord in the second

half of the verse. God truly “purges away” the sins of those who come to Him and request this cleansing through repentance. Isaiah 1:10-20, 6:3-8, 1 John 1:5-10.

The great mystery of ELECTION is now referred to by David, for he sees that he has been “chosen” to fulfil a destiny and he has no idea about how the Lord came to choose him and not another older brother, nor anyone else. In the choice of David to be king we see a historic illustration of election in action. David is chosen, just as each of us has been chosen to fulfil our place in the PLAN OF GOD.

How can we be elected/chosen by God and have a set path to follow and yet still have FREE WILL? These things are mysteries and when men like John Calvin and Augustine of Hippo, who he copied, tried to explain this act of God in human terms they produce a very unsatisfactory theology. We are confronted with mystery here, because election expresses an act of God from ETERNITY PAST as it touches time, and our ability to even comprehend such things is severely limited.

God’s purpose is that we might “dwell in his courts” and have living daily fellowship with the Lord. God opens the door for us to approach His presence without fear of judgement, for by the precious Blood of Christ we are declared righteous. 1 Peter 1:18-25. David sees that he has been the recipient of grace and he seeks to repay the great debt to God through praise and worship, for this is God’s will for us. If we feel gratitude to the Lord we repay that by praise. When people claim to be believers and yet do not praise the Lord I stand in doubt of them, for when you think for a second or more of what the Lord has done for us, any normal person is going to burst into profound praise and worship. Greatly is the Lord to be praised! Psalms 47:6-7, Jeremiah 31:12-14.

5 By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:

6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power:

What are these “terrible things”? When the Lord moves in history He moves with power and at times with frightening power. I am always amazed at inexperienced and ignorant believers who ask the Lord for demonstrations of power, for if the Lord moves in power they will be terrified! God is not a fluffy toy, but the mighty God, and when He moves He moves, and man bows his head and his knee. Psalms 45:3-6, 47:1-3, 66:3, 76:4-11. God is the God of our salvation, for there is no other who can deliver us from sin and evil. Psalms 68:19-20, Ephesians 2:8-15.

The Lord’s work is such that He can be our confidence in difficult times. God is our confidence; His person, His power and His plan can all be depended upon, for His character is stable and we are secure in Him. It doesn’t matter whether we are close by the church building and other believers or far away upon distant seas, the Lord is our confidence and our shield at all times. Our confidence should grow as we consider His creative power and might.

Each time David reflects upon our safety with the Lord, he also reflects upon God’s power in creation as the maker of the rocks and mountains. The One who has stabilised the hills can stabilise the souls of those who rest in His strength. Remember it is WALKING in the power and plan of God that gives us our strength, for we have none in ourselves. Psalms 24:1-2, 119:90, Micah 6:1-2, Habakkuk 3:6.

7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.

8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

The seas were always a symbol of fear for the land based Israelites. They feared the raging of the seas and saw in the great ocean surges a picture of the uncontrolled power of God. The Lord is Lord over the land and the seas. Psalms 89:8-9, 107:23-30. The Lord who rules the seas also rules over the raging of men. The smallest actions of God will make people afraid, and those who are “far away” will be especially afraid, as they have possibly not heard of the good power of God and so all they can see is the scary things before them.

The cycles of the heavens with sunrise and sunset are things that should bring praise from the lips of all mankind, for the Lord has given us an order in the heavens that we can relax within. Mankind’s greatest desire is for order within the chaotic events of their lives. People want to know that the universe is heading somewhere, and that death is not the end, and so the daily order of the cycles of nature and the movement of the sun and moon give comfort to mankind. It is the character of God that alone gives us this relaxation as we look to the heavens. God has all the details of the heavens in His hands. Psalms 148:1-6.

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.

The Lord is active in the creation. God is not the great watchmaker who has wound up the universe and then left it to run down over time; the Bible teaches that God is active. God is involved in the productivity and fertility of the earth, but not as the “fertility cults” taught in David’s day. The pagan cults did immoral ceremonies to encourage the gods to make the land fertile, but the Bible revealed that the Lord was to be thanked for the blessing of the earth not cajoled into blessing mankind. Sexual immorality does not enhance the productivity of the land, nor the fertility of the people. The sexually

transmitted diseases of these pagans would destroy them, and God would judge their evil “fertility” religions, just as people are still “judged” by the natural consequences of their sexual immorality with infertility.

God was already blessing mankind and would continue to do so, as the people were obedient to Him. What the Lord sought from man was obedience to His laws and thankfulness for His bounty. God has provided for us; all He seeks from us is our praise, worship and obedience to the plan He has for each of our lives. All the seasonal rains are there for mankind and if we orient our thinking to the Lord we will have His blessing and provision for our lives. Psalms 147:7-11.

11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.

12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.

13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

The “crown of the year” was harvest time, and it was a time of special rejoicing in Israel with the harvest festival being a time of special thankfulness in worship. The “Harvest Festival” was the Feast of Booths, which occurred in the seventh month of the year. It prophetically looked forward to the Millennial Kingdom of the Lord. Refer to the BTB study on FEASTS OF ISRAEL, MILLENNIAL KINGDOM. All the feasts in some way were tied back into the harvest cycle and reminded the people of God’s provision.

The first had great significance as a feast of deliverance and Firstfruits of the Spring. This festival fell in the first month of the Hebrew year, at what was called the Passover-Firstfruits time; the Feast of Unleavened Bread which ran for eight days. It was also a time of thankfulness, as it was a time that reminded the people of their deliverance from Egypt, but also their future deliverance from sin and death through the sacrifice of the Messiah. The feast that we refer to as Easter began the cycle of feasts of celebration of the bounty of God, but the “crown of the year” was the time that focused upon the final victory of the Messiah and the establishment of God’s Kingdom upon the earth.

Passover-Firstfruits began the cycle of annual feasts, so that the year began by reminding the people that they had been delivered by the Exodus, and the “Firstfruits” of the land were there for them when they entered the Promised Land. They began the year remembering that God provided for them at the very time of year when the agricultural cycle had not even begun. They crowned their year with the Harvest Festivals, the last of which was Booths/Tabernacles, which also looked back to the Exodus wanderings and reminded them of the Lord’s provisions for them through their forty years of wanderings in the Arabian Desert.

However the Feasts did not look back alone, but forward to what was in the Plan of God for Israel. They were an annual testimony of hope and confidence in the Lord’s provisions. As the people looked back they could give thanks for deliverances in the past, and as they looked around at the fertile hills and valleys they could give thanks, and as they looked forward they could praise the Lord for what He was yet to do. As God had dealt with His people, so He would deal with them, and deliver them for His glory. The Lord has defeated sin and death and He will place all enemies as the footstool of His feet and rule over this earth one day. Hallelujah! Psalms 110:1, Matthew 22:41-45, Hebrews 10:5-17.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. It is easy to walk through this world blind to the creative power of the Maker of the heavens and the earth. Let us be reflective as we walk through this world. Let us praise the Lord in all our ways and in all our activities. Let us learn to give thanks for every meal and drink we take. Let us praise the Lord as we behold a flower, a tree, and even a blade of grass, let alone the birds and animals that delight us with their buzzing active lives.

2. How often are we holding special church services to give thanks? How often are we calling special prayer meetings to uphold the church? Have we ever held a revival prayer meeting to seek the Lord’s blessing upon us as a church? Polite and measured faith is no faith at all. God calls us to whole hearted loving faith that expresses itself in praise and thanksgiving. Unless we praise God like David we cannot expect the blessings he saw. Greatly is the Lord to be praised by His people; let the Lord’s people say so with praise every day. Refer to the BTB studies on THANKFULNESS, REPENTANCE.

3. The Lord has defeated the enemy of mankind and sin upon the Cross, and through the Empty Tomb He has gained victory over death itself. He awaits His Second Advent to rescue the remnant of His people from the last gasp of satanic fury in the Great Tribulation period, and then His victory in history will be completed with His Millennial Reign upon the earth. Let us rejoice in what the Lord has done, what He is doing, and what He yet will do. We have the certainty of these events through prophetic truth, and so let us proclaim them in power. Let the Lord’s people rejoice in His Plan for today and tomorrow, and let us see that His deliverance is as real today as it was yesterday, and it will be equally real tomorrow.

DOCTRINES

GOD – ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

GOD – PLAN OF GOD.

GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – FREE WILL

ETERNITY PAST

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING.

FEASTS OF ISRAEL

KINGDOM – MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

CHRISTIAN LIFE – THANKFULNESS

CHRISTIAN LIFE – REPENTANCE

PSALM 66

INTRODUCTION

This Psalm probably dates from the days of Isaiah's revival under the reign of Hezekiah. 2 Kings 20:1ff, Isaiah 36-38. During a crucial time in the Assyrian Crisis for Israel at that time the king became terminally ill, but he was delivered from death by the prayer he made and the Lord's gracious answer to it. Isaiah 38:1-22. He sang in thanks for his deliverance a Psalm and it may be that this psalm is Hezekiah's Psalm. Isaiah 38:20.

It is a reminder that his sickness was a judgement upon him, and he knew it and acknowledges that fact. Psalms 66:18, Isaiah 38:17. The great sadness behind this event in the life of Hezekiah is that he gets another fifteen years of life, but he squanders those years and his young son Manasseh, who is born through this time, grows up to be the worst king of Judah, and murders the very prophet Isaiah, who saves his father. 2 Kings 21:1-16.

As we read this psalm it is good to remember the terrible events that are behind it. The nation had been invaded by the cruel Assyrian Empire and all the fortified cities except Jerusalem had fallen. Only the great revival led by Isaiah had saved the nation. The prayer of the king had a weakness in the midst of it, and even though the nation is delivered they will not repent of their evils and walk with God.

PSALMS 66

1 Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: 2 Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious. 3 Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. 4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah. 5 Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men. 6 He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him. 7 He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah. 8 O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: 9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. 10 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. 11 Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. 12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. 13 I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, 14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. 15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah. 16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. 17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. 18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: 19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. 20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

REFLECTION

**1 Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:
2 Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.**

All nations of the earth are urged to honour their Creator, King and Lord. The author has no doubts in his mind about the universality of God's rulership, power and majesty. The Israelites did not have a "tribal god", they worshipped the Creator of the Universe. The liberal critics of scripture argue that there was an "evolution" of the concept of God, but throughout the scriptures there is the proclamation of the majesty and lordship of the Lord our God. The liberals argue from false science and make a false theology from it; it is a tissue of lies from the very father of lies. John 8:41-56.

All nations must bow their knee to the God who revealed Himself to Israel. Before the revelation came to individual nations they were judged on the basis of the light they had received, but once the truth is fully proclaimed that nation is responsible to respond to the full light of God's truth. Psalms 81:1, 95:1-2, 96:1-5, 98:4, 100:1, 117:1-2, Acts 17:29-31. Refer to the BTB study HEATHENISM AND GOD CONSCIOUSNESS.

It is important for people to make open testimony of the goodness of the Lord their God. If people hesitate from speaking of the glory of the Lord their cowardice must count against them. We are to be ready to praise the Lord our God and give thanks to the Lord for all His goodness. If we do not openly honour His name we are not His children, for children naturally and openly acknowledge their parents. Let us be challenged by this second verse and openly praise and honour the Lord our God, and let us make His praise glorious for all to hear.

The early believers were transformed people and others looking on, "took note that they had been with Jesus". Acts 4:13. All who know Him praise His Holy Name, and all who have met with Him love Him and praise Him from a transformed heart and life. We cannot be happy or thankful enough in the presence of our Lord, and with His presence within us. Let us praise!

**3 Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.
4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.**

The psalmist here in verses 3-4 may be quoting a number of earlier texts. If you look at the earlier psalms, Psalms 47:2, 65:5, 76:12, and even the song of Moses Exodus 15:1-16, we will see many echoes, or actual quotations of the language found here. The author of our psalm weaves in the earlier verses to make his own hymn of praise. There are truly no original words of praise, for from the beginning of time godly people have been lifting up their voices in praise and honour to the Lord. In the end of history all will acknowledge the Lord as God, even the lost will do so and bow their knee as they are being judged. Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10, Revelation 20:11-15.

The author reminds himself and his hearers that the Lord does things that bring "terror" to the lost and comfort to the saved. The Lord does mighty and terrible things. The power of the Lord is not limited by anything except His own holy character. The only thing the Lord God may not do is act unjustly and unrighteously. This fact gives great comfort to us all, for we can know for sure that all things the Lord does are just, true, good and have a forward focus in the Plan of God. Look again at Psalms 96:1-5. The Lord is not a larger version of a pagan god, for they are simply demons, and the Lord is the Creator of all things. God's power can be depended upon and His character can be relied totally upon, so that we can all know that everything that occurs is both godly and good. Refer back to the BTB study on CHARACTER OF GOD.

**5 Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.
6 He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.**

"Come and see" is the phrase used by the Lord and his new disciple Philip. John 1:37-51. Mankind is urged to accept the invitation and come forward and truly see what the Lord has done and confront the reality of His claims over their daily lives. It is this that holds men back from confronting the truth; the truth makes demands upon us and the Lord is clear that His demand is for obedience, and praise and worship. God acts in the realm of man, for it is His created world, and He brings terror upon the hearts of men to remind them that He indeed is God and they are answerable to His majesty eventually.

The author recalls the Exodus deliverance at the Yam Suf, (the Sea of Reeds). Exodus 14. The Lord made the sea dry land and led the people of Israel to safety and then over that same ground drowned the pursuing Egyptians. It was a demonstration that He was capable of delivering His people from the most impossible places. There the people learned the song of Moses and they all sang it to praise the Lord's Holy Name. Refer to the BTB study NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. Exodus 15:1ff.

7 He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

God does not need anyone else to rule over His creation; He rules by His own power. He is looking over His creation, and His eyes behold the entire created world. The universe stretches out as far as the eye can see and even further. The Hubble Space telescope has opened our eyes to the size of the created universe with galaxies of millions of stars 200 million light years away from us.

We are told in Revelation about the events of the Great Tribulation when one third of the stars will go out (be extinguished). Revelation 8:12, 12:4. This means that possibly over 199 million years ago the Lord extinguished those distant stars, as their light will all be seen to be extinguished during that period of satanic rule over the earth. The Lord's Plan is indeed a great plan and the timing of events is precise and perfect. In light of these things, the psalmist warns unbelieving mankind not to lift his voice against the Lord, for the Lord will have the last words and they will be terrible ones. Terror will mark the hearts of the unbelievers in the last days, and yet they will still refuse to voluntarily bow their knee before the Lord as their Saviour and Lord.

**8 O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:
9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.**

Again he calls upon all the people of God to bless the name of the Lord. He calls them to lift up their voice and let the name of the Lord be heard upon the lips of the Lord their God. God holds all things in His hands and even the very souls of the lost are in the Lord's hands for life or death. In grace the Lord holds evil people upon the earth so that they will have no excuse when they stand before Him finally. Our life is in His hands, His presence with us is our stable refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deuteronomy 33:27-29. We are kept alive by and through His grace, and so let us praise Him every day for His ongoing grace, mercy, love and safety. Our feet will not be taken out from under us as long as we rest in His hands and do His work. Psalms 62:2-6, 94:14-18, 121:1-8.

**10 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.
11 Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.**

All faith is tested to demonstrate what purity is there within it. The Lord allows testing circumstances to come to us all, and the test will never be allowed to become too great for us to handle in God's strength within us. 1 Corinthians 10:13. Remember believer, the testing situation will never be too hard for those walking in the power of the Holy Spirit and wearing their full spiritual armour. Ephesians 5:18-20, 6:10-18. If we are obedient soldiers, fully armoured and spiritually ready we will never be caught short by the testing that comes in this life, for in our position in Christ we have all we need to resist and defeat the enemy's best attacks. Refer to the BTB studies CHRISTIAN LIFE.

12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

The Lord has allowed the enemy to quite literally "ride over the heads" of His people. The people of Israel had sinned terribly in their worship of foreign gods that were demons. Isaiah 1:21-27, 3:8-12, 5:8-24. The holy temple of Solomon had even become a place of idolatry. The Assyrian crisis from 721-700 BC was a time of great invasions and carnage in the land and the prophets of God fought for the hearts and minds of the people before they were killed by the enemy.

The armies of Israel were slaughtered on the fields and in their cities; only Jerusalem survived intact due to the revival led by Isaiah. They have been swept away by the flood of enemy forces that like a flood has drowned their nation in the blood of the slain. They were overwhelmed and the Lord Himself was insulted by the enemy forces, but the Lord has delivered them from evil. Isaiah 36:12-22, 37:1ff. They were relieved by a plague from God sent to wipe out the besieging Assyrian enemy army. Up to 185,000 men (185 "elephs" = units of the army) were slain in their beds by the plague outside the walls of the city. Isaiah 37:36.

**13 I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,
14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.**

The appropriate response to deliverance is worship and thanksgiving. The psalmist sings about the response he has to the deliverance of the Lord. He is able to share the joy of Moses and the Exodus generation and he wishes to praise the Lord through the Levitical sacrificial System and happily takes his offering into the temple and gives thanks for the Lord's provision for him and his people. It is these verses that make me think this psalm is written by King Hezekiah. Refer to the BTB study on THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL, and THE LEVITICAL OFFERINGS.

The king made a vow of thanksgiving when deliverance came and he is happy to fulfil his vow to the Lord. When we make promises to the Lord, let us ensure we keep them with thanksgiving. What we say to the Lord we must fulfil, and not hold anything back. Let us not give to the Lord things that cost us nothing, and let us not give to the Lord any second best offering. The Lord seeks giving from our whole heart and mind. Malachi 1:7-10, 13-14, 2:17, 3:8-12.

**15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats.
Selah.**

The king is ready to present the full array of sacrifices in thanks for his deliverance and that of his people. The king is bringing his best offerings and not holding back anything from the Lord. This is after a time of famine and invasion where the land has been pillaged and little is left, but in thanksgiving to the Lord he is giving all he has. We are to trust the Lord, and when he has delivered us, we are to give all our praises trusting him to keep us safe after we have given. The Lord seeks our whole hearted giving to His work so that all might fully know the grace and mercy of the Lord. Refer to the BTB study GIVING.

16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

The invitation to come to hear the Gospel message is open to all. Let us be in the company of those who “fear the Lord”, and reverence His Holy Name. When we love the Lord we place ourselves in the position to rejoice even more in the glory of the Lord. It is through our fellowship with others that we hear even more to praise God about and for. The joy of the Lord is our song and our strength. Nehemiah 8:10, Psalms 32:11, 132:9-16, Habakkuk 3:18, Zephaniah 3:17. The fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is praise and worship, and a person claiming to be a believer who does not praise and worship the Lord has not met the Lord.

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

This principle is a crucial one for all believers to understand, for it explains why prayers are at times hindered. When we hold onto secret sins we place ourselves in the place of judgement and will remain there until we confess our sins and come before the Lord for forgiveness. Refer to the BTB study CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS. Prayers are not heard by God when offered by sinful people who hold onto their sins. Sin must be brought before the Cross or prayers are not heard. This verse is a challenge for all ages of mankind; man must deal with sin before the Lord.

19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

The king is a sinner, and he knows it, but he has been saved and forgiven and so he can be heard and delivered. No matter how bad we are we can be saved, and it was this message from the prophet Isaiah that King Hezekiah had heard and responded to. Isaiah 1:10-20, 21-27. God has heard his prayers and given his answer in the deliverance from the armies of Assyria and the later death of their evil king Sennacherib. God has acted in mercy and delivered the people in His mercy. God deals with us in His mercy, for severe judgement is His “strange work”. Isaiah 28:21. It has been a close call for Israel, but by learning Bible doctrine and responding to the author of scripture they have been delivered. Isaiah 28:7-20. Refer again to the BTB study on PRAYER.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Praise His Holy Name. Let all the people praise the Lord for His goodness and grace towards us all through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Praise is the sacrifice and offering that we need to make often and loudly to our God. Let us praise the Lord every day, and let our voice be heard in His praise.

2. Let us thank the Lord for His deliverance of us. Let us recognise the Lord’s work for our salvation and deliverance from troubles. Let us bring our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving whenever we remember the goodness of God. Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2. Let us ensure our prayers are heard by being careful in our confession of sins and careful in our daily lives to walk away from temptations, rather than blunder into them through careless walking. Let us remember that we walk through a dangerous world and our safety is only found when we obediently walk with God and utilise all His provisions for us.

DOCTRINES

HEATHENISM AND GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS

REVELATION.

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD.

GOD – NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – POSITION IN CHRIST.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH AGE BELIEVER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SOLDIER: CHRISTIAN SOLDIER IN EPHESIANS 6.

FEASTS OF ISRAEL.

OFFERINGS – LEVITICAL OFFERINGS REPRESENT CHRIST

BLOOD SACRIFICE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIVING

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER.

PERSECUTION

TEMPTATION

PSALM 67

INTRODUCTION

This is another psalm that is thought to date from the days of Hezekiah's deliverance from the Assyrian threat around the year 700 BC. The evil Rabshakeh, the State Minister of Assyria had stood outside Jerusalem and invited the people to surrender and be deported to become slaves. He had lied to the people in order to get them to hand over their nation to the evil empire of Assyria. Isaiah 36:12-22. The Assyrian Empire was as evil as the Nazi Regime that terrorised Europe in 1940-45. They practised torture and murder as regular tools to control others, and terror was their weapon that was used with great effect upon all nations around them.

Hezekiah does the right thing when facing the words of the Assyrian; he goes to the prophet of God for the words of God to comfort and strengthen him. Isaiah 37:1-7. Hezekiah's people are in fear and his officials are in fear, but the prophet Isaiah stands in faith; God will deliver them. The Rabshakeh returned and spoke more evil to the people hiding frightened behind the siege wall of Jerusalem. Isaiah 37:8-14. Hezekiah does the right thing again and lays the letter of the evil empire out before the Lord. He affirms the truth about God as the antidote to the lies of the pagan Assyrian. Isaiah 37:15-20.

It is around this time that the Psalm we have before us is written, a time when the king believes the words of the prophet of God ahead of the words of the pagan ruler of the empire of evil. God's Word becomes more real to him than the threats of evil men. Hebrews 11:1.

PSALMS 67

"1 God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. 2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. 3 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. 4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. 5 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. 6 Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

REFLECTION

**1 God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.
2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.**

We all stand in need of the mercy of God, for we stand in the sin of our father Adam, with active Old Sin Natures, and often falling into sins ourselves. We stand in need of mercy and that mercy is freely given through our Saviour Jesus the Christ. The psalmist understands that confession of sin and acceptance of the rightness of God's previous judgement upon them are required before mercy can be asked for. Psalms 80:1-3. God blesses us through our POSITION IN CHRIST. God causes the face of mercy, love, and grace to be shown to us. God's face will shine with joy upon us because of our active relationship with Christ. SPIRITUALITY opens the door to the blessing of God. The Psalmist here echoes the Mosaic blessing upon Israel. Numbers 6:24-27, Deuteronomy 1:11, 2:7.

The purpose of all God's actions is that the way of God might be known upon the earth and His message of salvation might be known to all the nations of the earth. The universal proclamation of the GOSPEL message through EVANGELISM is the goal of all revelation. God's purpose in leaving us here upon the earth after our salvation is that we might teach the truth to all who will hear it. Matthew 28:18-20.

We are not here to be healthy, wealthy, famous and relaxed! We are here to be servants of the living God and proclaim His truth to all who will hear the truth about the Lord. The "saving health" spoken of here is more than just physical health, for one day that leaves us and we die. Psalms 43:5, 66:1-3, 117:1-2, Isaiah 49:6. The truly "saving health" is the state of SALVATION that has lifted us to HEAVENLY PLACES and will not ever let us go. John 6:36-40, 10:27-30.

**3 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.
4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.**

The author of this psalm is determined that all people learn to pray and praise the Lord their God. He in effect solemnly orders all the people to praise the name of the Lord. Let the people recognise their need to praise the Lord their God. A full understanding of the nature of God as Creator and Saviour ought to move all mankind to praise the name of the Lord.

What does our knowledge of the Lord do to us? Does our knowledge of Bible doctrine make us praise the Lord more? If it does not there is a problem with the process within us. If our knowledge of the truth does not transform us we are in need of a change in our spiritual lives. Something is wrong if we do not have a great desire to worship. The key element

behind the praise of man, for the psalmist, is the truth about the righteous judgement of the Lord, and the fact that the Lord will one day rule over the earth.

Judgement is certain, and judgement by God will be absolutely just, and completely merciful to all who have accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. This is comfort beyond words, but the person who understands this praises the Lord in any words they can find, and trusts the Holy Spirit to find the words that their own mind cannot. Romans 8:26-27. The fact that the Lord will rule upon the earth one day is truly comfort indeed. The ultimate victory over sin and death will occur and the Lord's SECOND ADVENT will bring in the rule of righteousness upon the earth for a time before eternity proper begins. Refer again to the BTB study MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.

5 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

6 Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.

7 God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

Once again the psalmist calls on all the people who know the truth to express it aloud. We have not yet seen the true prosperity that the earth is capable of. The blessing of the earth is to be seen at its best in the Millennial Kingdom, for then alone will the earth be as it is meant to be. God will then be able to freely bless without holding back anything, because of the obedience of mankind in that day. This is our challenge now; to get a glimpse of millennial blessing now by being obedient to the Lord in all our ways here and now and truly see what the Holy Spirit is able to do with our lives. Refer to the BTB studies, OBEDIENCE, SUBMISSION.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. We all stand in daily need of the grace, love, and mercy of God. Let us come before the Lord and seek after His loving mercy. Let us tell all of the grace, mercy, love and forgiveness of the Lord their God, if they will only come before Him and cast their lives before Him.
2. Let us proclaim the truth we know aloud for all to hear. Let us proclaim the Word of God and the truth of God to all who will hear us.
3. The path of blessing is the "narrow way" of obedience to the Lord's Word and submission to the Lord's path for us through this life, not our own will. Let us bring every thought into captivity to Christ and so find the will of the Lord for us.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – POSITION IN CHRIST

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY-CARNALITY

GOSPEL OF SALVATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – EVANGELISM

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSED IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST

CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

KINGDOM – MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OBEDIENCE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUBMISSION

NOTES

PSALM 68**INTRODUCTION**

We return here to a Psalm of David, and it is a psalm about the Lord who delivers us in the battles of life, and will finally deliver the very earth itself from the grip of evil and sin. The warrior motif is dominant in David's works and we need to accept it and move forward with it so that we can understand it fully. David faced real and vicious enemies who wished to kill him, and some believers still will face this reality, but most will not. For those who do not face actual death threats there is still the satanic attack of the demonic forces around you that you must confront. The battle motif is relevant in the spiritual realm for us all, and for an increasing number of believers in today's world there is threat in both the spiritual and the physical realms.

We all need to understand THE ANGELIC CONFLICT, and ensure that we are fully spiritually armoured. Ephesians 6:10-19. Refer again to the BTB study on THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER IN EPHESIANS 6. We need also to remember that the Lord will be victorious! With the certainty of ultimate victory clearly understood the believer is in the right place to worship with all their heart and all their strength, and that is the challenge of this long Psalm; we are challenged to ensure our worship is meaningful to us and challenging to all believers and unbelievers who witness our praise. Let us take on the challenge that these verses give us.

PSALMS 68

1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. 2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. 3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. 4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. 5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. 6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. 7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah: 8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. 9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. 10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor. 11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it. 12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil. 13 Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. 14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon. 15 The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. 16 Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell in it for ever. 17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. 18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. 19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. 20 He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death. 21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses. 22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea: 23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same. 24 They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. 25 The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. 26 Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. 27 There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. 28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. 29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee. 30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war. 31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. 32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: 33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. 34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. 35 O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.

REFLECTION

**1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.
2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

If we stand with the Lord, then the enemies of God will be our enemies, and our enemies will have made themselves, by hating us, enemies of God. Hear the words of Jesus on this matter. John 15:18-27. Accept the fact that you will be hated by those who reject the Lord and His Word. The Lord takes very personally the attacks and assaults upon His people

and He will rise up and deal with those who hate Him and His people. David desires to see the judgement of the Lord upon his enemies; to see them scattered to the four winds and for the people of God to dwell in peace and safety. Psalms 7:6-7, 78:65-68.

There will be war and the rumours of wars until the Lord comes, but in the midst of the atmosphere of threat we can be safe in the care of God. Matthew 24:4-8. Do not be deceived about the reality of life upon this fallen world; there will be tensions, wars, threats and troubles until the Lord's return and rule over the earth. We are to stand with David and call upon the Lord to save us.

David longs to see those who hate the truth fleeing before the proclamation of God's holy name; that will occur every time we powerfully proclaim the truth of God's Word. The enemy will be put to flight when the Gospel message is preached powerfully. Let us see the enemy scattered before us; let us proclaim the Word of truth loudly and consistently in the power and light of the Holy Spirit. John 14:23-26.

The day will come when those who hate the Lord will flee from before Him but there will be no escape for them; that day is called the "Second Advent" of the Lord Jesus Christ. Until that time we will have trouble at times, we can be of good cheer, for the Lord has overcome the powers that rule this world. John 16:33, 1 John 4:4.

These evil people are like toxic clouds formed by noxious substances. They are poisonous to all they come into contact with but they are unstable and easily driven away by strong wind. The malice of the devil is indeed evil but also unstable and easily defeated by the power of God. The wind of the Spirit will always "blow away" the clouds of evil and the wax of malice that has sealed us under oppression will be melted by the fire of God's presence. Nahum 1:2-8, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, Revelation 6:12-17.

Satan is not as powerful as he tries to make us believe he is. He is easily defeated by the power of God directed by the Holy Spirit through the spiritual believer. Let us not be in fear of the enemy, but rather confidently walking in the power of God. Refer to the BTB studies on WALKING.

3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

Remember, we are told to put on the "breastplate of righteousness" as an essential part of the armour of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 6:14. The breastplate protects the soldier's heart and vital organs and speaks of the protective function of our standing in a place of complete security with God. Our head is protected by the helmet of the assurance of our salvation, and the breastplate has the same truth behind it. We are declared righteous by God through our acceptance of the work of Christ for us. This truth is summed up in the doctrines of IMPUTATION and JUSTIFICATION. WE ARE DECLARED RIGHTEOUS!!!

This is great grace in action through the perfect PLAN OF GOD for us. Truly the Psalmist orders the people of God to praise His holy name, for we receive the gift of righteousness from the only power that can declare us so. We are declared righteous through our POSITION in Christ and that declaration is real and enables us to be safe from danger and stable in our minds so that we can worship our great God.

As we have seen the Last Judgement is a serious doctrine, and one that causes fear and dread to many, but to the believer who understands the imputation of the righteousness of God it has an altogether different effect. The certainty of the Final Judgement is an encouragement to mature believers who understand that there is no peace on earth without the removal of evil men and women from the earth, but younger believers do not see that as clearly until they mature in their knowledge of the Character and Plan of God.

The triumph of the Lord is a great thing to rejoice over, and our understanding the righteousness of God is the starting point for praise for all believers; young and mature alike. It is the believer's deeper understanding of the holy and perfect CHARACTER OF GOD that is the starting point for all powerful praise and worship. As we accept the Word of the Lord and learn more of the character and resultant plan of God, we become more and more righteous ourselves through our growing relationship with Christ (refer to the BTB studies, Maturity, Position in Christ). 2 Peter 3:18.

Rejoicing in the Lord is not just to be quiet worship, but abandoned worship. We are to worship the Lord with "exceeding rejoicing". The order of the psalmist is clear and strong; the believer who loves the Lord is to say so with song that praises His holy name. Sing unto the Lord, sing unto the Lord and praise His holy name! He is the One who made the heavens and the entire heavenly arrangement and the apparent movement of the planets is in the hands of the Creator. As Moses had encouraged the people of Israel to understand many years before this time, the hands that hold Israel are the "everlasting arms". Deuteronomy 33:27. The hands that hold us all are the hands that made the heavens, and the creation of the universe was just the "finger work" of God. Psalms 8:3.

The judging of the demons is in the same category; just the finger work of the Lord. God deals with evil without effort. Luke 11:15-22. He is the mighty God. The name of God here, "JAH", is unique in the scriptures. It is the strongest possible way of saying, "The Lord over all". Our God is the mighty God, the maker of the heavens and the earth, the author of space-time, the One who is the beginning of this world and will be its ending, the One who has a bigger plan to be revealed yet. Refer to the BTB study on NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:

The Lord is the protector of the weak and vulnerable who take shelter under His arms. Psalms 10:12-18, 61:3. God is the protector of the weak and vulnerable, but they must seek shelter under His power and person. If bitterness overcomes us we will always be destroyed by it, whether we are poor, rich, powerful or insignificant to men. God will judge the case of the widow and fatherless; they must simply place their cares in His hands. 1 Peter 5:5-9. Refer to the BTB studies, POVERTY, WELFARE. In this world we will face poverty and distress in marriages and families until the day the Lord returns to set up his earthly kingdom. The Fall of Man has let loose an evil amongst men that only the cleansing presence of the Lord will sweep away.

Our response to our Creator and Saviour is the action that makes the difference between blessing in this life and trouble in this life. We have no choice about the situation we are born into, and many of us enter this world in a place of trouble or danger. I myself was born to a woman who had to flee the country to escape my violent father. She sold the ring she had received from him and fled when she knew she was pregnant, went into hiding to protect herself and me, and when I was three months old, she made the difficult choice to adopt me into a safe Christian home and flee the country.

She was absolutely correct to flee. She never returned to New Zealand and lived and died in the UK. I met her and was able to thank her in the Lord's name for her sacrifice that saved me from great abuse. I look back at her sacrifice and give praise to God for His protection over me from before I was born. He truly set me in a godly family and my dear adoptive parents, so recently passed away, did a wonderful job of providing a Christian home to stabilise the little child they had received.

The Lord is the One who is in the true liberation business, but it is not the so called "liberation movement" theology that guides the Lord. So modern called "liberation theology" is a perverse and evil twisting of the biblical truth and brings no liberation as the psalmist desired. When God liberates us, he liberates us from the control of sin and evil through the power of His Holy Spirit. We are all truly "bound in the chains" of our Old Sin Nature, and all too often we buckle under the pressures of this world and fall into sin and evil thoughts. It is the Lord who liberates us from the power of sin and lifts us up into living fellowship with Him again.

We are lifted up to blessing, for when we are forgiven we are totally forgiven. The ungodly however are under the judgement of God, and those who rebel against the Lord dwell in dry and barren land. Deuteronomy 28:15-24. There is that ever present choice for mankind; to walk the constricted and hard way with God, or the broad way that leads to destruction. Psalms 107:33-43, Matthew 7:13-14. God calls us to walk with Him on the narrow path of obedience that will always lead to glory and blessing, but man's rebellion hinders most from following this path.

The Lord has at times dramatically gone before His people. The most dramatic time in history was during the Exodus when the Lord was with His people in the physical form of a pillar of cloud and fire. Exodus 13:17-22. The drama of the physical presence of the Lord and the definite nature of the guidance received had the people in awe, but it did not stop them from disobeying the Lord at times. There were thirteen specific rebellions throughout the history of the Exodus over the forty years of wandering.

It is a reminder to us that even the most dramatic signs of God's presence can be ignored by people who are determined to disobey the Lord or rebel against His leaders. It was a glory time for the believers who marched in faith, but a time of judgement for the rebels who staggered in their foolish unbelief. The principle behind this is stated by Paul in his letter to the Roman Church. Romans 4:16-25. Paul, in this passage was reflecting upon the strength that faith gives to the believer, who may stand in impossible situations and glory in the Lord. Let us by faith see the presence of the Lord around us. 2 Kings 6:15-17.

8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

The Lord's appearance to His people at the Mt Horeb/Sinai in Arabia was awesome indeed. There was great terror in the hearts of the people as they saw the mountain covered in cloud and fire, and as they felt the earth shake under their feet. Exodus 19:3ff, 16-25, Hebrews 10:31, 12:24-27. The greatness and serious power of God is a thing we do not reflect upon enough, and this very fact may account for the lack of strong faith under pressure on the part of many of the Lord's people today. We need to remind ourselves of the power of God, for it is the Lord's greatness that gives us assurance of His ability to handle all that we pass over to Him in prayer.

Remember the words of the Lord's Great Commission. He begins by saying, "All power is given to me". Matthew 28:18-20. There is no power shortage with the Lord, and He withholds no "plentiful rain" of blessing from us, so if we are short of power to accomplish the Lord's work it can only be a connection problem from our side. God's hand is not shortened, nor His power hindered, except by our sinfulness. Isaiah 50:2-11, 59:1-8, 1:10-18.

10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

When we are weary the Lord provides His plentiful rain of blessing into our soul and spirit. As a congregation of the Lord we dwell in the Lord's presence and may enjoy His blessings as we walk close to Him. Psalms 74:1-2, 21-23. We dwell in the place of the blessing of the Lord when we walk in SPIRITUALITY rather than BACKSLIDE and fall into Carnality. God has prepared for us blessing, and that means He has prepared blessing for us from ETERNITY PAST and that there is no shortage of provision, or power to deliver that provision. Deuteronomy 26:5-11, 32:7-14, 33:27-29. The Lord delivers His bounty to His people and underneath us all are the everlasting arms of the Creator-Saviour God.

The greatest bounty of the Lord is His revelation of salvation and the way of sanctification (spiritual growth). The REVELATION of scripture is the greatest bounty to mankind for in the scriptures we read of the character and plan of God and are able to bless and praise the Lord. It is the Bible itself which gives us our way of focusing our lives forward to serve the Lord in spirit and in truth. The Bible comes to us as a result of revelation received by men and women throughout history.

In the Exodus period Moses and his sister Miriam receive revelation and sing songs of doctrine to the people. These songs are recorded and become Exodus 15. The people of the Exodus generation were challenged by prophetic words, by direct instruction and the revelation from Sinai itself. Their children were challenged by the written records of these things, as we are today. It is vital for all generations that believers receive the Lord's revelation, in whatever form it comes to that generation, for only then do we have the truth as the Lord reveals it to us.

The Word of God is the recorded truth of God, and our daily study of the Word opens the door to the will of God for us. Let us ensure we value the Word, but not as a treasured possession that is stored on the locked shelf; let us ensure we open it daily. The Bible came to us through the agency of believers who heard the Word in their spirit and recorded the truth through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

This process of revelation and INSPIRATION involved many different people through the centuries, each of whom was open to the Holy Spirit, and so the revelation to them was woven by the Spirit into the canon of Scripture that we now hold. Let us value it and utilise it. 1 Timothy 4:1-13, 2 Timothy 3:12-14, 4:1-4.

12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

13 Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.

15 The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.

The psalmist continues his account of the grace provision of the Lord through the Exodus period with this reference to the events of Exodus 14, when the king of Egypt fled from before the face of the God of Israel, and Exodus 17:8-16, when the kings of the Amelekites fled from their battlefield against the people of God. They had treacherously attacked Israel's camp but the Lord delivered them into the hand of the army of Israel. Later in the Exodus other kings were defeated when they attacked the people of God, and finally all those who had been treacherous throughout the forty year wandering were dealt with under God's direct orders. Numbers 21:3ff, 31:1ff. The women of Israel, who had been the target of these evil king's assaults, received the spoil from their armies. Numbers 31:27.

The people had been forced at times to "lie amongst the pots" when under arrow attack by their enemies. Like the wagon trains of the American West in the 1870s the Israelites came under arrow attack at many times in their forty years wanderings and the women and children had to take cover on the ground surrounded by their pots and any other things that provided protection from the arrows raining in on them.

They had been sinners many times through this time themselves, but they had been forgiven and they were brought through under God's grace and the Exodus Generation's children marched into the land in triumph. They had been forced to grovel in the dust to protect their lives, but the day would come when they would soar through the air with flashing wings like the coloured doves; their wings glinting in the sun with silver and gold.

Is this a symbol of prosperity and freedom, or is it a reference to the light glinting on the airliners of today? It may very well be, for it is otherwise a very strange metaphor for an ancient people. Land bound people may "leap like the gazelle", (2 Samuel 22:34, Psalms 18:33, Habakkuk 3:19), and their spirit may soar like an eagle, (Isaiah 40:31), but the glinting of the wings that carry them high is a reference that makes sense only to the metal aircraft of today; it makes no real sense in the ancient world at all.

In its day it was taken as a symbol of prosperity and freedom from care, worry and threat, but in my opinion, it finds its fulfilment in the Israeli airliners of today, as does Isaiah 60:1ff. Refer to the EBCWA Commentaries on these passages above. This Psalm goes well beyond its day, as the following verses make clear, for it speaks of the end of all things and the triumph of the Messiah.

The references in verses fourteen and fifteen are obscure to us today, but not in the day of the psalmist when the people were saturated in the teaching of the Torah. The reference to the "snows of Salmon" and the "hill of Bashan" were powerful allusions to all of the victories of the period of Joshua and the later Judges and their flow on effect through the centuries. The only man named Salmon that we have in scripture is the father of Boaz, the ancestor of David. Salmon

was one of the spies who entered Jericho and then later married the woman who saved them, Rahab. Joshua 2:1ff, 6:22-23, Ruth 4:18-22, Matthew 1:4-5.

The phrase, “the snows of Salmon” is obscure, but may mean the “refreshment” that Salmon brought to the land by his actions. Fresh snow brought down from top of Mt Hermon was a delight for the people to drink on hot summer’s days. The actions of Salmon as a spy, and then as a husband to Rahab, becoming a father, and ancestor of David, all brought refreshment to the people of Israel, both in his day and many generations later. By his actions he saves his people, but he also becomes an ancestor of the humanity of the great king David, and the Messiah!

By small acts of faith men and women become heroes of faith well above the status that they may think they have achieved by their actions. Salmon could not think of the results of his actions in Jericho as he acted as the spy, nor as he made the promises to Rahab and her family, but by all his actions he set up the very line that would lead to Messiah, and would combine both Jew and Gentile through faith.

The “Hill of Bashan” is another interesting allusion that has baffled commentators, but it may also be a most powerful illustration/image of faith in action. The hill of Bashan was a greater hill than Mount Zion where the temple was standing at the time. From the greater Jerusalem area you can look across towards the hills of Bashan. It was an area that was conquered from its king Og, the last of the giant-kings. Deuteronomy 3:1-11. He was a giant of a man, but he stood and opposed God and God’s people and so he was laid low. The hill of Bashan is a powerful symbol for Israel, that the giant tests of this life are to be laid at the foot of the Lord’s altar and left there, for the Lord is the destroyer of giants.

Mt Zion, though small in size is greater than the hill of Bashan. Man’s power is obvious and only on the surface, but God’s power is mighty and His verdicts are final over arrogant men. This entire passage looks forward to the final victory of the descendent of Salmon, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will conquer the great “giant” of evil, Satan, and will cast down all the mighty men who stand with Satan. The mountains will be “cast down” and Zion will be the great mountain above all the “hills of Bashan”.

16 Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell in it for ever.

17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.

When do the hills “leap”? They appear to “leap” during violent earthquakes when the ground surges up and down beneath the feet of frightened men. The greatness of the power beneath our feet at such times is nothing to the power of the Creator-God that made this earth. Psalms 114:1-8. The hills may be shaken with earthquakes and the land changed dramatically by them, but Zion is the key hill in the world. The hills may be shaken, but God’s choice of Zion for His earthly throne remains unchanged through the centuries. Psalms 132:13-14, Zechariah 14:1ff, Acts 1:11, Hebrews 12:22-25, Revelation 16:12-20, 20:9. It will be the “hill of the Lord” until time ends and eternity begins.

The city of Jerusalem will remain the hottest place politically upon the earth until the Lord Jesus rules from Mt Zion over the entire earth. The glory of the Lord and His power to destroy the enemies of man and truth are beyond the capacity of man or demons to resist. The Lord is mighty and He will be victorious. The terrifying glory of the Lord that the Israelites saw at Sinai will be seen throughout the entire earth at His Second Advent, and all mankind will acknowledge their Saviour or their Judge, but none will stand against Him. Revelation 19:11-21.

18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.

This is a clear reference to the Lord’s victory over sin, death, and finally over Satan himself, the author of sin and death. David here prophetically sees the Lord in His glory in total victory over the enemy of mankind. This is also trumpeted in Psalms 24, 47, 110, and other places. Paul takes this passage up and sees it as a reference to the victory of the Lord at the Cross and in the Empty Tomb. Ephesians 4:8-10, Colossians 2:14-15, Hebrews 8:1, 1 Peter 3:21-22. The Lord gained victory at the Cross and proclaimed it through the resurrection, and by means of this victory He has given great spiritual gifts to saved men and women.

We have received more spiritual gifts in this age than at any time in history to date. Over thirty four things have been received by believers at salvation, and many are not even aware of these things. Refer to the BTB study GIFTS GIVEN AT SALVATION. Even the rebellious have received the gifts of God in grace to challenge them and move them to repentance. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, Titus 3:3-7. God truly “loads” us with blessings in time and eternity.

20 He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.

21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.

This may be a reference right back to the prophetic word that Moses recorded came to the serpent (and to Adam), after the Fall of Man. Genesis 3:14-15. The “seed of the woman” (the Messiah) would crush the serpent’s head. Refer to the BTB study CHRIST – THE SEED. Satan tries to do the wounding of man, but God is the One who will wound His enemies, and He will deal with those who refuse to repent to the “hairy scalp” (old age). Psalms 55:23.

The tenacity of the unbelief of rebellious man will be seen at its worst in the latter days of the Great Tribulation period, when even with total judgement being rained down upon rebellious man, most unsaved people will continue in their rebellion against God. Revelation 16:9, 11, 21. 18:15-17. These evil people will weep and wail in a self centred manner for their distress and physical and financial losses, but they will not repent and bow their knee before God.

**22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea:
23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.**

Just as the Lord brought the people of Israel from the East Bank of the Jordan across to the West Bank and conquered the land, so the Lord will bring His people across the Jordan again in triumph. Joshua 3-4. The people will be brought from the midst/depths of the sea itself. This is a baffling reference as it has no poetic parallels and only by being stretched may refer to being taken "from the depths of the Gentile nations". It makes sense if Israeli submarines are involved in the last battles of the Great Tribulation period and are trapped on the bottom of the sea. It doesn't matter where the people of the Lord are at the time of their final deliverance; they will be brought with glory back into the land and there they will worship their Messiah.

The last great battle against God and His people Israel will be bloody indeed, with two thirds of the population of Israel being killed, and over 90% of the earth's population being destroyed by the terrible events of those days. Truly the blood of the rebels will cover the ground and the surviving dogs. There were no Israeli dogs in the ancient world, as they were unclean animals, but in today's Israel there are many pet dogs, and it is these animals which will be eating the slain in that terrible day. Zechariah 12-14 covers this period, as do passages in Isaiah and the last chapters of Revelation. Refer to the BTB study TRIBULATION.

**24 They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.
25 The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.**

The unsaved had many opportunities to see the worship of the Lord and the actions of the Lord. The psalmist is possibly referring back to the Exodus period and reflecting upon the attitudes of the pagan kings who saw the deeds of the Lord in their own lands and knew that the Lord God of Israel was indeed the Lord God over the entire earth. Few were saved and cast away their fake gods and embraced the truth, but some did. Under David's reign many of the Philistines were saved and others from far and wide were influenced by the faith of Israel, but most clung to their evils.

David records the music of the old Tabernacle and the men and women who were part of the tabernacle music and records it as if there was an evangelistic purpose in it. Musical worship is a contentious subject and always has been in the Church.

Many argue that we ought to follow the service type of Moses'/David's Tabernacle or Solomon's Temple and others go to the far extreme and ban all music except the human voice or chanting. This has been a constant debate through the centuries. Refer to the BTB study on MUSIC. From David's reference we can see that he believed that music in worship should have two purposes; the first was worship for the participants and on-looking believers, but the second was evangelistic towards the unbelievers.

The secondary purpose of all worship is that any unbeliever who sees and hears it going on is confronted with the truth about God and is challenged to bow their knee and worship themselves. 1 Corinthians 14:23-33. Let us challenge ourselves on this matter about the structure, content and impact of our worship services.

**26 Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.
27 There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.**

Worship is not just to be "from the front". Worship is to involve all the people in praise of the Lord. If there is not activity in a worship service that involves everyone it is falling short of what David demanded. The congregation was not to be passive; they were to be active in their worship and praise. The "fountain of Israel" was their place of worship, and the Tabernacle and later the Temple was the fountain of blessing of the nation. The fountain of blessing for us in our families, our nations and our world is to be our church services. Are they functioning in this capacity? Is there joy and holiness in our services that fire us up and challenge our entire community? Everyone was there at the tabernacle!

**28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.
29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.**

All the princes of the tribes joined together to praise the Lord at this time. Sadly the foolishness of Solomon's son would end this and start the organised apostasy that would destroy the Northern tribes. Proper worship will always produce unity of spirit amongst God's people. When division and conflict is caused Satan is present. The Holy Spirit does not produce discord! Ephesians 4:3. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is unity and love. John 15:2-16, Romans 6:21-23, 7:4-6, 9:16-23, Philippians 1:9-11, James 3:17-18, 5:1-6. The Lord will strengthen us in the bonds of love, and He commands us to be strengthened in the Holy Spirit. The Lord will work within us, through the Holy Spirit, to produce strength.

Whenever faith is being weakened and worship being destroyed, then you can be sure that God is not there, but the enemy surely is! God's work is known by its fruits, and when God is working there is spiritual strength, courage, loving service to others, and praise to God. Matthew 7:13-23. David saw that the kings of this world want to feel part of something spiritually powerful, and if they sense that God is present somewhere they will draw close to that place and bring their gift offerings. Even pagans desire genuine spiritual power, and worship is designed to draw genuine seekers to the Lord that they might "taste and see that the Lord is indeed good". Psalms 34:8.

30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war.

31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

It doesn't matter how powerful the visitors are who come to see us, they need to be rebuked if they are wrong in their beliefs about God and what He demands of them. It doesn't matter how militarily strong a delegation is, they can put their spears away, for unless their hearts are right with God they will not be able to worship in spirit and in truth. Psalms 66:18, John 4:23-24. It doesn't matter how many sacrifices the worshippers bring, God is not impressed unless their hearts are right before Him. They can save their bulls and calves if their heart is not right before God.

It doesn't matter how much money they bring before the Lord to give to the Temple work, it is all worthless unless their heart is right with God. If violent and ruthless men come and try to act respectfully, they will be turned away by the Lord, for He sees their violent heart and will not accept them unless they repent. Isaiah 1:10-20, Malachi 3:6-12. Many of the presently Moslem nations will come to God in the last days and be accepted, because they will come in repentance and with acceptance of the Lord as their God and with total rejection of their previous violence towards His people Israel. Isaiah 60:1ff, Zechariah 14:1ff.

32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:

33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.

Once again David orders all of mankind to sing to the Lord. All the nations are invited and indeed ordered to praise the Lord and honour the creative and saving work done on their behalf. We are all to sing to the Lord and bow our knee to the truth. Man is challenged to accept the truth about the Love and Grace of God, and acknowledge His power to save by accepting him as Saviour and Lord. God is mighty, and the ruler of the universe is to be acknowledged as the King of all Kings. God is the Lord over all and mankind is challenged to face the facts and accept the truth, rather than cling to their atheistic-agnostic inaction. The Lord demands action from man, and we bow and worship, or bow in judgement; there is no third option.

34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.

35 O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God

It seems obvious to "ascribe power to God", and yet mankind is so stupid that most do not treat the Lord God as if He has power! It is crucial for us to begin all thought about the Lord by remembering that the Lord is indeed the Creator Saviour God and that He has "all power" (Matthew 28:18). Let us begin all our prayer and reflection about the Lord by remembering the power of our Maker and Saviour and so we centre ourselves in the expectation that great things are going to happen to us and with us. The Lord has an amazing plan and we are getting ourselves ready to be used when we remember His power.

Our worry and fear is an insult to His power, for He is ready and able to assist us in any thing we require to fulfil His plan for our life. The Lord has not called us to fulfil a plan He cannot supply the power for. There is no power crisis with the Lord, and there is no shortage of power for everything that we need to do to fulfil our purpose for being upon this earth. The only power problem is a connectivity problem, for our connection with God is only broken by sin, and it is corrected by confession. Isaiah 50:2, 59:1-2.

The Lord is excellent/Lord over Israel. God is the God of Israel; they remain His people and those who forget this fact place themselves under judgement. God's power is over Israel as a protective shield, and none may touch Israel without feeling the wrath of God upon them. I recall reading an open letter by an Arab Sheik about this a number of years ago as he chided his fellow Arabs and invited them to show how by threatening or attacking Israel that they had ever prospered.

He invited them to be kind to the "people of the Book" as the alternative did not seem to have gained the Arab world anything except defeat and trouble. The Bible is clear; those that attack Israel will not ever prosper. Deuteronomy 22:10, Psalms 17:8, Zechariah 2:8. The Lord is God and He is to be obeyed and His plan is to be respected. Let us worship the Creator and Saviour and so be blessed and be a blessing to others.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Come on believer, let us challenge ourselves to rejoice with exceeding rejoicing in the Lord. I was challenged yesterday in our Communion Service to really worship the Lord, and I did so with song, hands uplifted in joy, with tears, and with song. I was alone at church with no friends or family around me to comment. At times we can have well

meaning friends and family encourage us to be “more dignified” in our worship, but the clear challenge of God is to be “more exceeding” in our worship.

Let us allow ourselves to love and adore our Saviour, and Creator, and our mighty Protector. We are beloved, and so let us acknowledge the fact in our worship. We are “loaded with blessings” (verse 19) by the Lord, and so we ought to be given over to rejoicing and thankfulness whenever we pray.

2. It is disobedience to the Word of the Lord that hinders man’s blessing. We are called to walk in the rich pastures of God’s blessing, and these are to be enjoyed, even on the “narrow way” He has called us to walk. We may have a difficult path to walk through this life, but the rich pasture of blessing in the soul is there in the midst of the greatest pressures. Our blessing in spiritual places is what keeps us in the toughest paths through this fallen world, and the blessings of the Lord are ours even in the midst of the Valley of the shadow of death. Psalms 23:4.

3. Let us remember that as the Lord’s servants we are like the prophet Elisha when he saw the chariots of fire upon the hillside around him and prayed that his young frightened servants might also see the presence of the Lord. We are surrounded by the presence of the Lord, and we need to see His presence in faith and rejoice in our superior position to that of the pagans. 2 Kings 6:13-17.

4. If the “plentiful rain” of the Lord’s blessing is withheld from us then we need to confess our sinful thoughts and deeds and draw close to the Lord again. Let us walk close to the Lord and enjoy the blessing of His presence. God is our refreshment, like the “snows of Salmon/Hermon” and he is our shield against the assaults of the giant pressures of our “Hill of Bashan”. To walk in victory means valuing the revelation of God’s Word above all else and drawing near to the truth through solid biblical study under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. God’s Word is to be more real to us than the pressures we face. Let us do this daily, and the more pressure we find ourselves under, the more earnest in prayer and Bible study we need to be.

5. The end of man’s time upon this earth before the Lord’s return is terrible indeed. The end of the Great Tribulation period is a time of incredible judgement and also incredible rebelliousness on the part of unsaved mankind. Those who have rejected the Lord remain total in their rejection of the Lord until the very end.

It is incredible that man can be as stupid as he is proved, but the Lord is stable in His plan and judgement upon all who reject His Truth are judged finally. The earth will be restored and the saved peoples of the earth will rejoice, but the path to it is one of judgement due to the sin and evil that has ruled this earth since the Fall of Man. Let us acknowledge the satanic blindness that oppresses mankind and let us pray for the Lord’s conviction upon the unsaved people we know.

6. Let us be vigorous in our assessment of our worship services. Let us be honest in our questions here and ensure we are on target in worship. Firstly, are we really expressing our praise and worship to the Lord? Are we honouring the Lord in our worship? Secondly are we immediately arresting the attention of the unbelievers who are visiting? Do all people who visit the service understand what is going on and do they get a challenge to face the Lord as their God? If we are not on target with our worship we need to change our structure and our content!

DOCTRINES

ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SOLDIER: CHRISTIAN SOLDIER IN EPHESIANS 6

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING AND LIVING IN THE LIGHT.

SALVATION – IMPUTATION

SALVATION – JUSTIFICATION

GOD – PLAN OF GOD.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – POSITION IN CHRIST.

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY – CROSS TO THE CROWN.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY – SIGNS OF MATURITY (ROMANS 15:1-15).

GOD – NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

POVERTY

WELFARE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY-CARNALITY.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BACK-SLIDING AND RECOVERY

ETERNITY PAST.

REVELATION.

BIBLE – INSPIRATION

BIBLE – BIBLE AND THE BELIEVER

BIBLE – CANONICITY

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIFTS GIVEN AT SALVATION

CHRIST – SEED: CHRIST THE SEED

TRIBULATION IN MATTHEW 24

DISPENSATIONS – THE TRIBULATION OR THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

MUSIC

PSALM 69**INTRODUCTION**

This Psalm of David plumbs the depths of despair that the believer can feel at times when overwhelmed by pressures that sweep over the soul. The battlefield of the Angelic Conflict can be fierce and brutal at times, and it is well to recall the words of Jesus as recorded by the Apostle John in John 15:18-27, when He reminds us that Satan and his demons hate us with the same fury they hated Him. At some times believers will feel that fury.

I smiled as I opened this Psalm this morning, for I am right in the midst of such attacks at this very time, and the first verses were comfort to my very tired and battered soul. This Psalm speaks of David's anguish but it goes far further than his, or any ordinary man's anguish. Many critics argue that this cannot be a Psalm of David because the things he describes in verses 11, 12, 21, 33-36, do not tie in, or cannot be tied, into any aspect of David's life that we have recorded in the Kings/Chronicles account.

It is argued persuasively by some that Jeremiah may be the author, and that this Psalm may be the counter-balance to Lamentations, or come from his time of imprisonment unjustly at the hands of King Zedekiah. This is well argued and does tie in with Jeremiah's life experience, but it does not negate the ancient inscription tying this Psalm to David. It is true that Jeremiah could be the author, but it is equally true that we have only a fraction of the history of the life of David in our biblical text. Many incidents of his life are omitted and as the ancestor of the humanity of the Lord Jesus I can see no more obvious person than David to be anointed to write a prophetic psalm on the inside of the work of salvation by the One who is to come as the "Son of David".

It is a psalm of innocent suffering, and so neither David nor Jeremiah can be speaking of themselves, for both acknowledge their sinfulness. It is a truly prophetic and "Messianic" Psalm, clearly looking forward from the days of the human author to an event that will change the history of redemption for mankind. It is the words of a man of Israel, but it draws near to the God-Man Who will come and combine things we can understand, and may have experienced, with the things that only our Saviour experiences for us to deliver us from sin and death.

It is a Psalm that lets us enter the heart thoughts and feelings of the Lord Jesus Himself. It is the Psalm that gives us the inside of the Cross. It gives us the interior dialogue of the Lord Jesus with the Heavenly Father as He suffers for our sins. John 17 gives us THE TRUE LORD'S PRAYER; the outward expression in prayer of the Lord's desires for us as He sets His path towards the Cross. This Psalm gives us the details missing from John 17 and completes that passage, although written one thousand years before it. The Work of the Lord upon the Cross created the most extreme anguish in the history of the universe, and this Psalm gets us as close as we can get to the mind of the Lord as He strengthens Himself for the task of defeating sin and death. Refer to the BTB studies on the CROSS.

It is the most quoted Messianic Psalm with the exception of Psalm 22. Refer to the following references to this Psalm and see the contexts of each quotation. The Messianic nature of this Psalm is unmistakable and points to the One who will go to a Roman Cross, and who a later generation of Israelis will finally look to in their darkest hour for redemption. The nation of Israel is yet to act upon this Psalm, but they will, in the dark days of the Great Tribulation period "look upon the One whom they pierced". Zechariah 12:10ff.

The following passages refer back to the specific verses of this Psalm.

Verse 4	Matthew 27:23, John 15:25, 1 Peter 3:18,
Verse 8	Isaiah 53:3, John 7:5,
Verse 9	John 2:17, Romans 15:3,
Verse 12	Psalms 22:6, 7, Matthew 27:27-30,
Verse 17	Matthew 27:46,
Verse 20	Matthew 26:56, 27:27-31,
Verse 21	Matthew 27:34, 48, John 19:28,
Verse 22	Romans 11:9, 10,
Verse 26	Isaiah 53:5, Zechariah 13:6,
Verse 29	Isaiah 53:3, Philippians 2:9.

Let us hear the words of Jesus, prophetically written by the Psalmist hundreds of years before the Cross, and let us praise His Holy Name for His great gift to us of Eternal Life, won at such great cost.

PSALMS 69:1-36

1 Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. 2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. 3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. 4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away. 5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. 6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. 7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. 8 I am become a stranger

unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. 9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. 10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. 11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. 12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards. 13 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. 14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. 15 Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. 16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. 17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. 18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies. 19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee. 20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. 21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. 22 Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. 23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. 24 Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. 25 Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. 26 For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. 27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. 28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. 29 But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. 30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. 31 This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs. 32 The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God. 33 For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners. 34 Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein. 35 For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. 36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.

REFLECTION

1 Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.

2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

The image the psalmist uses here is a powerful one; it is the image of "drowning in troubles". Drowning is a very weird experience. I have only had this experience once in a swimming pool in the Fijian Islands and was quickly pulled from the pool and "came to" rapidly. Drowning is a paralyzing experience where everything stands still and all you see is light and all around you the water is like a blanket that holds you in its grip. It is strangely pleasant until you are pulled out and the coughing and spluttering begins.

It is the total powerlessness that I remember looking back to that day, and in the troubles that have assailed me in the last three days I have experienced this same strange, dream like paralysis, as the fear and anguish grips the soul and seems to seep into every corner of the mind. My prayer last night (in 2009), with my wife lying beside me and joining me in it with equal fervour, was David's prayer; "Save me Oh God". Psalms 18:4, 42:7.

The promises of God, revealed to the prophet Isaiah are the promises that we cling to in our distress. Isaiah 42:1-2, 5-7, 11-13. We rest upon the holy character and plan of God. This is the same peace that Jesus knew in the Garden of Gethsemane, for the light of God shines best out of the darkest places. John 17:1-5, 25-26.

The feeling of being trapped in deep mud is the feeling of a soul caught by overwhelming pressures that have no human solution. The author has no stable place for his feet and they slide around underneath him. He feels the suction of the mud pulling his feet and legs under, and as he experiences this entrapment he sees the raging flood waters of adversity sweeping towards him to drown him under their great weight. It is a picture of total and frightening entrapment. It is only God that can lift us from such places of total despair. Psalms 40:1-2. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and he set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."

It is the Lord upon whom I rest this day as I write these words, and I know that peace in the midst of great adversity. The words of Isaiah back this encouragement. "I am the Lord; those that wait for me shall never be ashamed." Isaiah 49:23. "He will keep him in perfect peace, whose trust is in Him". Isaiah 26:3. The terrible entrapment we can feel in deep distress is the same as the mire of sin that our Lord felt as He paid the price for our sins. It was not the mud of our sins that kept Him upon the Cross however, but His love for us and His obedience to the Plan that was to open the door for our salvation. We are in the hands today of the one who Loved and loves us.

3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.

There is nothing wrong with the tears of great grief. Psalms 6:6-7, 13:1-3, 22:1-2. There are things that it is right to cry over and there is no shame in those tears. When we face great distress we are best to let our tears flow, for the tears are

the means by which the negative chemicals of the stress reaction are excreted safely from the body. The very stress chemical Cortisol, that will otherwise suppress our Immune System, is excreted through the tears safely out of the body.

The author of this Psalm is in great distress, which has dried up his tear glands and his salivary glands. This is the extreme sign of stress/trauma and while both David and Jeremiah knew these symptoms at times, the Lord is the One who experienced the worst suffering in this area. Refer to the BTB studies, especially the CRIES FROM THE CROSS. Our Lord went all the way to save us, and we are called to walk all the way with Him, along the path He has called us to walk.

The hatred of the enemies of the truth for the Lord was extreme. The mindless hatred of the Jewish leadership is incomprehensible. They hated him without any cause, other than their own desire to remain in power and not have to recognise Him as their King and Saviour. Their hatred was great and vilely expressed, and their punishment was terrible indeed. All the families of the High Priests suffer greatly in the years leading up to the Jewish revolt 66 -71 AD, and all perish in the unspeakable horrors of the siege of Jerusalem. Their forty years of grace were over at that point.

The enemies of the Lord and Psalmist are more than the hairs on His head. The enemy is in number superior to any forces that can be assembled to stand for the truth, and many of the enemies of the truth are the "mighty men" of their day. Both now and then the "mighty" are more with Satan than with God and it is a sad and baffling thing that we face when we confront this issue. We naturally long to see the intelligent and mighty people of our day embrace the truth about the Lord, but most hate Him and the Gospel message. John 15:25, 1 Corinthians 1:26-27, 1 Peter 2:21-25.

5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

Verse five is clearly not a reference to the suffering of the Lord, but to the suffering of the author. This is a good section to remind ourselves of how revelation and inspiration works. The author speaks of himself and explains his own feelings and thoughts, but also has revealed to him in the midst of his own pain, the greater pain of the One to come.

God the Holy Spirit weaves the man's experiences together with those of the Messiah to come to form the complete Psalm. The author feels deeply his own sinfulness and his need for a Saviour and deliverer. He is not hiding from his sins, but confronting his need for forgiveness and cleansing, and expressing his confidence in the work of God to lift him up. Psalms 17:3-4, 19:12-14, 44:20-21, 51:1ff. The author thinks deeply about his sins, for he sees their defilement of himself, but he also sees the seepage of sin to pollute the lives of others, and he is concerned for all the people that his life touches.

We are all too often impulsive in our actions and foolish in our decision making. If human beings could keep fit by "jumping to conclusions" we would have no obesity problems amongst any people upon the earth. Mankind is foolish more than it is wise. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, and it advances with the daily practise of prayer that waits upon the Lord for clear direction and guidance. Proverbs 1:7, 2:1-11. Waiting upon the Lord is the major habit that needs to be learned in the process of prayer. Prayer is a two way process; both our speaking, and our listening for the Lord's answer to the request.

The psalmist is concerned lest he may have caused offence to anyone and hindered their faith in any way. This concern for the spiritual impact of one's own life upon others is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. We are urged to think of the weaker brethren and do nothing to hinder their spiritual life. 1 Corinthians 8:7-9, 13. Everything is about "others", for we are here to praise and honour the Lord and bless others. The psalmist seeks the Lord's assurance that none have been hindered by any foolishness of his.

7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.

We cannot stop being attacked in this world, nor abused by evil men, but we must be sure that the abuse is of the right sort. Psalms 22:6-8. We must never be abused for evil things that we have done. It is a shame to use the name of the Lord who died for us if we are guilty of gross sin that leads others to mock the name of the Lord. 1 Peter 2:11-16, 3:8-9, 15-17, 4:1-5, 14-16. We are here to honour the Lord, not disgrace the Lord.

In the psalmist's case he has been abused unjustly and he has taken the reproach of others without any just cause. He has been covered with shame by the reproaches of men, but he has no shame in his life that would give anyone cause to reproach him. These verses speak of the special suffering of the Lord our Saviour. They speak of His willingness to be isolated from all whom He knew and loved, in order that we might be brought into relationship with God through Him. Even His own family rejected Him before the Resurrection. Matthew 10:21-27, 34-39, 12:46-50, 26:48ff, John 1:11, 7:5.

9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

This first verse here is so well identified that it is clearly a prophetic word about the Lord's dramatic cleansings of the Temple. The Lord twice cleanses the temple of the money changers and other crooked men who were turning the

Temple into a mafia operation. He cleansed the Temple at the beginning and end of His earthly ministry to ensure that the right message was being given as He ministered as the “Lamb of God come to take away the sin of the world”. Matthew 21:12-16, Mark 11:15-19, Luke 19:45-46, John 1:29, 2:13-17. The Lord was reproached by evil men, and that was the joy in the midst of the pain of it, for those who reproached God reproached Him. We are known by our friends and by our enemies. If we have the right enemies we are standing for the right things. Psalms 89:50-51, Luke 7:3.

He wept at what the sin of man meant at the tomb of Lazarus. John 11:33ff. It was not the sadness of Lazarus’ death that moved Jesus to tears, for He was about to raise him from the dead, but the grief and hopelessness of the majority of men moved Him to tears. Sin led to death in the Garden of Eden and it is the curse of sin that His own resurrection would lift from mankind forever. The Lord freely fasted through His ministry and set the example of fasting for the disciples.

Jewish fasts were often weekly, and most did a fast of some sort one day a week. It was designed for focused attention to details in their spiritual life and the early church called for fasting and prayer whenever there was an important issue to be faced. Refer to the BTB study below FASTING. Jesus fasted regularly, but He also enjoyed His food and wine on non-fasting days, and He was abused by the religious leaders about His pleasant and relaxed eating and drinking. Matthew 6:16-18, 9:14-15, 11:16-19, Luke 7:31-36.

**11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.
12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.**

The Lord grieved over His people, although there is no record that He put on sackcloth or skins as John the Baptist did. Psalms 35:13-14. The “sackcloth” was the sign of mourning and the Lord truly mourned over His people and their sinful state, and some of His last words were, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”. Luke 23:34. He was indeed a “proverb” to them, for they insulted Him directly and His birth, spiritual state, and sinless life. Psalms 44:13-14, John 8:44-52, 10:20-21. The terrible thing about the reaction of the people of Israel to their Messiah was their insulting of the One who came to save them.

He was literally the “song of drunkards” as they mocked His birth and later generations of Jewish people were taught that He was the illegitimate child of a Roman soldier and Mary. This evil blasphemy was spread to discredit the Lord by the very men who executed Him and set their guard at the tomb. They were the judges of their nation; the very people who sat at the gate and should have been the source of wisdom, but they preached lies. When they couldn’t stop the Resurrection or the spread of the new faith they still tried to discredit the founder by terrible lies.

**13 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.
14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.**

The Lord was not distracted from His earthly ministry by the lies of others, instead He focused upon the completion of the plan, and the honouring and worship of the Father in the process. The Lord sets us the example for dealing with distractions and distortions; it is to keep your eyes fixed upon the goal that we are called to and drive forward in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our prayer is “to be towards the Lord”. The orientation of our life is to be towards the Lord, and to the Lord alone are we to pour out any distress or fears. It is the Lord alone who answers prayers, and so to the Lord alone we are to open our hearts. Men cannot be trusted, but the Lord our God can be trusted. Isaiah 49:8-12, 55:6-11.

God will always answer prayer; either “Yes”, or “No”, or “Not yet”. This is summed up by the psalmist when he notes that God answers in “an acceptable time” (at the exactly right time), and that the answers to prayer are not wrung out from the reluctance of God, but from the bounty of His mercy and grace. God hears us, not because we are good, but because He is great in love, mercy and grace towards those who have accepted His Messiah. Refer again to the BTB study on PRAYER.

We can feel at times like we are stuck in the mire of sin and death. The right response when we feel we are being dragged into the mire of testing circumstances is to pray to the Lord for deliverance, and keep on praying for that deliverance until it comes. 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 Peter 5:5-9. As we feel that sinking feeling, we are to cast our cares upon the Lord with the absolute assurance that He cares for us. We are to be specific about the threats we face, as David is here; there are those that hate him, and he wants deliverance from their threats and their violence. He feels that the waters of adversity are deep around about him and he wants to be delivered from them and placed back on solid ground. Refer to the BTB study ROCK, for we need to feel the rock of Christ’s security under our feet. Romans 15:1-7.

**15 Let not the water flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.
16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy loving kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.**

David casts himself upon the loving mercy of the Lord and prays that the very real dangers he faces might be escaped from in the days to come. He faces the full spectrum of pressure. He feels overwhelmed by the waters of adversity; with a sense of being drowned. He alternately feels as if he is being sucked down a great drain hole by weights that drag him deeper and deeper into despair. He feels as if the trap door of pressure is going to close tight above him and permanently trap him under its darkness.

It is what some have called the “dark night of the soul” that David faces. He stands firm however and appeals to the loving kindness of the Lord, for he knows the Lord is full of tender mercies. There is no fear in his appeal, but a strong faith in the goodness of God. We do not have to twist God’s arm to bless us, for He seeks our blessing. Judgement remains God’s strange work; blessing is His preferred work. Isaiah 28:21, Ezekiel 33:11, 2 Peter 3:9.

**17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.
18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.**

The normal feeling for the pressured believer is to feel/think that God has left them alone and has not heard their heartfelt prayers. David expresses this in verse seventeen. God does not hide His face from the believer, but the believer must face this fear that we can all have after many months or years under pressures and express it. God seeks honesty from us and then He can answer our doubts, fears and questions.

David is asking for urgent help, and that is an encouragement to us all, for we are tempted to ask for the Lord to act immediately, and David gives us the example to follow. If you need help now, ask for it now! It is the deep desires and despairs of the soul that need to be healed by the presence of the Lord, and David asks for the healing presence of the Lord with him. God’s presence close to our heart is all we need to deal with despair. He asks for the healing presence of the assurance of redemption.

To really know we are redeemed and are freed from sin is vital when we face pressures, for they may tempt us to believe we are still in slavery to the empire of Satan. The enemy will always try to rob us of our assurance of ETERNAL SECURITY and so David prays that the enemy may be silenced, that he might be fully delivered from them, and that his heart might be encouraged.

**19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.
20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.**

These verses may be applied to both David’s experiences and to the Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry. This is an encouragement to us all, for we can often feel great abuse and pressure from evil men and women. They may reproach us for our faith, and insult and abuse us for our moral stand. They may shame us by lies and assaults, and bring us to the place of dishonour before our peers by devious means. I work for the Medical Council of New Zealand at times, counselling doctors who have been on the receiving end of abusiveness or stress/trauma. I have worked with several doctors who were “set up” by drug addict patients and then lied about by these evil people.

In one case the doctor was struck from the register for a year as a result. The evil was well hatched and executed by the drug addicts and the doctor was “punished” by them for not prescribing addictive drugs to them. This man was dishonoured by the evil servants of Satan and had to humbly walk through the next year attending courses and re-entering his profession only after that year. At times innocent people are abused and dishonoured by the lies of evil men or women. If we face this, the prayer of David and our Lord is our refuge and our salvation.

The heart may be broken by the assaults of our past friends upon us. Think of the Lord’s broken heart here, and remember that the abuse He received from evil men and women was being received as He was paying for their very sins upon the Cross. As He died He faced the mockery of the very people He was dying for. The people He paid the price of sin for were the worst insulters of His holy name.

There is great distress and depression upon the Lord as He goes to the Cross. It is a triumph, but it is the greatest suffering every known by any man at any time in history, for it was 100% undeserved. There was no pity in the eyes of anyone by the Cross. The Romans did their worst, as they always did at crucifixions. Only the death of the Lord makes the centurion think again. Matthew 27:54. There were none to comfort the Lord, but our challenge is to be the comforters to the needy and persecuted. Matthew 25:34-46.

**21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.
22 Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.**

The Roman’s gave the Lord a stupefying drink as He suffered on the Cross. Matthew 27:34. This was an act of kindness according to some commentators, as some believe it acted as a pain reliever, but was bitter and awful to taste, and actually poisonous in any significant quantity. It is debated by commentators as to whether it was a pain reliever or a device of the Romans to provide internal agony in the intestinal tract to match the pain in the body from the nails. From the scriptural references I tend to believe the latter; that this was a bitterness to add to the physical suffering.

David is not vindictive when he says these words, he is precisely prophesying how their judgement will come upon them. These people will reap what they have sown. They have invited people to their dinner table and then either assassinated them or verbally abused them. The prayer request regarding these people is that their own treacherous table might become a snare to them. He asks that their own plots might be turned back upon them and that they might be betrayed at their own table surrounded by those they thought friends.

Each and every member of the family of Annas and Caiaphas, the High Priestly political family who conspired to murder the Lord, suffered this way. They were outplayed by other families for the powerful role of High Priest, which had become a political rather than a spiritual office. Josephus records in his book, "The Jewish Wars", that they ran protection rackets, and held trading concessions that gave them their wealth and power, and that these very things made them a target for even more ruthless people in the days leading up to the Fall of Jerusalem to the Roman armies. Wealth will often become a snare to those who plot and scheme to hold it at the cost of the welfare or even the lives of others. Malachi 2:1-3, Romans 11:7-18, Isaiah 8:11-15, 1 Peter 2:8.

23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

24 Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

These people think they see everything and understand all things, but they are deceived. They think they see but their very perception is blinded by satanic deception. Refer to the BTB study BLIND MAN. They are confident in their arrogance, but David requests that the Lord will remove their arrogance and make their legs knock together. David understood, as we must also, that we were all blinded by the deception of this present world until the Holy Spirit broke through. Ephesians 2:1-10.

David wants them broken and changed, and only those who will not change be destroyed. It is this heart that made David beloved of God, and it is this heart that moves our Lord towards the Lord. It is this heart that must move us. If a person is still alive, no matter how evil they are, there is hope for the Holy Spirit to break through their satanic blindness, and we are called to pray for them. John 16:8-11. Refer to the BTB study HEATHENISM AND GOD CONSCIOUSNESS.

The persistence of negative volition on the part of the evil people leads to David's last prayer towards them; that they might be thoroughly judged and destroyed, before they continue in their evil and hurt more innocents. He asks however for the judgement to be in God's will and character, not his own, although he will fully express his own desires for them.

The anger of the Lord is what David prays for, and what the Lord prays for upon the lost. This is a good prayer to pray towards the persistently evil, as it leaves them in the Lord's hands for justice and equity in judgement. To ask for the "wrath of God" upon someone is to open the door to the possibility that God is not angry with them, and will therefore not judge them but bless them. When you ask for this you are asking for the Lord to go to work on that person according to their heart and their on-going deeds. You are asking for God to hold them accountable for their actions and deal with them according to their true heart deserts.

David feels great anger towards the evil men who have abused him, but does not ask God to judge in accordance with his anger, for his anger may be disproportionate to what they really deserve. Our emotions are often out of step with the true reality. Let us pass people over to the Lord, and never wish upon them what we desire, but what God can do justly to them.

25 Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

26 For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.

David is very human and he expresses his desires towards the Lord fully and with passion. He is not wrong doing this, he is human. Let us not be harsh in judging David for his dark desires for they're evil people, but let us remember that he is loved by God, even though he expresses such things. This tells us that the Lord wants us, above all else, to fully share our hearts with Him, and pour out our deepest desires towards Him. Even if we seek vengeance and need to hear the correction of the Lord, the Lord seeks our honest and open disclosure of our heart's desires.

David can see that the only way to eliminate the truly evil people groups is for there to be no more of them. This is today referred to as "genocide" when evil men practise such "ethnic cleansing", and yet the Lord will eliminate all persistently evil groups and individuals when He returns to this earth. When He returns He will not come as the Saviour, but as the judge of all. Refer to the BTB study RETURN OF OUR LORD.

The reason for their judgement is their attitude towards the Messiah. They have abused the Lord, and when we think of what the Lord has done for man, we can see that there is no hope for those who reject Him. Ephesians 2:4, Hebrews 2:3. There is great "wrath to come", and only a real relationship with the Lord will save us from the wrath to come. John 3:36, Romans 1:18-32, Colossians 3:6-8, 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

David is not asking the Lord God to move people to more sin, but to ensure that these people really become fully the people they truly are within. Many hide their evil and shield the deep malice they feel from the world by pleasant sounding words and apparent "good deeds". David wants them fully exposed as the people they are before judgement falls, so that none might doubt the justice of God. At times we wonder what is going on when we look at the fate of an individual, and David wants there to be no doubts whatsoever about why the fate of these people is so awful.

David doesn't want these people to be saved, and that may appear terrible to us, but that is because we cannot see what they have done, whereas David can. There are people who are so awful that we do not want to see them in heaven, but are content with their being judged in hell (the Lake of Fire) forever. God had to teach Jonah this about the Assyrians,

that even though they were totally an evil people and did terrible things, they also were loved by God and could be saved. Jonah 4:1-11.

29 But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.

30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

Even though in human terms David was rich beyond comparison in his age, he saw that he was poor in God's sight. Psalms 40:17, 109:29-31, Isaiah 53:1-3. He also saw that he was filled with the sorrow for sin that characterises all who walk closely with their God. The closer we walk to the Lord the greater the light of His presence shines into our lives and the more sin we see there. Awareness of sin is not a bad sign in a man's life; it is a sign of a close walk with God. David can see that only the salvation of the Lord will set him up on high and allow him to relax before God and before man. Psalms 91:14-16, Ephesians 1:19-23, Philippians 2:9-13.

David's response to his distress is clear, and his prayer for deliverance; he will sing praises to the Lord in joyful expectation of the Lord's action on his behalf. He says "Amen" to his prayers with praise for their answer. He expresses biblical faith, for this is the standard of faith; that we praise the Lord for answered prayers before we see the answer.

31 This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

It is our praise that honours God, not the extent of our sacrificial offerings. The Lord seeks for us to praise His holy name and He delights in the sacrifice and offering of praise above all other things. Hebrews 13:13-15. It is not required to be of great status before man to approach the Lord and praise His name; the humble of circumstances are able to boldly approach the throne of God. Hebrews 4:16, 13:6.

Many feel disempowered in this world because of circumstances they face and the things they have experienced. There are many traumatised people in our world, and there always have been; possibly in previous centuries far more than our own. To process our traumatisation requires more than mere psychology has to offer; it requires the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul. The great "good news" of the true faith is that all who come to the Lord will be saved from sin and death and delivered from their Old Sin Nature and all the evils that have beset them as they walk with the Lord steadily and daily away from their dysfunction into spirituality and true life with God.

33 For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.

34 Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.

God hears the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable. Many people feel "prisoners" to their lusts and weaknesses; however, the Lord does not despise our weaknesses, but through the ministries of the Holy Spirit within us provides a remedy for them in Christ Jesus. We are all prisoners to some desire of our Old Sin Nature, but in the power of the Holy Spirit we can deal with them. The challenge for each and every one of us is to walk humbly before the Lord and feed daily upon the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

Some people feel trapped in their birth status and the world they have been birthed into, but through our second birth, we are "BORN AGAIN" into a new world as members of the ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD and as such we are beyond the assaults of those who would abuse us and hold us down as the people we once were. We are transformed people in Christ Jesus, a new creation, and it is in this new place that we have the opportunity to defeat the enemy and praise the Lord from a new and eternal position. Psalms 96:7-10, Isaiah 44:21-23,

35 For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.

36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein

David's expression of faith is complete; the Lord will deliver Zion. The Lord's promise is clear; He will return to this hill and rule from this place. The future of Jerusalem is written still in blood, but its end is glorious with one third of the population accepting the Messiah and being brought through into the Millennial Kingdom. The Lord will rebuild the cities of Judah and the places that are desolate because of the evils that have been done will be restored and the believing survivors of the nations of the world will praise the Lord in that day. Zechariah 12:1ff. The people who enter the Millennial Kingdom will be only those who love the Lord and honour His holy name. The only people entering eternity will be believers, and that is why it will be perfect.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Trust upon the Lord believer when the waters rage over, around, and through you. When there is no human hope there is divine deliverance to be claimed and waited for. Wait upon the Lord and renew your strength in faith. Blessing man is God's desire; judging has always been God's strange work, and He does it only when there is no alternative.

2. Our sins are not hidden from God. The only people fooled by our secret sins are ourselves and other weak minded men and women. Let us confront and confess our sins and draw near the Lord again with clean hands to worship our Saviour. Let us keep short accounts with God and so be lifted up from the miry bog our Old Sin Nature leads us into.

3. We are our "brother's keeper"; for we are here to bless others and bring God's glory to them. The Lord leaves us here upon the earth to be a blessing, not to put our feet up and relax until He returns for us. We are here with the "Great Commission" to fulfil. Matthew 28:18-20.

4. Let us cast our cares upon the Lord, for He alone consistently cares for us and has the power to deliver us from the apparent "disasters" that come upon us. The testing situations we face are well able to be handled by the power of the Lord. Let us trust Him and hand all things over to Him. When in mire pray believer; don't squirm around, or you will only sink deeper!

5. Have we thanked God for answered prayer today? This question applies to prayers already seen as answered and those whose answers are yet to be seen. We see an answer come in time, but from eternity past the answer is already there in the mind of God. Let us see things as God sees them, and from God's perspective beyond time the answer is already given. Let us praise the Lord as we request things from the Lord, for He is the Lord of time and space as their Creator, and the answers to our prayers are already given.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER – THE TRUE LORD'S PRAYER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER.

CHRIST – HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION – THE ROAD TO GLORY

CHRIST – OBEDIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST

CHRIST – SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

CHRIST – WORK OF CHRIST COMPARED WITH WORK OF MAN

CHRIST – WORK ON THE CROSS

CHRIST – CRIES OF CHRIST FROM THE CROSS

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FASTING

CHRIST – ROCK: CHRIST AS THE ROCK

BLIND MAN AS A PICTURE OF THE UNSAVED.

HEATHENISM AND GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS.

CHRIST – RETURN OF OUR LORD

CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS.

SALVATION – REGENERATION: BORN AGAIN.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD.

NOTES

PSALM 70

INTRODUCTION

Students of theology may ask as they read this psalm, as to how it got into the book as a separate psalm, when it appears to be simply an excerpt of Psalm 40:13-17. It is clearly a repetition of the earlier recorded psalm, but which comes first? Does Psalm 40 develop over time as an expansion of this heart felt earlier prayer, or is it that the end of Psalm 40 becomes a psalm in itself, as a cry for immediate help, to be sung at appropriate times? On superficial examination the passages are identical, but there are subtle changes, and the early editors of the Scriptures who gathered the psalms into their final form together after the Exile clearly believed the difference to be significant enough to make this a separate psalm.

The differences are as follows. The name of God is swapped at key points, with Elohim (God – “plural of magnitude” to the Rabbis, but the reference to the Tri-unity of the God-head to ourselves) being replaced for Jehovah once, and for Adonai (Lordship) once, and Jehovah replaced by Elohim twice. The prayer in verse three for the Lord to act against the enemies, requests that they be “turned back” rather than “made desolate”. The prayer of verse five asks for the Lord to “make haste”, rather than “think upon me”.

The liberal critics have a field day with this psalm, using it as a clear proof of the different authors who wrote and edited the scriptures from the various “Elohists Schools of scribes”, and the “Yahwist Schools of priests/scribes”. What is then the explanation? Looking back from our day when we discuss the full CHARACTER OF GOD with greater knowledge, as we survey the complete CANON of Scripture, it may be easier to see the writer here thinking about his use of words at a later time in his life.

We will only know the final story in heaven, but what I believe is that David rethinks the activity of God in relation to the work of God that he requested, and that this psalm is a later one to Psalm 40; a reworking of his requests to the Lord in light of his life time of walking with God. He sees that the use of the ancient terms for God each indicates a different aspect of the divine nature and operation, and he tries to be more precise in his request in this Psalm than in its origin in Psalm 40. I will explain what I mean as we examine each verse. Refer to the BTB studies on the TRINITY.

PSALMS 70

“1 MAKE HASTE, O GOD, TO DELIVER ME; MAKE HASTE TO HELP ME, O LORD. 2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt. 3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha. 4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified. 5 But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.”

REFLECTION

1 MAKE HASTE, O GOD, TO DELIVER ME; MAKE HASTE TO HELP ME, O LORD.

Verse thirteen in Psalm forty had two references to Jehovah (JHWH) the sacred name of God and ended with a reference and appeal to “the Lord” (Adonai). This appeal emphasizes the passion of the psalmist, who requests the dynamic power of God by the name (JHWH) given to Moses at Horeb. Exodus 3:11-15. He ends his appeal by referring to the Lordship of God (Adonai), acknowledging that the Lord is truly his Lord.

In Psalm 70 before us the changes indicate an older, more thoughtful appeal without the open passion, but with more theological depth behind the words. Adonai is omitted as the concept of lordship is carried within the holy name of God (JHWH) and by omitting Adonai and keeping the last reference to Jehovah the writer emphasises the lordship power of God. By changing the first reference to Jehovah to Elohim he emphasises the full multi-dimensional character of God, and so he begins by reflection upon the settled CHARACTER OF GOD and rests his appeal upon the surety of God’s eternal and stable nature, ending by appealing for power to be exercised, but upon the basis of character.

Psalm 40 is an appeal for raw power to be exercised or unleashed, but Psalm 70 is the appeal for stable and theologically significant power to be used. There is urgency in each appeal, for the danger and threat is real in each case, but the later and shorter psalm cuts straight to the central matter in the appeal, which is not the thoughts and feelings of the psalmist, nor even the violence and threats of the enemies, but the stability and settled character and power of the entire God-head.

David wants more than just the release of power at this point; he wants the entire PLAN OF GOD to be fulfilled through the situation he finds himself in. He sees that the situation is irrelevant, and so there is no introduction to the Psalm this time, because he sees that God’s knowledge of that is perfect anyway; what he seeks is that the action required comes from the total CHARACTER OF GOD in accordance with the PLAN OF GOD and that the will of God might be done through all things that occur.

2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.

3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.

David directly addresses his desires for the enemies of the truth that he faces presently. He seeks their confusion in the face of the living God. He wants them brought to total shame as a result of seeing the actions of God on his behalf. He does not seek personal vindication, but the glory of God through this. These people have attacked him because he stands for God and they are of the enemy, and David seeks their defeat in the Lord's holy name.

They have arrogantly attacked the child of God and David seeks the actions of his heavenly Father to support and protect his family members, but he seeks far more than simply their judgement. They seek David's life, and he desires that they might be overturned in their plans, and pushed backwards, and that they might be put into total confusion, for they follow the author of confusion. John 8:44, 1 Corinthians 14:33, James 3:14-16. Refer to the BTB study on the FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

David asks for absolute justice; that what the enemy has sought for him might be done to them. They have desired his hurt, and so he wants them pushed backwards that they might be on their back and vulnerable and exposed to the truth, being forced to look upwards to God. They have laid settled plans of evil, but he wants their counsels turned to confusion, for they follow the author of confusion.

They have mocked the faith and confidence in the Lord that David has expressed. Such an attitude is shameful and David wants them to feel their shame. Once again, it is not for himself and his vindication that he seeks this, but for the name of the Lord. David seeks for the final and complete vindication of the Character and Plan of God amongst men.

David's eyes in this psalm are far further focused than they were in Psalm 40. In the earlier Psalm he sought the deliverance from his enemies here and now, but here in Psalm 70 he seeks the final judgement of all who stand against the people of the Lord in a last and final JUDGEMENT. For those who persist in their rebellious and malicious attacks upon believers he seeks judgement, but he also seeks salvation for the lost, if they will open their eyes and accept their true God.

4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.

David seeks the judgement of the rebellious against God, but the salvation of all who will look up, even if they do so after being flattened by the Lord first. John 16:8-11. All who seek the Lord will find Him, for it is the work of the Holy Spirit alone that moves within men to seek after their God. Refer to the BTB studies on the HOLY SPIRIT. David's purpose, and the purpose of all who have the heart of the Lord formed within them through the FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, seek to see their enemies Holy Spirit filled also, for then they will praise the name of the Lord they once despised.

David's prayer is that all believers might rejoice in the Lord and by their sacrifice of praise bring honour to the Lord's name from the midst of the times of persecution they may be facing. If we love the Lord and His work for us, then let us say so without letting a day go by! Do we praise the Lord enough for His salvation? The entire purpose for our being left here is that we might bring LIGHT to the world and magnify the name of the Lord. There is no other purpose for our being here, other than to serve the Lord in accordance with His Plan and praise His Holy Name in the process.

5 But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.

David's humility is strange to some, and a number feel he is a hypocrite here, for he was vastly wealthy and needed nothing from men at all that he did not have in abundance. What does he mean by this verse? He had vast financial wealth, but he saw that it was all of no spiritual significance outside the Plan of God for its use. He realised that no matter what the physical wealth he owned he needed the spiritual wealth that only the Holy Spirit of God could provide. Spiritually he was, like all men, "poor and needy".

All of us stand in need of the grace of God. We were all lost, until the Lord found us. We were all without Christ, without hope, and without both temporal security and eternal life. God alone could meet our needs and praise God, He did. The Lord alone is our deliverer, and He will never delay in our deliverance; He will deliver at exactly the right time in accordance with His plan for our life. We are in His hands. Deuteronomy 33:27, John 10:27-30, 15:7-17.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. David has matured in his reflection upon the things he prays for in this Psalm. He thinks about the request he is making, and sees it in terms of the Character, Plan and Power of God. He no longer just appeals for overwhelming Sinai like power to blast his enemies, but he requests that the Lord's Will be done within the Character and Plan of God. He doesn't speak of his specific situation, other than to identify that, as before, his enemies mock his faith, for he sees that he can leave such people in the hands of the God who has thought of all the details from eternity past.

2. Do we actively seek through prayer the salvation of our enemies? This is the Lord's remedy to stop any bitterness arising towards them. No matter how evil a person is, nor how wicked their plans towards us, if they are still alive, there is hope for their salvation. We are urged to pray for them by the Lord directly. Matthew 5:10-12, 43-48, 1 Peter 2:18-24.

3. Let us praise the Lord for His salvation towards us, and for His glory and His holy name. Let us sing continually of His goodness and grace towards us. No hour should pass without some opportunity to praise the Lord in our heart, and at times for our lips to sing His praises and magnify His name before the world.

4. We are in the Lord's Hands this very day. Let us pause and reflect upon this truth. Let us take our concerns, doubts, and worries, and place them into the hands of the One who cares for us and has a plan which covers every situation in our life. Let us relax in the arms of the One who carries us through this world and will bring us through to glory. Let us praise His name now and forever. Jude 24-25.

DOCTRINES

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD.

GOD – NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BIBLE – CANONICITY.

BIBLE – WORD OF GOD – HEBREWS 4:12

GOD – TRINITY

GOD – TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

GOD – TRINITY IN THE TITLES OF GOD

GOD – PLAN OF GOD.

GOD – FATHERHOOD OF GOD

JUDGEMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE.

HOLY SPIRIT – EFFECTIVE CALLING

HOLY SPIRIT – OPERATION.

HOLY SPIRIT – FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

LIGHT

GOD – NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

NOTES

PSALM 71**INTRODUCTION**

This was a favourite Psalm for the Rechabites, the sons of Jonadab. Jeremiah 35:1ff. These were godly people amongst the corrupt nation in the last days of the kingdom before the Babylonian Captivity, and this was their song as they headed into captivity with Ezekiel with the first major group of captives in 597 BC, after Daniel's group had gone in 605 BC.

In the Septuagint Greek translation made around 280 BC the Psalm is ascribed to David, and I see no problem with this, as the editors end the "Psalms of David" with their footnote at the end of Psalm 72. This Psalm, like the one before it is a mosaic of quotations from earlier Psalms stitched together in a new order, but it has differences in the very composition that made the early editors include it in the Canon of Scripture. It provides a powerful summary of many doctrines about faith, trust and confident hope in the Plan of God.

A list of the verses and their quotation sources, and later quotations from them, is instructive.

Verse 1-3	Psalms 31:1-3.
Verse 3	Psalms 7:6, 18:2, 42:8, 90:1, 91:9.
Verse 4	Psalms 140:1, 4.
Verse 5	Psalms 22:9, 31:7.
Verse 6	Psalms 22:9-10, 34:1.
Verse 7	61:3.
Verse 8	63:5, 96:6, 104:1.
Verse 9	92:14.
Verse 10	31:13, 56:6, 83:3.
Verse 11	3:2, 7:2.
Verse 12	10:1, 22:11, 19, 35:22, 38:21-22, 40:13.
Verse 13	35:4, 26, 40:14, 109:29.
Verse 14	130:7.
Verse 15	35:28, 40:5, 96:2.
Verse 16	51:14, 106:2.
Verse 17	26:7, 90:5, 119:27.
Verse 18	22:31, 78:4-6.
Verse 19	35:10, 36:6, 57:10, 126:2.
Verse 20	60:3, 80:18, 85:6, 86:13, 119:25, 138:7.
Verse 21	18:35, 23:4, 86:17.
Verse 22	33:2, 78:41, 81:2, 89:18, 144:9, 147:7.
Verse 23	5:11, 32:11, 34:22, 55:18, 103:4, 132:9, 16.
Verse 24	35:28.

This Psalm reminds us that we can have inspired quotation into new circumstances that when woven into the life experience of the author produces a new or deeper revelation of truth. The same thing said twice is still inspired, and with repetition into slightly different circumstances may produce far greater depth of understanding and application of a truth.

This is a Psalm directly into my heart at the time I find myself in presently and I rejoice that David may have woven this together in a situation he faced, and I can see why the Rechabites sang this as captives on their way to Babylon, weaving David's earlier words into their Psalm 119, and why it has been a favourite of many who suffer great and unremitting pressures in their lives. It is a song of a mature believer still trusting the Lord under pressure in old age as they have through their youthful years. It is a song of encouragement to us all as we grow old in the Lord's service and as the battles grow fiercer towards the end.

PSALMS 71

1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. 2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. 3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress. 4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. 5 For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth. 6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee. 7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. 8 Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day. 9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. 10 For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, 11 Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. 12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. 13 Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt. 14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and

more. 15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. 16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. 17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. 18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come. 19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee! 20 Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. 21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. 22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. 23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. 24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

REFLECTION

1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

It is an act of conscious will that is required by us as the Lord's children, each and every time we face troubles, to place our troubles firmly again in the Lord's hands. Each time we are assailed by worry and confusion of mind, we are to place the situation that has caused our distress firmly in the Lord's hands and rest in His care, and trust in His plan. Refer again to the BTB studies, GOD CARES FOR YOU, THE PLAN OF GOD. David does not want to be "put to confusion" in the eyes of the pagans lest they mock the Lord through his calamity. As he stated in the earlier Psalms, "those who say, Ah Hah", are always ready to mock the Lord through the distress of His servants. Psalms 40:15, 70:3.

Our distress is the Lord's problem, not our own, for we are "bought with a price", and so our problems are not our own, but the One who paid for us with His own blood. 1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23, 1 Peter 1:18-19. The principle behind the doctrine of REDEMPTION is the principle of "change of ownership" and therefore the change in who is responsible for our problems.

If we own a house then the entire cost of everything associated with our house is our responsibility, but if we rent a house, then the responsibility for the costs of the house is with our landlord, for they own it. Their reputation as "honest" and "having integrity" rests upon their performance of their responsibility to us as their tenants. This is exactly as it is with God and our own bodies. We are His, and our fate is His responsibility, and His reputation rests upon the performance of His plan. Are we in any danger in this area believer?

David feels mental confusion through the pressures he feels. He experiences the normal emotional turmoil of those under maximum pressure after a life time of pressure situations. It doesn't necessarily get any easier as we advance in the Lord's service, for every day we need to apply the same doctrines and the pressure may be building through life if our service is building in effectiveness.

Each and every day it is good to join David in asking the Lord to settle our minds in the living reality of His Person, Plan and Power. We want deliverance in "His righteousness"; we want escape from our terrible situation in accordance with His Plan. 1 Corinthians 10:13. We want to know that we are heard and that He is moving to act as we speak. We will see our deliverance as it comes, but the challenge of faith is to praise the Lord in advance of this.

3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

We need to live within the palace of God's provision rather than the "panic palace" of the emotionalism of our Old Sin Nature. It is living in the provision of God's Word, for the doctrines there are like a strong tower of strength, our shield of strength, our strong walls of protection against doubts and fears. All these images of dwelling in the promises of the Word are important to grasp and at times cling strongly to. David continually resorts to the overshadowing presence of the Lord's Word in his soul. He lives in the PROMISES of God's Word, and so ought we to live.

The Lord is my ROCK and my strong fortress. Psalms 31:2-3, 91:1-2, Proverbs 18:10, Isaiah 33:16. Martin Luther wrote and sung his mighty hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is My God" to express these thoughts. As we lift our voice in our prayer request, so the Lord has already given orders that we might be saved from our distress. Let us see the Lord's actions to help us with this same clarity of mind that the psalmist shows here; this is faith in action, as we see the actions of the Lord in our heart before we see them in life with our eyes. The enemy are wicked, cruel, and unrighteous. Psalms 17:8-13, 59:1-2. The enemy are nasty indeed at times in this earth, but the Lord will deliver us from them all; let us trust Him and cast our burdens upon Him, in thanksgiving for His response as we make our prayer request.

5 For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth.

6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee.

It is the Lord alone who is our hope. The longer we trust in the Lord the more confident our faith can grow, but we still need to affirm it with strength each and every day. From my youth I have trusted the Lord, and like David, I can look back

and affirm that the Lord has been my strong tower, and through terrible situations He has kept me safe and brought me through to glory. I face the toughest situation in my life to date as I write these words and with David I affirm that He will bring me through this and I praise Him for His answers to prayer now, for they will come and I will see my deliverance upon the earth over my present difficulties. I wrote these words in 2009 and still in 2015 the pressure is on me to the maximum; I remain financially caught in a vice from which I cannot move without the Lord's deliverance, and I know He will deliver in his time. It is not ever whether the Lord will deliver us, it is only when he will to the glory of his name.

Like David we all have been kept alive since before our actual birth itself. It is the grace of God that has brought us to this point, and His Grace will keep us until we have completed our task upon this earth as we walk in obedience to Him. Let us give continual praise to the Lord for all He has done, is doing, and will do for us. Romans 15:11, Philippians 4:8ff, Hebrews 13:15.

7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.

8 Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.

Many look on at David and wonder at his life and his achievements, but others looked on at his sins and troubles and wondered whether God is indeed with him. David is not concerned about the doubts of men regarding his life, for he is the servant of the Lord and he is God's Man. He was sure that he was a sinner in need of a Saviour, and he was absolutely sure that he had found his Saviour in God. He is absolutely sure of his position in the hands of the Lord and he is absolutely sure that all will praise the Lord when they look back at his life, and he is determined to praise God all through his life. He wants every day to be a day for praise and honour to the Lord. Psalms 145:1-2. Let us praise the Lord with our whole heart and rejoice in His holy name with our entire spirit.

9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.

10 For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,

It is the latter days of David by the time he weaves this prayer together. Heart disease stops his life eventually and his circulation slows to an extent that he cannot get warmth to his extremities. 1 Kings 1:1. He is coherent until the end, but debilitated by the disease. He suffers at the end, and it may be that as the circulation problems advanced he prayed this prayer, weaving together the Psalms of early days to form this new testimony of faith in his old age.

He wins the Crown of Glory, 1 Peter 5:4, for endurance under suffering, and possibly also the Crowns of Life and of Righteousness, for faithfulness under trials. 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, Revelation 2:10. David is not complaining about his debility, he is resting upon the Lord in faith, and he is blessed in the midst of his suffering and he is blessed eternally and is crowned with many crowns forever. Refer to the BTB study REWARDS AND CROWNS.

I have just helped by daughter move flat, and at 58 years of age my strength failed me. Even though I stay fit with daily weight work outs and walking I got thoroughly worn out by the multiple lifting involved. I didn't despair, but I groaned at times through the day, and also chuckled as I acknowledged, that I am getting older. The same assurance that kept David in his latter years is mine and it is yours believer; the Lord will not forsake us as our strength forsakes us at times. The enemies of the Lord are our enemies and they will keep plotting against us if we keep standing for the Lord. People without enemies are not doing anything! Jesus told us we would have enemies. John 15:18ff. The challenge is to make sure that they are the "right ones"; they must be the people who hate God also.

11 Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.

12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

The enemy will have a malice that surprises many, but should not surprise a good student of the Word of God. The enemies of David mocked him and the Lord's care over him, and saw his pressure as the opportunity to abuse him and persecute him at a higher level than they had to date. They made the mistake of seeing the pressures on him as evidence that God was not there to help him, but the pressures were simply opportunities for faith to grow, and the Lord was waiting to act until the right time.

The enemies are wrong, and David asks the Lord to move close and assist now to silence them fully and finally. David casts his care upon the Lord for he knows that the Lord will deliver him and silence those who mock the believer and the one true God. David feels the urgency of his situation in these latter years exactly as he does in his early years. This is an encouragement to me as I struggle still with patience under pressure, but I draw comfort from David's own struggle. He knows the plan of God is perfect and that all is there for him, but he still pleads, because worry is in his heart, and it's OK.

13 Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

It is absolutely appropriate to pray that those who persistently seek the soul of the believer might be judged and defeated. Those who seek our hurt will be judged by the Lord for their wickedness and malice. It is EVIL and it is SIN that they practise, and if they do not repent they will be eternally judged. They will be covered with the dishonour they deserve in the end. They will be covered with reproach for their evil treatment of the Lord's people.

We must await the Lord's judgement to see this, but it is certain, just as our deliverance is certain. Let us praise the Lord for all His good works on our behalf. At times we must bear the reproach of evil men. We will be "despitefully used" and abused by evil men, and our challenge is to continue to pray for their salvation, for while they live there is hope for their salvation. Matthew 5:43-48, John 16:8-11.

15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

We do not know the years of our life. Psalms 40:5,12, 139:17-18. None of us know how long we are to walk upon this earth, and we do not need to, for each and every day is to be treated by us as if it is our last. We are urged throughout the scripture to "number our days", and that means to value each day as a gift from God to be used for His glory and service. Deuteronomy 32:29, Psalms 90:12, Luke 12:16-21, 35-38, Ephesians 5:15-18. Refer to the BTB study TIME. As long as we live we are challenged to praise the Lord with all our strength.

David commits to this, so that even as he becomes more debilitated with his heart condition he will continue to praise the Lord with any strength he has each and every day. He recognises that it is only the strength of the Lord that enables him to go on through life. As we get older we become more struck by this fact, but it is so obvious! In the Lord alone is our strength; we have no strength to cope with the problems of this world in the strength of any other. As we get older let us praise the Lord more and more for what He has done, is doing and will do forever.

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and grey headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

It is good to remember that the Lord has taught us since the beginning of our walk with Him, and this is why we are so blessed by finding the Creator in the days of our youth. It is good to constantly remember the blessing of the Lord and praise His holy name every time we recall His goodness to us. God has worked wondrously for us, and He is worthy of our praise. Let us praise the name of God.

David now tells us in verse eighteen that he is old and grey headed. He is not old according to Western standards in the early 21st century, for he is only in his mid sixties, but his hard life since earliest days has worn him out and the cares of rulership since the age of thirty has taken its toll. Many are care worn by 60 and feel old by 50 because of the stressors of their life, and David is an encouragement to all who have had a hard road in this world.

David wants to die having used every last bit of life he has demonstrating the power of God over him. He wants his people to praise God because of David and what he has done and what he has stood for and illustrated. David's heart prayer is answered; both his petition and his desire. Refer back to the BTB study on PRAYER.

Even David's sin becomes a testimony of grace and mercy. 2 Samuel 22:2-51, 24:14, 24, 1 Kings 1:28-35, 2:1-4. David's desire is that his life might be a blessing to the people alive at the time, but also his testimony might be a blessing to all people who will follow after him. This prayer request was also granted, for he ensured that all his life's work was recorded and copied, so that even his sins could instruct those who followed him that they might not fail as he did. David's words keep on encouraging us through until today, and they will do so until time ends. His Psalms will be sung in the Millennial Temple.

19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

20 Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

Who is like unto the Lord? There is none like the Lord, for He alone is God above all. The holy and perfect majesty of the CHARACTER OF GOD is indeed the believer's "First Aid" in times of trouble. Isaiah 61:3. When we are depressed by pressure we are always to be advised to turn to the doctrine of the Character of God and simply read it through, point by point, for in these truths we can draw comfort from the strength of God.

When we place our problems against the truth of God's majesty we have the right place to go; the right place is always to go to our knees and cast all our cares upon the One who has the power to transform our present distress into rejoicing. When we see that the path we are to walk through this world may involve SUFFERING, but if it does it is within the plan and provisions of God for us. David can relax in his distress, for he sees that the Lord has led him into his path, and so the Lord will lead him through and out the other side of his difficulties with joy. Romans 15:13, James 1:2, 1 Peter 1:8, 4:13.

21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

David knows that the Lord will "increase his greatness", and bring comfort to him on every side. David is not seeking greatness for himself, but for the name of the Lord God who will be honoured and glorified by his words. Greatness amongst men is an illusion that is easily swept away by a change of circumstances, but greatness from the Lord through

spiritual blessing to others is a permanent joy to the believer, in time and in eternity. David praised the Lord in his songs and he prays that they may be sung forever, and they will be. David writes songs that will be sung in heaven itself. What a glorious answer to his prayers. Let us join him in praising the Lord our God.

23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

We are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord that was shed for us, and let the redeemed of the Lord say so! Psalms 107:2, 1 Peter 1:18. Let us lift our voices in praise to the Lord our Redeemer. All the day long our voice should readily praise the Lord and lift our voices to give thanks. The enemy is silenced by God, but we must not be silenced in our praise to the Lord for His goodness towards us.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Our lives are in the Lord's hands. Our fate rests within His Plan. We were bought with the price of the precious blood of Christ, and so we are the Lord's now, not our own people. God is personally responsible for our fate, our houses, our jobs, and our lives. We are to walk with Him in absolute obedience to His will and then we will be led into the paths that He intends for us. Let us praise Him for His care over us from the midst of our worst situations, for the Lord will bring us through with blessing.

2. We are all "works in progress"; we are all sinners who have found the grace, mercy and forgiveness of God. Let us praise the name of the Lord our God, for in Him alone do we have confidence and assurance. In the Lord alone is there cause for confidence and praise. Let us praise His Holy Name each and every day. Praise the Lord!

3. The hatred of the enemy's people is a good sign for a believer. Satan should have good reasons to hate us, for our service should be Holy Spirit empowered and destructive to Satan and all his works. Let us rejoice in the hatred of the right people towards us. Let us praise God for adversity and advance in the filling of the Holy Spirit along the path the Lord has ordained for us.

4. It is all right to appeal strongly to the Lord for help when we experience panic deep in our soul. The only sin in this is if we do not trust the Lord and come before Him and seek His help and deliverance. Let us draw comfort from David in his anguish and cast our cares upon the Lord, for He is indeed our strong tower and our fortress of strength. Let us praise the Lord all through our days.

DOCTRINES

GOD – GOD CARES FOR YOU

GOD – PLAN OF GOD.

SALVATION – REDEMPTION

PROMISES

CHRIST – ROCK: CHRIST AS THE ROCK

CHRISTIAN LIFE – REWARDS AND CROWNS

EVIL

SALVATION – SIN – MAN'S NEED FOR SALVATION.

TIME

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER.

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

PSALM 72

INTRODUCTION

This is the last in the collected "Psalms of David" and although it is headed as if it is a Psalm of Solomon, it is David's Psalm for his son, the then crown prince Solomon. It prophetically describes the glory and majesty of the king's reign, and as such it prophetically pictures the reign of the greater "Son of David", the Messiah Jesus. It is a hymn of praise, and also what is known as a "doxology"; the closing hymn for a service of worship. It is the doxology Psalm for this section of the psalms, and ends the Exodus Section, Book Two of the Psalms.

God gives David a glimpse of far more than his son's successful but fatally flawed reign. Solomon's reign will be great indeed, and Israel will never know more power and influence amongst the nations, nor hold more foreign territory than under Solomon's reign, but there is sin at its heart. It was the "Golden Age" for ancient Israel and they were famous as a nation throughout the Middle East. Fame however is fickle and enemies arose with malice and resentment towards them.

The riches of the kingdom were lusted after by Pharaoh of Egypt and the alliance by marriage with the Crown Princess of Egypt was in itself fatally flawed for Solomon. He will compromise his faith to try to create peace in his harem, but his love for foreign women will bring the rotting corpse of paganism into the very heart of the kingdom that was to be set up in godliness only. 1 Kings 11:1-13. The kingdom will be glorious, but it becomes an example of hypocrisy over time; an example of what not to do as a ruler of God's people.

David may begin this prayer-psalm for his son Solomon, but God takes him in the power of the Holy Spirit into the very Millennial Kingdom of David's "Greater Son"; the Lord Jesus Christ. Solomon's line will be extinguished as rulers by the death of Jeconiah (Also called Jehoiachin, and Coniah), the last of Solomon's corrupt line. Jeconiah himself will be chastised in prison in Babylon, be saved, and will end his days at the king's table there, but his sons will be rulers, not kings again. 2 Kings 24:8-16, 25:27-30, Jeremiah 22:24-28, Matthew 1:6-12.

Solomon's line will lead directly to Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of our Lord. As a son of Joseph the Lord Jesus could never have ruled over Israel as their king, for his line was denied that due to the repeated immorality from Solomon to Jeconiah. However, as a godly parent, and adopted father of the Lord, he set a good example to him as a child, for he was a noble and saved believer, as his ancestor Zorobabel had been. The Lord would be born by VIRGIN BIRTH through Mary, and she was of the line of David through Nathan, and so not under the ban upon the line of Jeconiah.

David sings for his son Solomon, but it is the ignored son Nathan who will carry the messianic hope of Israel, not the mighty king Solomon. It is through this hidden son of David that the Messiah comes, and through his humble origins he was protected from satanic attack for centuries and so the line survived and Mary was protected from the attention of the enemy's powerful servant (Herod the Great) by her anonymity and humble circumstances. God uses this technique throughout the ages, having his key servants "fly under the radar" of Satan.

Most self publicists are not powerful servants of the Lord, for the Lord seeks service that is effective and mostly private. Public attention to the Lord's work serves only for satanic targeting. God doesn't need publicity for He works through the Holy Spirit and the Lord will always draw the crowds He desires to be present in each and every situation. Remember the line of Nathan, and remember the significance for the safety of his line that he was able to be out of the lime light all through history until the Messiah was born. Even then He had a humble life until His first miracle in Cana of the Galilee. Luke 2:15-19, 39-40, 51-52.

PSALMS 72

1 Give the king thy judgements, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. 2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgement. 3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. 4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. 5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. 6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. 7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. 8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. 9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. 11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. 12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. 13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. 14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. 15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. 16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. 17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. 18 Blessed be the LORD

God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

REFLECTION

- 1 Give the king thy judgements, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.
2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgement.**

The Psalm has five stanzas; the first covers verses 1 – 4, and examines and sings the praises of the righteousness of the reign of the coming king. David's prayer for his son is that he might have the "judgements of God". This is a prayer for divine wisdom to govern in a just and fair way. David wants Solomon to receive the wisdom of God and the righteous judgement of God, so that unfairness does not unhinge the nation. It is the presence of unrighteousness that does the most to create a spirit of rebellion in any nation. David's prayer for his son is that he might serve the people, and the Lord from whom he has received them, in a spirit that carries the fruit of the Holy Spirit. David understands that one of the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT is righteousness. Refer to the BTB study.

When people see that justice is administered with the Character of God guiding the law giver, they then respond with thanks, praise, and worship. Solomon prays for this divine wisdom himself, after a service of sacrifice at Gibeon. 1 Kings 3:4-14. Solomon knew he needed this wisdom to balance his own natural tendency to stray sexually, but he sadly either ignored, or failed to follow through on the Lord's condition for receiving wisdom; that he might walk in OBEDIENCE to the words of God. 1 Kings 3:14, 28, 8:56-61.

- 3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.
4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.**

The godly purpose behind the exercise of power is the protection of the weak and the judgement of the evil. The role of the king was to minister justice in such a way as to make the cruel and heartless wicked men hesitate before they acted with malice, and make the poor and weak rejoice, knowing that they would be protected from evil. Their role was to minister righteousness in accordance with God's standard, not the hypocrisy of men.

The king was responsible for the poor of the land and his duty before God was to protect the widow and orphan, save the children from abuse, and break the oppressors in pieces, and end their tyranny. Refer to the BTB studies on POVERTY, WEALTH, WELFARE. The harshest words of the Lord Jesus were directed to those who abused and made merchandise of the weak and vulnerable. Matthew 18:1-11.

- 5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.
6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.
7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.**

Note the time line for the prayer; "as long as the sun and moon endure". It is a reminder to us that this universe is temporal and special, and both are categories of this creation alone. The Lord has a plan to eliminate all vestiges of time and space and bring in an eternal creation that is beyond them. We cannot even conceive of a non-temporal, non-spatial universe, for the New Creation is well beyond our present categories of thinking. 2 Peter 3:10-18, Revelation 21:1ff.

David looks far beyond Solomon to the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth in His MILLENNIAL KINGDOM. The reign of Solomon does not come anywhere near fulfilling David's prayer in these verses, but the Millennial Kingdom of the Messiah does. The sun and the moon will fail and be destroyed, but the Lord's plan for mankind will not fail, nor will saved mankind be destroyed; we have an eternal destiny and the Lord requests that we see and rejoice in it now. Present distress is assisted by future confidence and rejoicing in the reality that is yet to be seen.

- 8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.
9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.
10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.**

This is clearly no reference to Solomon, but to the only One who ever will rule the whole earth; the Lord Jesus after His return is the only One who will ever achieve this. The final triumph of the Lord will be total and His enemies will, "lick the dust", or as we say it today from the cowboy movies, "bite the dust" (die under judgement). From the Mediterranean Sea right around the world to the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf, the Lord will rule over all the earth. Refer again to this doctrine of the MILLENNIAL KINGDOM because in His kingdom we have the final fulfilment of all the prophetic truth in the scriptures.

No-one will forget who is king; even far flung desert places will honour Him in their prayers every day. The great "kings of Tarshish" (Rulers of the Western Europe) will bow and bring presents to the Lord as their king. The islands of the far flung oceans will honour Him. The kings from far into the Arabian Peninsula will bring gifts to acknowledge Him as their king. All the nations of the earth will bow before Him. Every knee will bow; there is no doubt about how this world will end. Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10.

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

The Lord is the One who will care for the weak, the vulnerable, the orphan and the poor, and no king amongst men has ever been as He will be for we do not have all the facts when we make judgements, and can get things wrong. All other rulers amongst men can be at times supporting crooked and evil people, and judging unworthy of assistance those who may be most deserving. We get it wrong, but the Lord will not.

The Lord sets out to save the soul and support the body of the needy. This must be always our emphasis also, even in today's fallen world. Unless a person is saved and secure in their eternal life the help we can give them in time is truly limited in its value. The Lord is not in the business of helping people be more comfortable on the path down hill to hell! Matthew 7:13-14. We need to have the love that the Lord had for the lost and the needy, but get the order for caring for people correct; first stabilise their spirit in the arms of Jesus, then help their soul and body. Refer again to the BTB study on WELFARE.

The Lord is in the redemption business; not just to redeem their bodies from violence and assault, but to redeem them eternally, so that their destiny is secure forever. Refer to the BTB study REDEMPTION. The bible teaches that we are precious in the sight of the Lord, and any blood we shed in His service is precious in His sight. Our death is precious in His sight, and we need to see that because we are covered by the blood of Jesus, we are precious in His sight. Psalms 68:20, 116:15, Jeremiah 15:1, 24:4-7, 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Many have died for their faith, many are dying for their faith, and many will die for their faith in the future, and all are precious in the Lord's sight, and in heaven will receive the Crown of Life from the Lord for whom they stood. We are all called to walk different paths, but whatever the path we are called to walk we need to know that the Lord is with us on that path, and we are precious in His sight.

The challenge for each and every one of us is to just stay on the path the Lord has called us to walk. The one truth to which we can all cling is the truth that the Lord will be praised forever, and our prayers will always be answered, and that means His Holy Name will be upheld by events when we see them all in eternity. For some of us there will be many things to check out and understand about our path and the path of some of our friends and family, but we will be with the One Who has the answers then.

We do not have the answers to some events today, but we are challenged to, by faith, affirm the righteousness of God in that event, even though we cannot see it now. Hebrews 11:1-3. The day will come when the Millennial Kingdom dawns, and then the Lord Jesus will receive all the glory He has deserved from the beginning, and all prayers will be offered to Him, and thanks offerings of prayer will be continually offered for Him around the world.

16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

The last days of the Great Tribulation Period, before the Lord's Second Advent, will be terrible indeed, and there will be few survivors; just a "handful of corn" upon the tops of mountains. Only the most inhospitable areas of the earth will be sanctuaries for the surviving believers upon the earth, but there will be survivors. The destruction of the earth through that period, as described in Revelation is so staggeringly awful that few could be expected to survive, and yet many groups of believers in all nations will survive under the Lord's special care and protection.

The children of those survivors will become mighty peoples, like the great forests of Lebanon of the psalmist's day. The crowds of these people will sway and ripple like the great forests. It is a lovely and lush image of a vast crowd as it moves like the trees of a great forest in a gentle wind. This is an image of prosperity and peace, and that is exactly what the Millennial Kingdom will be; a time of prosperity and peace like no other upon the earth.

The entire focus of satanic hatred is to extinguish the name of the Lord Jesus, but he is unable to do this, even though he pours all his malice into the Great Tribulation period. The believers survive world wide, and the nation Israel survives, and one third of them become believers, and they are delivered by the Lord's return. Zechariah 12:10-14, 13:8-9, 14:1-7. The days of the end of the assaults of Satan upon mankind are terrible, but he is not successful. The name of the Lord survives, His name is honoured, He is glorified, and Satan is judged in an instant, with all who served him. Isaiah 29:5-6, Zechariah 14:12-13, Revelation 19:11 - 20:6. All nations call Him "blessed". Zechariah 14:14-21.

18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

God is incapable of doing anything other than things that we will "wonder at". The Character of God is stable and secure, and He only does wondrous things that bring eternal glory to His Holy Name. We can be assured and have our faith

strengthened as we affirm this truth in the midst of the doubts that can come when we cannot see the whole picture from this side of eternity. David sings with certainty that the glory of the Lord will be seen in all that God has done throughout history, and that the end of history will be a time of glory and praise and honour to the Lord for all He has done and is.

The whole earth will be filled with His glory. The repetition of the word "Amen" emphasises the faith aspect of this prayer affirmation. David is calling aloud the reality of the truth of God's final triumph over all His foes; he is standing by faith upon the secure prophetic promises of the Word of God. He is calling these things realities by faith, and there is no doubt in his mind, for they will be seen to come to pass in later days. Let us stand with David and call the things that are yet to be as if they already are, for everything in the Plan of God is secure and settled. Refer again to the BTB study on FAITH.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. When Solomon walked in the power and under the direction of the Holy Spirit he did and said wonderful things. He produces the greatest leadership manual from the ancient world, the book of Proverbs, and the greatest poem on the shortcomings of all men without God. He does and says wonderful things, but he fails to follow through 100% on the moral life he was called to live and he fills his days with sexual pleasure and it turns his head away from what he has been called to do as the king of God's people. Distraction is the temptation of Solomon. He gets distracted by personal pleasure from the path of divine and national service. Let us examine our own lives and ensure that we are not distracted for the Lord's path by personal and self centred pleasures.

2. Fly under the radar. As a servant of the Lord the only publicity that should ever be "obtained" for your ministry, (if it is bone fide), is the publicity that the Lord provides free of charge by means of events that occur. I would argue strongly that "ministries" that seek to self publicise are either false or led by CARNAL believers. Refer to the BTB study SATAN'S COUNTERFEITS. To seek publicity is to play with the devil, and draw his servant's attention to the Lord's work so that they concentrate their attacks upon its destruction. The Lord kept His plan under cover until it was launched at Cana, and that is our example.

David sang of Solomon as the great king, and yet this was in fact the Lord's wonderful deception for the enemy, who then concentrated attacks upon Solomon and his line. The true line that would lead to the Messiah was therefore protected. Solomon had a weakness and it was opened up by enemy temptation, and he and the kingdom fell with great loss of life and wealth, but the line of Nathan quietly moved ahead undetected to their date with destiny in the person and work of Mary.

3. We are each called to walk a path that differs from the next person. We must be sure we are on the Lord's path for us, but once we are sure of that, we need to devote ourselves to obediently walking that path. That means accepting the Lord's deliverance from trouble, or His presence through the trouble, even unto death. We are precious in the Lord's sight, each and every one of us, but for some it is only in heaven itself that they will know fully how precious they were. SUFFERING is a major subject for each and every believer to come to terms with, for even the precious ones must accept at times some suffering, and for some that is to the shedding of their blood. Let us teach this truth with honest confrontation towards the hard issues involved here for some.

4. Some of the "tragic deaths" that we observe here on earth are not going to be understood until we see the Lord face to face, and with complete hindsight we are then able to see and know the truth. Let us express confidence in the CHARACTER OF GOD as we face things that we cannot get our thinking clear on this side of eternity. There will be no tragedies as seen from heaven; only events that were too complex for us to comprehend from this side of eternity. Let us thank God for the deaths that we face that are presently inexplicable, and express our present confidence that in heaven we will know the truth and it will fully "set us free" from any doubts about God's Character or Plan. John 8:32-36.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OBEDIENCE.

POVERTY

WEALTH

WELFARE.

KINGDOM – MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.

SALVATION – REDEMPTION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH

ANGELS – COUNTERFEITS OF SATAN

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD

GOD – PLAN OF GOD