

PSALMS

Book Two

CHAPTERS 51 - 100

by

Brian J. Bailey, Ph.D., D.D.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to extend our thanks to all the following:

To Mary Humphreys—for her excellent assistance in the editing of the grammar of this book.

To Daneil J. Caram—for his diligent efforts in typing out the original manuscript of this book.

To Suzette Erb and Tarah Derrick —for their superb “final touches” in the proofreading of this book.

To Mercy Alarid—for her beautiful drawing of the front cover.

To Pastor Joseph Cilluffo—for his vivid colorization of the front cover.

PREFACE

The Psalms have been called the hymnal of Israel and of the Church. In times of revival, the Holy Spirit has inspired God's people to set the Psalms to music, greatly aiding the devotional and spiritual lives of believers everywhere. Flowing through the Psalms is a strong, creative spirit of prophecy. They produce love, joy, hope, and trust within the hearts of those who meditate upon them and sing them.

When I have faced seemingly impossible situations, I have found that a psalm set to music has often sprung up within my heart. One such time was on the occasion of the funeral of my own dear wife. The verses of Psalm 30:10-11 bubbled up from deep within my heart, and all mourning and sadness literally disappeared. I was filled with unspeakable joy and happiness.

The Psalms are basically devotional in character, dealing with the emotional life of the believer—his fears, sufferings, distresses, persecutions, joys and hopes. Their purpose is to develop a deep sense of trust and confidence in a loving Heavenly Father who hears and cares when we pray to Him in our

Psalms 51-100

afflictions. The Psalms portray a God who delivers His people from the storms of life by bringing them to their desired haven, and giving them an expected end.

The Psalms cause us to realize that the Lord uses these distresses to enlarge us, to teach us His ways, and to bring us into fellowship with our Heavenly Father and His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Psalms bring comfort, consolation, and courage to the weary pilgrim along life's journey from earth to heaven.

Brian J. Bailey

INTRODUCTION

The Lord Jesus divided the Old Testament into three sections: the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Lk.24:44). The Jews have divided the Psalms into five sections, corresponding to the five books of Moses.

- 1.) Psalm 1-41 Genesis
- 2.) Psalm 42-72 Exodus
- 3.) Psalm 73-89 Leviticus
- 4.) Psalm 90-106 Numbers
- 5.) Psalm 107-150 Deuteronomy

Psalms 51-100

The word *psalm* comes from the Greek word *Psalmoi* used by the translators of the Septuagint Old Testament. This Greek word corresponds to the Hebrew word *Mizmoi*—meaning an ode or song whose singing is accompanied by an instrument.

The Psalms fall into two principal categories:

- 1.) *Didactic* - meaning teaching
- 2.) *Lyrical* - meaning poetical

Hebrew poetry cultivated the recurrence of a thought, which is called parallelism. The Jews had a tendency to say everything twice. The second form of expression is a repetition, an amplification, or explanation of the first. Almost all the verses of the Psalms have a division in the middle. The second half of the verse repeats or amplifies the first half.

Many of the Psalms are Messianic, meaning that they prophesied or foreshadowed the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus. The Lord Himself testified in Luke 24:44, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law

Psalms 51-100

of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the *psalms*, concerning me.” Everything that was prophesied of the Lord in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to be fulfilled.

The New Testament writers quoted from the Psalms more than any other Old Testament book, except the book of Isaiah.

The majority of the Psalms were written during three specific periods in the history of Israel:

- 1.) During the time of David
- 2.) During the reign of Hezekiah
- 3.) During and after the Babylonian captivity

* One or two Psalms were written earlier and possibly a few later.

Each Psalm is best understood and interpreted by a careful examination and study of that particular Psalm. Occasionally, however, it is necessary to look at the historical circumstances through which the Psalms were birthed by the Holy Spirit in the life of the author who penned them.

Psalms 51-100

We trust that this little book will be a personal blessing to you. We have recommended to our students throughout the world that they read five psalms a day. This has proven to be of great benefit to their devotional life as well as their prophetic flow.

SUMMARY OF PSALMS 51-100

We have provided a brief summary of Psalms 51-100. A key verse or key thought from each psalm is given to help summarize the overall tenor of the Psalms.

Psalm 51 - David acknowledges his sins after committing adultery with Bathsheba and ordering the death of her husband. He cries out to God for a clean heart and a renewal of the joy of his salvation.

Psalm 52 - The boasting tongue shall be destroyed, coming to a sudden end. David, in contrast, likens himself to a green olive tree in the house of the Lord.

Psalm 53 - The fool said, "There is no God." None understand or seek God; but when God brings back the captivity of His people there shall be rejoicing.

Psalm 54 - The Lord is with those who uphold the soul of the righteous.

Psalm 55 - David's guide and friend has risen up against him; so he prays that this enemy will go down quickly into hell.

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 56 - The wicked wrest the words of King David, but David's tears are in the Lord's bottle. God will deliver his feet from falling.

Psalm 57 - What a note of confidence by David—"I will cry unto God that performeth all things for me."

Psalm 58 - The psalmist prays for the melting away of the wicked—"so that a man may know that there is a reward for the righteous."

Psalm 59 - In this psalm, David prays that God will avenge him of his enemies. However, he asks the Lord to scatter them and bring them down rather than to destroy them, so that His people will not forget His judgments upon the wicked.

Psalm 60 - God gives a banner to them that fear Him. Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim are His, but Judah is His lawgiver.

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 61 - "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Abiding in the tabernacle under the shelter of God's wings, David prays that his years shall be prolonged and that mercy and truth will preserve him.

Psalm 62 - David waits upon God. His expectation is from God, for power belongs to Him.

Psalm 63 - David longs to see the power and glory of God in a dry and thirsty land as he has seen Him in the sanctuary. His soul follows hard after God.

Psalm 64 - Those who search out iniquities—their own words shall fall upon them.

Psalm 65 - Blessed is the man whom God chooses, and causes to approach unto Him, that he may dwell in the courts of the Lord. And God will crown the year with His goodness!

Psalm 66 - The psalmist speaks of the ways of God—trying us, laying affliction upon our loins, but eventually bringing us out into a wealthy place.

Psalm 67 - God shall judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon the earth.

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 68 - Speaking of the last days, “The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.”

Psalm 69 - This psalm foreshadows the crucifixion, showing the cause of Christ’s death in the phrase, “reproach hath broken my heart.”

Psalm 70 - A cry to the Lord to make haste and bring deliverance.

Psalm 71 - This is a plea that the psalmist be not forsaken in his old age, so that he might show to this generation the strength and power of God.

Psalm 72 - A psalm for Solomon—that in his days righteousness shall flourish and there shall be an abundance of peace. This will be fulfilled in the reign of King David’s greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 73 - The end of the wicked and the righteous is contrasted. After looking at the prosperity of the wicked, the psalmist went into the sanctuary of God and saw their end. He then understood and declared that the Lord would be his guide, and that after his death, He would receive him into glory.

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 74 - This psalm, written in the time of the Chaldean invasion, speaks of the distress of the people without synagogues, temple, or prophet. The psalmist pleads with God to have respect toward His covenant.

Psalm 75 - Concerning promotion—God is the Judge. He puts down one and lifts up another.

Psalm 76 - The divisions of Israel are clearly enunciated:

In Judah God is known.

In Israel His name is great.

In Salem, Jerusalem, is the Tabernacle of God.

In Zion is the dwelling place of God.

Psalm 77 - In sickness, the psalmist remembers the former works of God in the history of the children of Israel (v. 11).

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 78 - This psalm deals with the history of Israel. It records the time when Ephraim turned back in the day of battle and was consequently rejected by God. Instead, the Lord chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which He loved. In particular, God chose David, a shepherd-king who fed the people of Israel with integrity of heart.

Psalm 79 - This is a psalm of the Babylonian destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, when Israel pleads, "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; preserve thou those that are appointed to die."

Psalm 80 - This psalm is an allegory of Israel as the vine of God's planting, with its hedges broken down. All who pass by do pluck her. The boar out of the wood wastes it, and the wild beast of the field devours it. "Turn us," prays the psalmist, "and we will be turned."

Psalm 81 - If Israel had submitted unto the Lord, they would have been fed with the finest of the wheat.

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 82 - This psalm was quoted by the Lord in John 10:35, where He said, “[God] called them gods, unto whom the word of God came...”

Psalm 83 - This psalm is a prayer for God to destroy those who fight against His hidden ones.

Psalm 84 - The psalmist speaks of the greatness of the Tabernacle of God and expresses the thought that a day in His courts is far better than a thousand spent anywhere else.

Psalm 85 - This is a prayer for the bringing back of the captivity of Jacob. The psalmist prays for revival and that the land may yield her increase and contain righteousness, truth, and mercy.

Psalm 86 - The psalmist extols the mercies of God, for He has not suffered his soul to go down to the grave. He prays for a heart that is united to fear His name.

Psalm 87 - God loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob, and He makes an eternal record of those who are born spiritually into the vision of heavenly Mount Zion.

Psalm 88 - This psalm tells of the psalmist who has been brought close to the gates of death because of the fierce wrath of God upon him.

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 89 - This psalm deals with the mercy and faithfulness of God to King David—the firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. However, the psalm continues by saying that the Lord has cast off and broken the covenant by shortening the days of his youth (presumably speaking of Christ, King David's greater Son).

Psalm 90 - A prayer of the prophet Moses on the shortness of life—that we might number our days and apply our hearts to wisdom.

Psalm 91 - The psalmist speaks of the blessings of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. This psalm was quoted by Satan in his temptation of Christ (Mt. 4:6).

Psalm 92 - The wicked flourish so that they may be destroyed forever, but the righteous flourish as the palm tree and bring forth fruit in old age.

Psalm 93 - The sureness of the Lord's reign is pointed out, as well as the fact that holiness becometh His house.

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 94 - The purpose of the Lord's chastening and teaching from His law is to give us rest from the days of adversity until the pit is dug for the wicked.

Psalm 95 - "Today if ye will hear His voice harden not your heart." This was quoted in Hebrews 3:7-8 as a warning not to miss the rest of God.

Psalm 96 - Strength and beauty are in the Lord's sanctuary. The Lord is coming to judge the earth in righteousness and truth.

Psalm 97 - Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart.

Psalm 98 - Here is the commandment to make a joyful noise before the Lord because He comes to judge the earth with equity.

Psalm 99 - The emphasis here is on the fact that the Lord is holy. Moses and Aaron were among his priests, and Samuel was among them that call upon His name. They called and the Lord answered.

Psalm 100 - Entering into His gates with thanksgiving precedes "coming into his courts with praise." Thankfulness is the prerequisite for praise.

CONDENSED OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

Because some Psalms were written at different epochs in the history of the children of Israel, the following outline is provided to aid you as a quick and ready reference to events mentioned in individual Psalms.

- The Descent into Egypt under Joseph
- The Period of 400 years in Egyptian Exile
- The Exodus under Moses
- The Wilderness Journey
- The Entry into the Land of Promise under Joshua
- The Period of the Judges until Samuel
- The United Kingdom Under Saul
- David persecuted by Saul
- David Ascends the Throne at the Death of Saul
- The Reign of Solomon
- The Divided Kingdom comprising the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah
- The Assyrian Invasion
- The Babylonian Captivity
- The Restoration Era
- The Birth, Ministry and Death of Christ
- The Church Age
- The Millennial Reign of Christ for 1000 years
- The New Heavens and the New Earth

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE LIFE OF DAVID

About seventy-three Psalms are directly attributed to David. Because they were written at crucial times during his life, an understanding of David's life helps us to appreciate more fully the spiritual implications of those psalms.

A. EARLY LIFE OF DAVID

1. Birth at Bethlehem - 1 Samuel 17:12
2. Son of Jesse - Ruth 4:17, 22
3. Genealogy - 1 Chronicles 2:3-15
4. Member of the tribe of Judah - 1 Chronicles 28:4
5. Youngest son of Jesse - 1 Samuel 16:10-13
6. Handsome lad - 1 Samuel 17:42
7. Shepherd - 1 Samuel 16:11
8. His strength - 1 Samuel 17:34-36
9. God's chosen - 1 Samuel 16:1, 13

B. HIS LIFE UNDER KING SAUL

1. Royal harpist - 1 Samuel 16:14-23
2. Armorbearer - 1 Samuel 16:21
3. Giant killer - 1 Samuel 17:4-49
4. Conqueror of Philistines - 1 Samuel 17:32-54
5. Jonathan's friend - 1 Samuel 18:1-4
6. Wise behavior - 1 Samuel 18:5-30
7. Psalm writer - Psalm 59 (Title)

C. THE FUGITIVE HERO

1. Flees from Saul – 1 Samuel 19:1-18
2. Takes refuge with Samuel - 1 Samuel 19:20-24
3. Makes covenant with Jonathan - 1 Samuel 20:1-42
4. Eats shewbread - Matthew 12:3-4
5. Feigns insanity in Gath - 1 Samuel 21:10-15
6. Dwells in cave - 1 Samuel 22:1-8
7. Saves Keilah - 1 Samuel 23:1-13
8. Experiences God's deliverance - 1 Samuel 23:14-15
9. His second covenant with Jonathan - 1 Samuel 23:16-18
10. Is betrayed but saved – 1 Samuel 23:19-29
11. Writes a Psalm – Psalm 54 (Title)
12. Spares Saul's life – 1 Samuel 24:1-22
13. Is scorned by Nabal – 1 Samuel 25:1-38
14. Marries Nabal's widow – 1 Samuel 25:39-42
15. Again spares Saul's life – 1 Samuel 26:1-25
16. Dwells in Ziklag – 1 Samuel 27:5-7
17. Rejected by Philistines – 1 Samuel 29:1-11
18. Smites the Amalekites – 1 Samuel 30:1-31
19. Kills Saul's murderer – 2 Samuel 1:1-16
20. Laments Saul's death – 2 Samuel 1:17-27

D. KING OVER JUDAH

1. Anointing at Hebron – 2 Samuel 2:1-4, 11
2. List of supporters – 1 Chronicles 12:23-40
3. Long war with Saul's house – 2 Samuel 3:1
4. Abner's covenant with David – 2 Samuel 3:6-21
5. Mourning of Abner's death – 2 Samuel 3:28-29
6. Punishment of Ishbosheth's murderers - 2 Samuel 4:1-12

E. KING OVER ALL ISRAEL

1. Is recognized as king – 2 Samuel 5:1-5
2. Takes Zion from the Jebusites – 2 Samuel 5:6-10
3. Builds a house – 2 Samuel 5:11
4. Strengthens the kingdom – 2 Samuel 5:11-16
5. Strikes down the Philistines – 2 Samuel 5:17-25
6. Escorts the ark to Jerusalem – 2 Samuel 6:1-16
7. Organizes worship – 1 Chronicles 15:1-29
8. Organizes musicians – 1 Chronicles 25:1-31
9. Blesses the people – 2 Samuel 6:17-19
10. Is upbraided by Michal – 2 Samuel 6:20-23
11. Receives an eternal covenant – 2 Samuel 7:1-29
12. Subdues many nations – 2 Samuel 8:1-18; 10:1-19
13. Commits adultery – 2 Samuel 11:1-27
14. Is rebuked by Nathan – 2 Samuel 12:1-14
15. Repents – Psalm 32:1-11; Psalm 51:1-19
16. Experiences subsequent afflictions - 2 Samuel 12:15-23
17. Has family strife – 2 Samuel 13:1-39
18. Is betrayed by Absalom – 2 Samuel 15:1-31
19. Flees from Jerusalem – 2 Samuel 15:13-37
20. Mourns Absalom's death – 2 Samuel 19:1-10
21. Returns to Jerusalem – 2 Samuel 19:15-43
22. Learns of Sheba's conspiracy - 2 Samuel 20:1-26
23. Atones for Saul's crime - 2 Samuel 21:1-14
24. Has further conflicts - 2 Samuel 21:15-22
25. Sings song of deliverance - 2 Samuel 22:1-51
26. Says his last words - 2 Samuel 23:1-7
27. His mighty men listed - 2 Samuel 23:8-39
28. Sins by numbering the people - 2 Samuel 24:1-17
29. Buys Araunah's threshing floor - 2 Samuel 24:18-25
30. Secures Solomon's succession - 1 Kings 1:5-53
31. Gives a dying charge to Solomon - 1 Kings 2:1-11
32. Reigns forty years - 1 Kings 2:11

F. SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DAVID'S LIFE

1. Prophet – Acts 2:29-30
2. Musician – 2 Samuel 23:1
3. Inspired man – Matthew 22:43
4. Type of Christ – Jeremiah 23:5-6
5. Name of David designates Christ – Ezekiel 34:23-24
6. Christ, the son of David – Matthew 1:1
7. “Kingdom of David” – Mark 11:10
8. “Throne of David” – Luke 1:32
9. “Tabernacle of David” – Acts 15:16
10. “Key of David” – Isaiah 22:22
11. Faith – Hebrews 11:32-33
12. Covenant of David – 2 Samuel 7:4-17 (or the sure mercies of David - Isa. 55:3)

PSALM 51

According to the superscription and all commentators of note, this psalm is the outpouring of David's heart when he was confronted by Nathan the prophet. It displays David's penitential nature. It is perhaps the pivotal time of his life when, like Saul before him, he sought to refute the judgment of God through the lips of His messenger. This anointed prophet, priest, and king, who had erred so grievously, turned once again to his harp to bring himself back into the presence of God.

It is, therefore, a lesson of primordial importance for us all. In times of monumental decisions, let us turn with all of our hearts to our Creator. In the Lord's great love and mercy, He will bring us into

Psalms 51-100

communion and union with Himself to fulfill His onward purposes for our lives, as He did for David. This psalm can be divided into two distinct sections: verses 1-12 are the confessions and pleas of David, the guilty one, and verses 13-19 anticipate David's demeanor after pardon and restoration.

*To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David,
When Nathan the prophet came unto him,
after he had gone in to Bathsheba.*

51:1-5 - *“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* David's sin was great, but his repentant heart enabled God to restore him. These verses show the progressive steps of true repentance.

Five Steps To True Repentance

1. First, David appeals to God's mercy to blot out (or remove) his sin.
2. Then he desires to be thoroughly washed from his iniquity. David displays a willingness and desire to forsake his sin, which very few who have sinned are willing to do.
3. David gives a clear-cut acknowledgment of his sin.
4. David acknowledges that sin is primarily an act against God. Therefore, God is just when He judges us.
5. David acknowledges that sin sprang from his fallen nature. It is natural for mankind to sin, because we produce the fruit of our fallen nature, which is sin. King David was not seeking to excuse his actions; he was merely acknowledging that the root of the problem was his fallen nature.

51:6 - *“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”* Now David turns his thoughts toward truth and wisdom, which are the two things that God desires to plant within us. Christ, the Word of God, is the very embodiment of truth. John 1:14 tells us that Christ is “the Word made flesh.”

Psalms 51-100

The Lord's desire for each one of us is not only that we might know the Scriptures and have a mental grasp of truth, but that the truths of God's Word might be written upon the fleshly tables of our heart. God wants truth actually to become a part of us.

In addition to this, He wants us to have wisdom in our inward parts so that we not only possess wisdom, but that we become *wise* people. Wisdom, which is to be desired above all the treasures of this world, can be defined as the ability to make right choices. Indeed, wisdom is a way of life.

51:7 - *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."* David expresses his desire to be purged from all filthiness. May we refer our readers to a similar thought expressed by the prophet Isaiah: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).

The ability of Christ to cleanse us from our sins may be likened to the process of cleaning a dirty cup. If the cup is placed into soapy water and scrubbed until it becomes clean, then the cup becomes like

Psalms 51-100

new again. So it is when the Lord washes us from all our defilement. Nothing of the past remains. Praise His wonderful name!

51:8 - *“Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.”* David’s confidence in the redeeming, restorative work of the Lord is so great that he anticipates that he will again rejoice. David had been broken by the Lord. Rebellious sheep must have their legs broken by the shepherd in order to keep them close to him. This treatment causes them to limp forever, but the important thing is that they will not stray from the shepherd again.

51:9 - *“Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.”* David further pleads that the Lord will no longer remember or regard his iniquities. “Wipe my slate clean” would be an appropriate translation. That is exactly what God did for David. The Lord forgave David and blotted out his sins.

51:10 - *“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”* This is one of the most devout prayers of the pious saint of God—“Create in me a clean heart.” This is a New Testament promise as enunciated in both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and recorded in Hebrews 10:16-17.

Psalms 51-100

The natural human heart is despicably wicked. “Who can know it?” asks the prophet in Jeremiah 17:9. Therefore, we need to ask God to give us a new heart (Ezek. 36:26).

51:11 - *“Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.”* One of the most terrible features of hell is the remorse that one senses because of being eternally separated from God, with the light and illumination of the Holy Spirit gone from one’s life. Because of the enormity of his sin, this was what King David feared the most. David had seen the end of King Saul, who had sinned and disobeyed the Lord. 1 Samuel 28:6 records of Saul, “He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets” (NIV). David pleaded with the Lord not to let him have the same fate as Saul.

51:12 - *“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and up-hold me with thy free spirit.”* David appeals to the Lord to renew the joy that Jesus alone can give. Because of his sin, David had lost the joy of the Lord. Therefore, he asks that he might experience again the bubbling well of joy within—that well within each of our spirits that sustains and strengthens us throughout life’s journey.

Psalms 51-100

51:13 - *“Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.”* With this anticipated restoration, David will again become the prophet and teacher of righteousness for Israel (and for the Church throughout all generations). The words of David have been echoed down through the ages, even to us in our days.

51:14 - *“Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.”* David is remembering that he was responsible for the innocent blood of Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband, and for the deaths of many in the ensuing civil war. Many people died because of David’s sin. David cries out to the Lord to deliver him from this terrible guilt.

It is truly amazing that the men of Israel who took up the offense of Absalom suffered enormous casualties because of their alignment with the usurper. Let us heed this warning that we never, for any reason, attack the Lord’s anointed.

51:15 - *“O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.”* This interesting phrase can perhaps be understood best from Romans 3:19, where Paul states that because of their guilt the

Psalms 51-100

wicked will be silent at the judgment seat. However, in Romans 5:11, Paul continues by saying that those who are justified by faith in Jesus will rejoice in God.

Therefore, with very happy anticipation, David looks forward to his restoration by the Lord into God's presence, whereby he can rejoice with all the saints again, having been freely justified by God from all his sins.

51:16 - *“For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.”* As has been so often stated in this psalm, as well as in the prophets and in the New Testament, God does not require animal sacrifices as pre-scribed in the Old Testament. Instead, He delights in the sacrifices of a broken and a contrite heart.

51:17-19 - *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.”*

Psalms 51-100

A broken spirit comes as we have godly sorrow for our sin and we repent of our wicked ways. We must be truly sorry for our sinful ways. The sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart are acceptable to the Lord.

As New Testament priests, let us offer these sacrifices continually unto the Lord, with the praises of God flowing forth from hearts that have been forgiven of their sins.

PSALM 52

This psalm was composed after Doeg the Edomite betrayed David to Saul (see 1 Sam 22:1-23). The psalm can be divided into two distinct portions. The first section (v. 1-5), deals with the divine indictment of the tongue of the wicked, while the second section (v. 6-9) speaks of the rejoicing of the righteous David over Doeg and Saul.

Psalms 51-100

*To the chief Musician, Maschil, A Psalm of David,
When Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him,
David is come to the house of Ahimelech.*

52:1 - *“Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.”* Certainly, Doeg had attained great preeminence in the court of Saul. Doeg was given to boasting of his lofty position. Because of his position, he must have been close to Saul and would have abetted the evil of the king. Therefore, David reminds Doeg, Saul, and all the wicked that God’s kingdom abides forever, and that their time is limited.

52:2-3 - *“Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.”* The wicked man devises evil plans against the righteous. The wicked is the very antithesis of the upright man, “who loves righteousness, and hates wickedness” (Psa. 45:7).

52:4-5 - *“Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.”* Doeg sought to destroy others, and especially David, through devouring words

Psalms 51-100

and accusations, which culminated in diabolical plots. Because of this, God would, in turn, remove him from the land of the living before his appointed time.

It is noteworthy that the righteous are very often privileged to see or hear of the demise of their enemies. Mordecai was exalted, while his enemy Haman was hanged. David met the executioner of Saul, and even Judas committed suicide before the crucifixion of Jesus. We should be patient in well doing, for in due time God will reward us and avenge us of our enemies.

52:6-7 - *“The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.”* David declares that the righteous will rejoice when they see God’s judgment upon their enemies. Doeg, apparently a very wealthy man, did not put his confidence in God, but rather in his riches and his innate cunningness to bring to pass his cruel desires.

52:8 - *“But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.”* David, on the other hand, rejoices in the fact that he is planted in the house of the Lord, and is like a green olive tree, typifying that he was at peace with God and himself. How satisfying it is to live

Psalms 51-100

a godly life and then receive the continual flow of God's mercy. (See Psalm 23:6 where David assures us that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives.)

52:9 - *"I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints."* We should praise God not only because He deals with our enemies, but more importantly, because He establishes those who trust in Him. We should meditate upon Psalm 52 when we are beset with foes. It will encourage us to believe for ultimate victory as we put our trust completely in our blessed Lord.

PSALM 53

Psalm 53 is an amplification of Psalm 14 concerning the plight of those who forget God. It is not a mere repetition. Psalm 14 portrays the foolish in their youth, while Psalm 53 portrays their fate in later years.

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath, Maschil, A Psalm of David.

53:1 - *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.”* In hell, one of the most horrible dwelling places of the damned is reserved for those who have denied the existence of God. During their lifetime, they have

Psalms 51-100

followed the downward path enunciated in Romans 1:21-32, and then have been given up by God to a reprobate mind.

53:2-4 - *“God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.”* Scripture consistently speaks of two seeds: the sons of God and the children of the wicked one. This may be seen in the days of Noah, when the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair and intermarried with them (Gen. 6:2).

Another illustration is the Parable of the Tares, wherein the Lord identified the tares as the children of the wicked one (Mt. 13:24-30). Furthermore, Jesus stated that the scribes and Pharisees were of their father, the devil (Jn. 8:44). The seed of the righteous is devoured by the wicked, because the wicked do not include God in their decisions.

53:5-6 - *“There were they in great fear, where no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them. Oh*

Psalms 51-100

that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.” Now God arises in judgment, and fear and terror comes upon the wicked, whereas before they had been confidently at ease. God will slay and scatter the bones of those that encamp against the righteous. The cry of God’s people should ever be that the Lord would release them from their captivity and the oppression of the enemy, in whatever form it may be.

In verse 6, there is a sense of a final deliverance as God’s people wait for Him to reveal His salvation out of Zion, His dwelling place. In due time—at Christ’s Second Coming—God will deliver His people, causing them to rejoice greatly. However, there are present-day deliverances for which we must believe. Be encouraged, beloved, that as sure as is the final triumph of the righteous over the wicked at the Second Coming, so sure is your personal victory through Christ over your present enemies.

PSALM 54

Composed at the time when David was betrayed by the men of Ziph (1 Sam. 23:14-26), Psalm 54 is David's prayer to the Lord to save him from the wicked. David had sought refuge in their wilderness territory after fleeing from the men of Keilah, who likewise had determined to hand David over to the pursuing King Saul, when he was bent on taking David's life.

Psalms 51-100

***To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil,
A Psalm of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul,
Doth not David hide himself with us?***

54:1-3 - *“Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.”*

David was in dire distress, being pursued again by Saul. According to the account in 1 Samuel 23:26, David was surrounded by Saul’s army. All of this happened because the Ziphims decided to hand David over to Saul. These strangers betrayed David, thinking that they would be recompensed by Saul for their evil doings. The word “stranger” has also been translated “proud.” David cries out to God to save him.

54:4 - *“Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.”* With assurance, David declares that God is his helper, and that He is with those who pray continually for his soul. What a comfort this verse is when it is quickened to us by the blessed Holy Spirit during times in our life when we seem to be without hope and oppressed by our enemies. God is with us!

Psalms 51-100

54:5 - *“He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.”* God will not only deliver us, but also destroy those who have risen up against us. According to the circumstances, the phrase *“cut them off in thy truth”* could mean that they will be eternally separated from God. Certainly, it means that we will not see our enemies any more.

54:6-7 - *“I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good. For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.”* Let us praise the Lord with a heart filled with thanksgiving for His salvation, and as we do, we will see God’s righteous judgments come upon our enemies, as did David. And we will be lifted up out of the troubles that weigh us down. Praise the Lord’s wonderful name forever!

PSALM 55

Written at the time of Absalom's rebellion, Psalm 55 centers around Ahithophel's betrayal of David. Ahithophel, David's friend and counselor, was the grandfather of Bathsheba. Therefore, he took David's seduction of Bathsheba and consequent murder of her husband very personally. Ahithophel joined with Absalom against David, but perished by his own hand when he saw that Absalom had rejected his good counsel.

Psalms 51-100

There are lessons here for us all. We should never take up the offense of another. Although someone might have a legitimate complaint, we should seek the Lord to receive His mind concerning every situation. In so doing, we will always be on the winning side—God's side.

This psalm can be divided into four main divisions:

1. David pleads his cause before God (55:1-8).
2. David portrays the destruction of his enemies; in particular, that of Ahithophel (55:9-15).
3. David turns to prayer and faith for comfort (55:16-19).
4. David returns to the theme of the overthrow of the wicked and the ultimate triumph for the righteous (55:20-23).

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David.

Part 1 - David pleads his cause before God (55:1-8)

55:1-4 - *“Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise; Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.*

Psalms 51-100

My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.” David begins this psalm by asking God to hear his prayers. In any given situation, it is very important that there is an open channel of communication between us and the Lord, with no hindrances between us and our Savior. Before David ever could have prayed this, there had to be the step of repentance enunciated in Psalm 51, since this psalm and the circumstances surrounding it were the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba.

The enemy was causing David, in his flight from Absalom, not only physical concern, but much emotional stress. This is often the effect of intense spiritual pressures. They can affect us physically, especially in our minds and hearts, and even in our stomachs at times.

55:5-8 - *“Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.”*

Psalms 51-100

An added affliction is the horror produced by the spiritual darkness that comes when our enemies are aligned against us, actively seeking our destruction. Because of all these distresses, David cried out like the prophet Jeremiah: “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD” (Jer. 9:1-3).

David wished that he could just fly away to the abode of the doves in the wilderness, and there find rest for his soul. Yet as all true saints know, we are not called to flee the tempest, but rather to allow the storms of life to lift us up to a higher place in God.

Many years ago I was in a similar situation. I desperately wanted to leave the church that I was pastoring. One night the Lord gave me a vision of a gathering storm coming down a valley. I watched as the sparrows and other little birds sought for shelter. However, further down the valley upon a high

Psalms 51-100

rock there was an eagle. The eagle's attitude was so different from the attitude of the sparrows. As that storm came nearer and nearer to him, the eagle remained still and calm.

When the storm reached him, the eagle stretched out his wings and leaped into the stormy winds. He knew that the very storms that sent the smaller birds scurrying for shelter would enable him to soar into the heights, lifting him above the peaks of the surrounding mountains. It is the same with us, beloved. The storms of life can either cause us to crave for shelter or enable us to soar into new heights in God. That is the difference between "sparrow Christians" and "eagle Christians."

Part 2 - David portrays the destruction of his enemies (55:9-15)

55:9-15 - *"Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it. Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets. For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the*

Psalms 51-100

house of God in company. Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.” The cry of David is that God would divide his enemies so that they would speak in discordant terms, and thus be weakened. Unity is strength, but division minimizes the resources of the enemy, and prevents his attacks from being successful against the saints.

Anarchy had taken hold of Jerusalem. Rebellion threatened to consume the king of Israel. However, the danger that imperiled David did not come from the camp of the enemies of Israel; for if it had, David could have borne it.

The adversary was his own friend, spiritual guide, and counselor—Ahithophel—upon whom David had leaned for advice many times to help him perform his kingly duties in equity and wisdom. The treachery was so great that no punishment was thought worthy except eternal damnation in the pit of hell.

Part 3 - David turns to prayer and faith for comfort (55:16-19)

55:16-19 - *“As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me. God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.”*

Through his prayers and supplication, David found the true peace that comes from the Prince of Peace alone. David found to be true what Elisha said to his servant when the hosts of the Syrians encompassed them: “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them” (2 Kgs. 6:16).

Some people have no fear of God because they have no changes or trials in their lives (Jer. 48:11). But trials and changes in our lives are necessary that we may know the terror of God, for we perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor. 7:1).

**Part 4 - David returns to the theme of the overthrow of the wicked
and the ultimate triumph for the righteous (55:20-23)**

55:20-23 - *“He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords. Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.”* There was no justification for these men to attack David, because there had been a bond of peace between them. Moreover, they had been deceitful, for after flattering David, they sought to pierce his very soul. But David, speaking prophetically to all of God’s saints who are called to pass through similar circumstances, exhorts us to cast our cares upon the Lord, for He truly cares for us.

In conclusion, David calls out to God to bring his enemies down to hell. The wicked often have their life shortened. After reviewing all their evil, David declares that he will place his trust continually in the

Psalms 51-100

Lord. May it be so with us, dear ones, that we may see the Lord's marvelous deliverance and salvation on our behalf.

PSALM 56

Rendered by some as “golden” or “most precious jewel,” Psalm 56 is the second of the “Golden Psalms” (the first being Psalm 16). It is so called because of the Hebrew word “*Michtam*.” *Janathelemrechokim* has been translated “the silent dove in distant places.” Therefore, this psalm was written by one of God’s most precious doves when he was entrapped in the hands of the Philistines. David records his gratitude for the Lord’s deliverance. Psalm 56 should be read in conjunction with Psalm 34 and 1 Samuel 21:10-15; 22:1.

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 56 can be divided into three couplets, a triplet, and a quatrain.

1. David's cry to God for mercy (56:1-2)
2. David's declaration of his trust in the Lord (56:3-4)
3. David's predicament as his enemies seek to entrap him through his words (56:5-6)
4. David's assurance of God's righteous judgment upon his enemies (56:7-9)
5. David's praise and gratitude for deliverance (56:10-13)

***To the chief Musician upon Jonathelemrechokim,
Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.***

56:1-2 - *“Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me. Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.”*

Before he came to the throne, David was ever beset with enemies during his wilderness wanderings. David was being persecuted by the Saul-led Israelite army and also by the Philistines. Since the days of Samson and even unto our days, the Philistines have been the perpetual enemies of God's people.

Psalms 51-100

Although they have been subdued at times, the Philistines have long inhabited the Promised Land and have never been totally eliminated. It appears that their total destruction awaits the time of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Isa. 11:14). The Philistines, as we can see from Genesis 26:14, have perpetual envy against the heirs of the covenant, the Israelites. Thus it was in King David's time—they were bent upon David's destruction.

56:3-4 - *“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.”* There is a very important treatise on fear in this psalm. We will seek to exegete it as follows:

- 1.) The phrase “when I am afraid” signifies trials and temptations that cause us to be gripped by fear.
- 2.) Then we turn immediately to God and place our trust and confidence in Him. This brings our soul into a state of rest and peace.
- 3.) Afterwards, realizing that our times are in His hands, we can refuse to be frightened at the contemplation of what man can do to us, for even our enemies are in the hands of God. David reiterates this in verse 11.

Psalms 51-100

56:5-6 - *“Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.”* As his greater Son after him (Christ), David knew the reproaches of the enemy. Sorrow and reproach broke the blood vessels in our Savior’s forehead, and great drops of blood issued forth (Lk. 22:44).

The Lord’s heart, likewise, was broken, and caused His premature death upon the cross. Pilate marveled that Jesus died so soon after He was placed upon the cross. Many times the words of our enemies can have a similar effect upon us. Their cruel thoughts toward us, in actuality, can be a conduit for evil spirits to attack our minds and hearts.

56:7-9 - *“Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God. Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book? When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.”* With confidence, David declares that God will cast his enemies down in His anger, for God knows and records all of our wanderings. “Holy wanderings” are a hallmark of every true saint. Even Abraham declared in Genesis 20:13, “God caused me to wander.”

Psalms 51-100

Many times we will go through difficult times of wandering when we will feel all alone. It is in times like this that we should be encouraged by the fact that God is always with us. All of our tears, whether they flow down our cheeks or come from our heart, are dutifully recorded by an all-loving Heavenly Father in His book.

David reiterates that when he calls unto the Lord, his enemies will retreat, because God is with him. So shall it also be for us, beloved, as we follow in the footsteps of victory that David has traced for us in this psalm.

56:10-13 - *“In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word. In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?”*

Then David breaks forth into praises unto God for His great deliverance from death at the hands of his enemies. The little phrase, *“Thy vows are upon me,”* relates to the fact that God had made an everlasting covenant with David as recorded in Isaiah 55:3—even the sure mercies of David.

PSALM 57

his is another one of the so-called “Golden Psalms,” whose treasures can only be unveiled to us by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, as we experience them. Psalm 57 was written at the time when David was in the cave into which Saul himself entered to rest. Capture seemed inevitable. However, David was actually given the opportunity to kill Saul, but he wisely refrained from touching the Lord’s anointed (1 Sam. 24:1-22). This psalm can be divided into two sections:

1. Hunted continually by Saul, David abides in the shadow of the Lord’s wings (57:1-6).
2. David gives thanks and praises the Lord for His protection and deliverance (57:7-11).

Psalms 51-100

*To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David,
when he fled from Saul in the cave.*

57:1-3 - *“Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.”* One of the keys to the life of David—the man who was so singularly protected by God throughout all his persecutions and battles—lies in his piety and devotion to the Lord. It is exemplified by the little phrase, *“In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge.”* This refers to the fact that God’s dwelling place in the Tabernacle of Moses was between the wings of the cherubim upon the Mercy Seat. Above the Mercy Seat, the shekinah glory of God was manifested.

David, therefore, was not an “Outer Court believer.” He lived spiritually within the veil, in the manifest presence of God. May we also have this same intimacy with our blessed Lord. It was in God’s presence that David was protected from all the battles of life. It is the place where God answers prayer. David declares that God will save him from the derisions and reproaches of Saul.

Psalms 51-100

57:4-6 - *“My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.”*

David then complains that his soul is dwelling among those who seek to destroy him. However, he confidently declares that they will fall into the same pit which they have dug for him. The reward of all of God’s faithful servants is that their enemies will not triumph over them, as Isaiah 54:17 tells us: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.”

57:7-11 - *“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will*

Psalms 51-100

sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.”

Verses 7 through 11 are repeated in Psalm 108:1-5. Here David makes a very important statement concerning a victorious, spiritual life—namely, that our hearts must be fixed upon God without wavering. Because David’s heart was fixed upon the Lord, he could exalt and extol the Lord with a spirit that was set free, even in the midst of grievous trials. We, too, can know this marvelous victory in spite of whatever trial we may be passing through.

One of the features of King David’s trial was its extraordinary length, possibly lasting about seven years. It is beautiful to see that through it all, David maintained a joyous spirit. God can and will sustain us, beloved, until He brings us to the glorious end of our trial.

PSALM 58

Michtam, the superscription to this psalm, can literally mean that it was engraved by David upon a stone or in a cave where he was hiding from Saul, who was seeking to take his life. It was then copied and given to the chief musician Altaschith at a later date.

To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David.

58:1 -*“Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?”* It appears that at the time of Saul, all of Israel was led and influenced by his counselors, who were intent upon David’s destruction. They were responsible for goading Saul into pursuing David.

Psalms 51-100

These counselors, though inherently wicked, no doubt perceived their own actions and decisions to be proper and right.

58:2 - *“Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.”* Their acts of wickedness sprang from deep within their own hearts (see Mk. 7:21-23). They apparently meditated upon and weighed the consequences of their actions. They fully intended to bring to pass their evil thoughts, which, in turn, produced acts of violence.

58:3 - *“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”* Now we come to a theological problem that has confused many people. From a Scriptural point of view, and also from nature, we see that there are basically two kinds of seed.

The Lord Himself said that the Pharisees were of their father the devil. Giving the interpretation of the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, the Lord Himself said that the wheat represents the good seed, which are the children of the Kingdom, but that the tares are the children of the wicked one. Thus the wicked manifest their lying tendencies often from the cradle.

Psalms 51-100

58:4-5 - *“Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.”* Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and wicked words poison and kill those who listen to them. The wicked close their ears to sound counsel and advice.

Just as snakes can be charmed by the music of a flute, while their nature remains unchanged, so the wicked are unchanged by the words of the wise.

58:6 - *“Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.”* The wicked seek to get their teeth into their prey and devour it. Thus David pleads with God to break their teeth. He is saying, “De-fang them—make them powerless to hurt others.” We should pray this same prayer for those who torment us and practice deception and violence.

58:7 - *“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.”* Often in the face of the opposition and intrigues of the wicked, who are seeking to overpower the righteous, we cry out to the Lord, as did David, that they would just

Psalms 51-100

disappear. David prays that in the very place from which they have shot their words and curses like arrows at God's people, they would be cut down and lose their power.

I have seen this happen literally in many instances. We often think that the Lord allows iniquity to continue unchecked, but that is not true. There comes a day of reckoning when the work that our enemies are permitted to do in our lives has had its desired effect. Then the Lord suddenly removes them, sometimes even by death.

58:8 - *“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.”* Because of the great havoc that his enemies were wreaking in the kingdom, David asked God Himself to remove them by death.

58:9 - *“Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.”* Having the assurance that God has heard him, David then describes the rapidity with which they will be removed. A broken pot that is discarded in a field will inevitably feel the thorns that begin to grow around it. However, David declares that the wicked will be taken suddenly by God

Psalms 51-100

in the prime of life (before the broken pot would have time to feel the thorns grow around it). How soon shall the wicked be cut off!

58:10-11 - *“The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.”* When God deals with the wicked, then the righteous will surely rejoice. All who know the situation will declare that God is truly a God of justice who rewards both the wicked and the righteous according to their deeds.

Therefore, beloved, let us rest our case with God who does all things well. Above all, let us not fret because of the apparent success of those who oppress us, for when their cup of iniquity is full, God will arise for our defense.

PSALM 59

According to the superscription, Psalm 59 was written at the time when David was living with his wife Michal, Saul's daughter (1 Sam. 18:28 - 19:17). Saul had only one purpose—to slay David, who had recently received from Samuel the kingly anointing that Saul had forfeited through disobedience. This psalm, the fifth of the Golden Psalms, may be divided into three sections:

1. David cries out for deliverance from his enemies (59:1-5).
2. David then prays that God will consume them (59:6-13).
3. Finally, David sings unto God, who is his strength (59:14-17).

Psalms 51-100

*To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David
When Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.*

59:1-5 - *“Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. 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. They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold. 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.”*

We need to understand David’s perilous situation in order to fully appreciate his cry for deliverance. One time, Saul’s men surrounded David’s house and then broke into it. Had David been there, he would have been taken to Saul, who would have slain him. David’s wife, Michal, enabled him to escape from Saul.

Therefore, with justification, David alludes to his enemies as the heathen who will receive no mercy from God because of their wickedness. They were not little minions, but the mighty men of renown in

Psalms 51-100

the court of Saul. We should compare this with our Lord's own statement that unfaithful servants will have their portion with unbelievers (compare Luke 12:46 with Matthew 24:51).

59:6-13 - *"They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear? But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision. Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence. The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies. Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield. 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. 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's persecutors, who had been elevated to prominence by Saul, imitated their master in speaking evil about David. However, the end of the matter is what counts, and God was going to bring them

Psalms 51-100

down. They would be brought to nought, and would lose their positions. Furthermore, David pleads that the Lord will not slay them so that they might be living examples of His righteous judgments.

59:14-17 - *“And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied. 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. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.”*

David asks the Lord to reduce his enemies to penury and poverty, having to seek scraps of food like dogs. By contrast, David and all the righteous will rejoice greatly in the abundance of God’s goodness to them. Beloved, be patient and faint not, for in due time God will come with a recompense for those who have patiently put their trust in Him. In my own experience, I have literally seen many of those who have attacked me reduced to nothing. Their churches have been reduced virtually to skeletons, with only a handful of people left, and they have been obliged to do the most menial kinds of work just

Psalms 51-100

to put food on their tables. On the other hand, God has mightily blessed us. The word of the Lord is ever true to those who wait patiently upon Him.

PSALM 60

Psalm 60 is another of the psalms filled with golden secrets by which the wise among His people are instructed. As the superscription tells us, this psalm was written at the time of the battles with Edom, mentioned in 1 Chronicles 18:12. The two Aramean tribes of Aramnaharaim and Aramzobah had taken advantage of the absence of Joab to attack Israel. However, upon his return with Abishai, Israel slew 18,000 as well as those of Edom. According to the records of 2 Samuel 8:13, there were also 18,000 Syrians slain by David.

Psalms 51-100

This psalm can be divided into two sections:

1. Previous hardships of Israel (60:1-4)
2. The Lord's triumph over Israel's enemies (60:5-12)

*To the chief Musician upon Shushaneduth,
Michtam of David, to teach; When he strove with
Aramnaharaim and with Aramzobah, when Joab returned,
and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand.*

60:1-4 - *“O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again. Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh. Thou hast showed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment. Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.”*

In previous times, Israel had been scattered by her enemies, especially in the era of the Judges. David reminisces about these times when Israel knew great astonishment because of God's

Psalms 51-100

judgment upon them. I believe that we all will pass through such times in our lives when the Lord seems to be far away from us, and we experience terrible bewilderment.

60:5-8 - *“That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me. God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.”*

Now comes the era of deliverance—God comes forth against Israel’s enemies. Shechem, often a source of rebelliousness, would be divided or weakened. The valley of Succoth likewise was a town that did not assist Gideon.

The region of Gilead was east of the Jordan River, from the lower end of the Sea of Galilee to the northern end of the Dead Sea. Originally given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, Gilead forms part of the Moabite and Ammonite kingdom of Jordan today. However, when the Lord comes again, it will belong to Him. Manasseh and Ephraim, the two tribes from the sons of Joseph, and Ephraim in particular (Hos. 14:8), will again bring forth fruit to God. Judah, with its capital

Psalms 51-100

city of Jerusalem and Mount Zion, will again send forth the Law. Christ, the Law-Giver, descended from the tribe of Judah (Isa. 2:3).

Moab is God's washpot. Spiritually, there are Moabite churches and Moabite Christians that refuse to go on with God. They are not prepared to let God lead them on. Therefore, God uses them to scrub and wash His people. Edom becomes the recipient of those whom God rejects. The Edomites represent churches where the rebellious congregate. Then there is the thought that God will shout in triumph as He brings down the Philistines, the modern-day Palestinians.

60:9 - *"Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?"* David foresees that God will cause him to triumph over Edom. We believe that God can give us victory over the rebellious, and especially over those who despise the deeper things of God and their God-given inheritance, as did Esau of old.

60:10-12 - *"Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies? Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies."* The lesson to be learned in particular from

Psalms 51-100

this psalm is that at times in our lives we have to know bewilderment and apparent abandonment by God. But if we will trust Him, there will come a time when we will experience victory over those very enemies that once were permitted to rule over us.

PSALM 61

Written at the time of Absalom's rebellion, Psalm 61 has been fittingly called "The Prayer and Thanksgiving of an Expelled King on His Way Back to The Throne." This psalm gives comfort those who are mourning. Bearing the same superscription as Psalm 4, 6, 54, and 55, this psalm was meant to be sung upon the stringed instrument that David so loved.

Psalm 61 can be easily divided into two sections:

1. David's cry to be lifted up above his problems (61:1-4)
2. The joy of being heard by God (61:5-8)

Psalms 51-100

To the chief Musician upon Neginah, A Psalm of David

61:1-4 - *“Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. 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. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.”*

Exiled by the consequences of his sins and ensuing judgments, David cries out in desperation to God. It is certain that although David was immediately forgiven by God, his subsequent sufferings and judgments were phenomenal. Through all these unfolding punishments that ensued, it is remarkable how King David turned to the Lord, and was comforted and strengthened. This speaks volumes about his relationship with God.

Although his heart was overwhelmed by all the events that were taking place, such as the rebellion of Absalom and the betrayal of Ahithophel, David prays that he might be brought to the Rock—the Lord Jesus Christ. David knew that it was the Lord who would shelter and strengthen him against his enemies.

Psalms 51-100

As we have said so often, and will surely repeat in this treatise on the Psalms, the key to victory for us is to spend time in the Holy of Holies with God (Psa. 57:1). It was within the veil, in the manifest presence of God, that David found victory over his circumstances.

61:5-8 - *“For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. Thou wilt prolong the king’s life: and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him. So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.”*

Now we see the cry of David answered. David knew that the Lord had heard him—what a blessed assurance to have indeed! Then in verse 6, David makes an interesting declaration. Basically, it means that he knew that God would not only lengthen the years of his life, but also raise him up again to be the prince in Jerusalem during the millennial reign of Christ upon earth. Jeremiah 30:9 confirms this: “But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.”

Psalms 51-100

The Lord also says in Ezekiel 37:24, “And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.”

David will behold the Lord’s face forever. What a blessed assurance not only for David, but for us, too, as we qualify for the privilege of reigning with Christ in the Millennium. Revelation 20:6 says, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Beloved, if we likewise persevere in our walk with the Lord, we will have that same assurance David had of ruling and reigning with the Lord in His millennial reign upon earth after His Second Coming.

PSALM 62

Psalm 62 is the second psalm directed to Jeduthun (the other being Psalm 39). There are remarkable similarities between Psalm 62 and Psalm 39. The word “only” is used four times in Psalm 39, while here it is used six times. Because of this, some have called Psalm 62 “The Only Psalm.”

As we have noted in our preface to Psalm 39, Jeduthun was one of the choir masters of David’s era. Jeduthun’s sons were doorkeepers in the Lord’s house (1 Chron. 16:42). This psalm can be divided into three sections.

1. The hypocrisy of the wicked (62:1-4)

Psalms 51-100

2. The Lord is David's only refuge (62:5-8)

3. The vanity of the wicked (62:9-12)

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

62:1-4 *"Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved. 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. They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah."* As do many others, this psalm starts with the thought of the holy waiting that epitomizes the saints of God throughout all ages. It is to God alone that we must look for our salvation.

King David then predicts the slaying of the wicked, for God does not tolerate the wicked forever. As David picturesquely describes, the wicked shall be like a wall or a fence that is about to come crashing down because it has eroded through weakened foundations. These enemies are hypocrites that praise a man to his face, but inwardly plot to devour him.

Psalms 51-100

62:5-8 - *“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.”*

With great confidence, born through years of experience, David exhorts those of us who are passing through similar experiences to make God our sole refuge. When we are distressed, we should pour out our complaint to Him concerning the devious plots of the wicked.

62:9-12 - *“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. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.”*

Psalms 51-100

David here uses a metaphor to describe the wicked, much like the metaphor Daniel used when he condemned King Belshazzar, saying, “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting” (Dan. 5:27). David declares that the heathen are lighter than vanity.

Among the heathen there was the prevailing belief that at the end of their lives they would be weighed in the divine balances. They believed that if their righteousness did not outweigh their sins, then they would be cast into everlasting flames. However, the fact of the matter is that our life’s works are measured by the righteousness of Christ. Therefore, only as God imparts His righteousness to us can we be found “not wanting” on Judgment Day.

Riches cannot save us, for the power to save is the sole prerogative of almighty God. We must trust in the mercy of God all the days of our life, so that our lives and our works will be accepted by Him.

PSALM 63

This Psalm was written, as the superscription informs us, when David was in the wilderness of Judah, fleeing from King Saul. There David spent nights of sweet communion and fellowship with God, meditating upon the person and goodness of the Lord.

This psalm can be divided into two basic sections:

1. David's thirst for the presence of God (63:1-8)
2. David's declaration of the fall of his enemies (63:9-11)

Psalms 51-100

Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

Part 1 - David's Thirst for the Presence of God (63:1-8)

63:1-3 - *“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; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.”*

The saints in the Holy Scriptures were noted for the fact that they rose up early in the morning to seek the Lord. It is a habit worthy of cultivation. The best authors are often those who write early in the day. Man, like the Lord, who is called the Bright and Morning Star, is created to do his best work before midday when he is fresh and energetic. As the day declines, so does his strength. This is particularly true with respect to prayer. The times of most fragrant communion with our blessed Lord are usually in the morning hours.

We also need to develop this holy hunger and thirst, epitomized by David, for the living Lord. Even as snack foods and “junk food” spoil one’s appetite in the natural, so filling our minds and hearts with the things of this world can spoil our spiritual appetite and hunger for the Lord.

Psalms 51-100

To obtain this hunger for the Lord, we must fast from spiritual “junk food”—television, newspapers, books, and magazines that are of no eternal value. Doing so will produce a spiritual vacuum within our hearts that can only be satisfied by God and God alone.

When nothing else can quench our spirit’s thirst, then we turn to God with all of our hearts. We cry out that we may see God in action as we have seen His power and glory in times past, that we may know the goodness of His love toward us, which is more important than life itself.

63:4-8 - *“Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.”* As we follow David in these spiritual exercises, we will know the joyful state of heart that he experienced—praises springing forth from a heart that is bubbling over with thanksgiving.

Psalms 51-100

Even in the night hours, David meditated upon the Lord, for He had been his help throughout all his wilderness wanderings. The Lord protected David from Saul and his army. Therefore, David again states, as he does so often in his psalms, that he will abide in the Holy of Holies under the shadow of the wings of the cherubim. David pursued the Lord with all of his might; and because of his ardent desire for the Lord, the Lord, in turn, strengthened him and prevented him from falling.

Part 2 - David's Declaration of the Fall of His Enemies (63:9-11)

63:9-11 - *“But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. 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.”* Now turning his thoughts toward his enemies, David declares their eternal destruction in the pit of hell. It will be true of them, even as the Apostle John stated in Revelation 13:10: “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.” David’s enemies (and ours too) will be slain by their enemies. The flesh of his enemies will lie in the open field, as did

Psalms 51-100

Jezebel's in a later era, to be consumed by the foxes. David, on the other hand, will rejoice in the Lord, while the mouths of those who speak lies will be closed by death's cruel stroke.

PSALM 64

Since the content of Psalms 64 and 63 is very similar, it is possible that they were written at the same time. It is noteworthy that David mentions his enemies in virtually every one of his psalms. These psalms are preserved for the edification of the saints throughout all generations. Let us recall the admonition of Paul: “All those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). We, too, will be opposed by our enemies.

Psalms 51-100

This psalm can be divided into the following two sections:

1. David depicts the evil ways of his enemies (64:1-6)
2. David foretells their destruction by the Lord (64:7-10)

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David

Part 1 - David Depicts the Evil Ways of His Enemies (64:1-6)

64:1-6 - *“Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not. They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.”* In David’s situation, his enemies were bent upon killing him. His only hope was that the Lord would preserve him and thwart their evil plans. They took secret counsel together, planning his demise and speaking bitter words against him.

Psalms 51-100

The Lord Jesus went through many similar trials at the hands of Satan's children. While upon earth, Jesus warned us in John 15:20: "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." The wicked "make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought" (Isa. 29:21).

Part 2 - David Foretells Their Destruction by the Lord (64:7-10)

64:7-10 - *"But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory."*

In due time, the Lord will judge the wicked. Even as Haman was hanged upon the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai, so shall the accusations and plans of the wicked fall upon their own heads.

Psalms 51-100

Certainly, we all reap what we sow. Then all men will consider the end of the matter and be instructed in the ways of the Lord. The righteous and all those who have trusted in the Lord for their deliverance will rejoice greatly in Him.

PSALM 65

From all appearances, Psalm 65 was written after Absalom's great rebellion against David had been quelled. Now the king is back in his kingdom and contemplating God's goodness to him. The superscription tells us that this is a lyrical poem meant to be sung or spoken as the circumstances dictated. There are three sections to this psalm:

1. The way of approach to God (65:1-4)
2. The manifestation of God's power (65:5-8)
3. The song of the joyful harvest (65:9-13)

Psalms 51-100

To the chief Musician, A Psalm and Song of David.

Part 1 - The Way of Approach to God (65:1-4)

65:1-3 - *“Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.”* Zion (meaning *citadel*), which was situated on the ridge running south from the Temple site in Jerusalem, was the place of God’s habitation (see Psa. 15; 24; 78:68). Zion is also the heavenly hill seen in Hebrews 12:22. There the praises of God’s people await Him, for He inhabits the praises of His people. All the inhabitants of the earth will appear before Him in Zion.

The Lord will purge us from all our sins in Zion. This applies prophetically to Israel as a nation at the Second Coming of Christ (Zech. 13:1), but also to us individually as we seek the Lord for a deeper cleansing in our lives.

65:4 - *“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.”*

Psalms 51-100

This is one of the most important Scriptures relative to our position with the Lord. We must realize that He Himself chooses those whom He finds worthy to behold Him face to face. This is borne out, in a certain sense, by the words of Christ in John 15:16: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.”

We have been chosen by God, not only for salvation, but also for an earthly and heavenly ministry. Each one of us was created to fulfill a valuable function in His kingdom. However, although we have been called by God, we must never forget that we have to be chosen and found worthy of our calling. “To be like Jesus” must ever be our cry. It is through Jesus that we have access to the Father. Therefore, the more we become like Him and the more we partake of His divine nature, the nearer to the Lord we will be.

Part 2 - The Manifestation of God’s Power (65:5-8)

65:5-8 - *“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: Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power: Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the*

Psalms 51-100

noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people. They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.”

In this section, there is the thought that the Lord will subdue by His awesome power His enemies, as well as the enemies of David. Whoever rose up against David, therefore, became the enemy of God.

Foreseeing the conversion of the Gentiles, David speaks of those who are at the end of the earth looking to the Lord for their salvation. Then, obviously referring to the late rebellion and insurrection of Absalom, he speaks of God’s quelling the tumult of the enemy.

That little phrase, *“the outgoings of the morning and evening,”* signifies the morning and evening sacrifices that were offered up on a daily basis unto God. We should rejoice in the day’s work that lies ahead of us, and at evening give thanks for the night of rest that the Lord gives us.

Part 3 - The Song of the Joyful Harvest (65:9-13)

65:9-13 - *“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. Thou waterest the ridges*

Psalms 51-100

thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.”

Here we see the joy of the king’s contemplation as he sees the Lord blessing the land that it may bring forth its rich harvest. These verses reveal the progressive steps to ensure a bountiful crop, not only naturally, but, above all, spiritually.

Firstly, the river of God flows forth in abundance. Next the corn, speaking of the Word of God, comes forth. Then the ground of our hearts is softened through the tender showers of the Holy Spirit, so that the precious fruit of the Spirit may spring up from within our hearts and lives.

Throughout the year, God’s goodness is manifested season by season. Every season has its own specific purpose, and every season is necessary for the harvest to reach maturity. In our lives, of course, the seasons sometimes last for many years, but as this psalm depicts, the end result is that we will receive the abundant blessing of the Lord.

PSALM 66

Composed by an anonymous author, Psalm 66 depicts Israel's deliverance from the Assyrian yoke in the days of Hezekiah (Isaiah chapters 36 to 39). In the first twelve verses, the congregation is speaking, and from verse 13 onward it is the author who is speaking on behalf of the congregation.

To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm

66:1-2 - *"Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious."* This psalm opens with an exhortation to make a joyful noise unto God. It is a

Psalms 51-100

rejoicing reminiscent of the celebration of a sports crowd whose team has just won the championship. Sometimes the reveling engulfs the whole city if the team has won a national or international trophy.

However, the exhortation here is not only to the Lord's people, Israel, but for the whole world to rejoice. Why? Because the Lord had just destroyed 185,000 soldiers of the Assyrian army that had surrounded Jerusalem (see Isa. 37:36; 2 Kgs. 19:35; 2 Chron. 32:21). The Lord sent Sennacherib, King of Assyria, back in shame to his capital city, Nineveh. The Lord humiliated the same king who had cruelly devoured the nations.

66:3-5 - *“Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah. Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.”*

Because of the greatness of God's power, the Assyrians are obliged to submit unto Him. The whole earth rejoiced at the fall of the Assyrian army. The psalmist encourages the whole world to come and

Psalms 51-100

see, and this they certainly did. Hezekiah, the king of Israel, was greatly exalted, and kings sent emissaries unto him (Isa. 39:1-2).

66:6-8 - *“He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him. He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah. O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard.”* Now the psalmist continues by reciting past wonders of the Lord, alluding to the miraculous drying up of the Red Sea, which was another time of great rejoicing in the history of the nation of Israel (Ex. 15:1-22).

Then there is a solemn warning to the nations not to rebel against the Lord, because the Lord manifestly rules over the nations. Again, the psalmist exhorts us to “bless the Lord” with a loud praise that can be heard. We must be vocal in our praises to the Lord.

66:9-12 - *“Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and*

Psalms 51-100

through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.” The Lord sustained the Israelites through all the trials He laid upon them. He will sustain us also, beloved, in the trials that He leads us through.

The Assyrians at this time brought great affliction upon the land, overrunning all the cities with the exception of Jerusalem. The Assyrians caught fugitives like a man catches butterflies. They certainly subjugated the land with their terror—thus we read the phrase, *“Thou laidst affliction upon our loins.”*

Like the Israelites in Egypt, the Israelites at this time were made to carry heavy burdens for their captors which nearly broke their strength. However, the Lord faithfully brought Israel out of Egyptian captivity into the wealthy land of Canaan. And now those who lived in Jerusalem became exceedingly wealthy because when the Assyrian army was defeated, they left all their treasures behind in their tents outside the city.

66:13-17 - *“I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah. Come and hear, all ye that*

Psalms 51-100

fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.” Now the psalmist gives his own personal testimony, promising to pay the vows that he uttered to the Lord when he was in sore distress. We, too, must offer up what we promise the Lord in our times of trouble. Then he tells how greatly the Lord delivered him.

66:18-20 - *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.”* There follows a warning that if we do not deal with any “known” sin in our lives, then all of our prayers will be in vain. If we neglect this warning, it is to our own peril. May we be as the psalmist who cried unto the Lord with a clean heart, and was delivered from all his troubles.

PSALM 67

Psalm 67 contemplates the harvest being brought in with gladness. The theme is that each plentiful harvest is a fulfillment of the promise given by the Lord in Leviticus 26:3-6: “If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.”

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 67 also has the sense of the abundant and final harvest of God which He has brought in from all the redeemed in the earth.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song.

67:1-2 - *“God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.”* This psalm has sometimes been called the Old Testament *Pater Noster*, for it starts with the words of the priest’s benediction, first uttered by the prophet Moses in Numbers 6:24-26. What a beautiful way to begin a day or a service with this holy benediction. Even as in our Lord’s prayer, we are directed to pray that His way (or will) may be known upon earth. Let us seek to be like Moses who not only knew the Lord’s ways, but also promulgated them throughout the whole earth. We should press on to know the Lord experientially as our Healer. As we know Him as our Healer, then we can pray efficaciously for the sick and see them healed in the name of the Lord Jesus, for He is Jehovah-Rapha—“the Lord that healeth thee.”

67:3-4 - *“Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.”*

Psalms 51-100

Selah.” For the Lord’s great goodness to the sons of men, let us not only praise Him ourselves, but encourage others to do so as well. The Lord judges the nations in righteousness. Here the psalmist is contemplating the Second Coming when the Lord will divide the goat nations from the sheep nations (Mt. 25:32-33).

We are prone to see the great wickedness perpetuated by nations like China, Russia, and Iran, and wonder why God does not do something about it. However, in time we will see the Lord’s judgment fall upon such nations, and His blessing come upon the righteous nations. Then everyone will know that the Lord reigns and that He will govern over all for eternity.

67:5-7 - *“Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.”* The psalmist closes with the thought of the abundant harvest that the faithful will enjoy. Also, there is a certain sense here that the Lord of the harvest will have the satisfaction of seeing the earth “yield her increase.”

PSALM 68

A psalm of David, fittingly placed after Psalm 67 (which started with the benediction of Numbers 6:24-26), Psalm 68 commences with the “Battle Cry of Moses” recorded in Numbers 10:35. It is a psalm of profound theology, having no less than six different names of God: Elohim (v.2), Adonai (v.12), Shaddai (v.15), Jehovah (v.17), Jah (v.19), and El (v.20). David portrays God as the compassionate, caring Father of mankind, and His Son, Jesus Christ, as the triumphant Warrior King.

Psalms 51-100

To the chief Musician, A Psalm or Song of David.

68:1-3 - *“Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. 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. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.”* This psalm starts with the Battle Cry of Moses. In His graciousness, God will arise to scatter His enemies and destroy them. Then the righteous will rejoice and be exceeding glad.

68:4 - *“Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.”* Verse 4 has been put to music in English to a very invigorating little tune. However, the Hebrew brings out the thought that the Israelites of old were to prepare the way for the Lord. His name, JAH, is a concentration of the name Jehovah, used first in Exodus 15:2, but not translated as such in English.

68:5-6 - *“A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.”*

Psalms 51-100

Then we see the compassionate side of God, who cares for the outcast. The welfare of the orphan, the widow, the alien, and the foreigner are all the concern of an ever-loving Heavenly Father and Divine Husband (Isa. 54:4-7). The prisoner and those in darkness are not forgotten by Him, but those who rebel will dwell in their wilderness experience forever.

68:7-8 - *“O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah: 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.”* David reminisces here concerning the wonders that God displayed in the wilderness journey, when He led His people from Egypt to the Promised Land in mighty power, causing Mount Sinai to quake (Ex. 19:18).

68:9-10 - *“Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.”* David continues now with the thought of God’s sending a free-flowing rain without measure upon those who are now in the land of His inheritance.

Psalms 51-100

Also, the Lord has prepared His goodness for the poor. The poor are not forgotten by the Lord. Ample provision has been made for them by the Lord. Therefore, let us be those who consider the needs of the poor. I have noticed that God pours out His Spirit abundantly upon churches that help the poor.

68:11-12 - *“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it. Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.”* Now we come to the battles in the times, perhaps, of the Judges. The Lord gave the command, and a great company published it. The word “company” is in the feminine gender in the Hebrew, suggesting that the men were stirred up when the women went from tent to tent. Certainly, this was the case in Deborah’s time when a woman, Jael, killed Sisera, the captain of the host of the enemy (Judg. 4:18-21).

Then the kings of the armies fled, and those who stayed at home divided the booty. This was the law that David himself instituted when he was captain of the army (1 Sam. 30:24-25).

68:13 - *“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.”* The little phrase, “among the pots,” has been translated, with much difficulty, in various ways, such as “among the sheepfolds.” But I would like to proffer this

Psalms 51-100

explanation: Although Israel had at times, like the patriarch Job, lain in the refuse dumps where rejected and broken pots were abandoned, yet they will come to be under the protection of the wings of the Holy Spirit in all His glory.

We, too, will go through very difficult times, as Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 4:10-11: "...We are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place." However, God will bring us into a place of great blessing through His Holy Spirit.

68:14 - *"When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon."* David now gives a very picturesque simile to describe the change that takes place in the land when God destroys and scatters the enemy. Mount Salmon, a woody hill near Shechem (Judg. 9:48), was known for its darkness. However, when it snowed, it was transformed into a site of great purity, light, and beauty. Therefore, when the enemy covered the land, it was a time of darkness; but when the enemy was vanquished by God, the land became alive and beautiful again.

Psalms 51-100

68:15-16 - *“The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. 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.”* The hill of God (Zion), in all of its beauty, is contrasted with the many peaks of the hills of Bashan on the other side of Jordan. They are volcanic in origin and are called “black stone” by the Syrians, whereas the hill of Zion on the West Bank is made of white limestone. Therefore, the foreboding hills of Bashan represent the world powers that are arrayed against Zion.

68:17 - *“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.”* At Dothan, Elisha saw the chariots of God and the angelic charioteers who had come to defend him when he was surrounded by the Syrians (2 Kgs. 6:17). The angelic hosts inhabit and defend Mount Zion in their strength as they ride forth against the foe, even as God manifested His presence at Mount Sinai.

68:18 - *“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.”* This is a prophecy

Psalms 51-100

concerning the resurrection of Christ. He descended into the lower parts of the earth after His death upon the cross, as both Paul and the Apostle Peter tell us (Eph. 4:9; 1 Pet. 3:18-20).

On Resurrection Day, Christ ascended into heaven with all the Old Testament saints. In heaven, He was able to release the blessed Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit upon His disciples. Even the rebellious are blessed by God for a time. He blesses them to give them an opportunity to respond to Him.

Obviously, the rebellious cannot continue in their wicked ways, for on Judgment Day they will fall into the category of those mentioned in Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Psalms 51-100

68:19 - *“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.”* Here David eulogizes God for continually blessing us. We do well, in the words of the hymn writer, to “count our blessings one by one, and we will be surprised at what the Lord has done.”

68:20-21 - *“He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death. But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.”*

God is our Savior even unto death, delivering us from that last enemy (1 Cor. 15:26). However, the Lord will wound His enemies—not only the heathen and the unsaved, but also those among His people who continue in their sins.

68:22-23 - *“The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea: That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.”* If we omit the interpolation, “my people,” inserted by the translators, we have a clearer sense of the meaning of this verse. God will bring His enemies from Bashan and even from the depths of the sea (Amos 9:2), to be judged by His people, Israel.

Psalms 51-100

68:24-27 - *“They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.”*

Here David describes the joy of those who have known the ways of God in the sanctuary (Psa. 77:13). The whole congregation worships God in song with tambourines. All of the tribes of Israel are represented here. The South is represented by Benjamin and Judah, and the North is represented by Zebulun and Naphtali. Certainly, this is what revival does for the Church—it unites the Body of Christ.

68:28-29 - *“Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.”* In revival times, the Lord strengthens His people and everyone brings gifts to the Church, even as the Israelites brought their offerings into the Temple in times of revival in the Old Testament.

Psalms 51-100

68:30-32 - *“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. Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah.”* God rebukes the heathen and their armies, causing them to submit and bring tribute to Him and His people. The Lord will destroy all those who delight in war and violence.

This looks forward to two specific periods in Israel’s history: Solomon’s inauguration when all the nations made peace with Israel and brought gifts; and also the time of the Millennium, when people will beat their swords into plowshares, and there will be a time of peace instead of war. In addition to other nations, Egypt and Ethiopia, two longtime adversaries of Israel, will come and worship the King of kings at Jerusalem.

68:32-34 - *“Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: 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. Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the*

Psalms 51-100

clouds.” This psalm concludes by commanding all the kingdoms of the earth to worship the Lord, who is from everlasting to everlasting—the One who has always ruled in heaven.

What comfort this psalm gives to us as we contemplate the greatness of our all-powerful God. In His good time, the Lord will bring all His enemies and ours under His feet. The end of all things for the righteous is always good, beloved.

The heathen nations will be forced to confess, at their defeat at Armageddon and when Jesus descends upon the Mount of Olives, that God’s strength has been manifested on behalf of Israel. The terror of the Lord will be manifested as He comes in the clouds to deliver His people, Israel. Praise the Lord, for in Him we have the victory!

PSALM 69

Entitled “the Psalm of Lilies” like Psalm 45, Psalm 69 is a beautiful psalm. *Shoshannim* means “lily.” This inscription can only be speaking prophetically of the One we call “The Lily of the Valley”—the Lord Jesus Himself. In part, this psalm was the experience of David after Absalom’s insurrection, but in its fullest sense, it speaks of the passion of our beloved Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, A Psalm of David.

69:1-5 - *“Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying:*

Psalms 51-100

my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. 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. O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.”

Certainly, these verses, and especially verse 5, apply to David, since Christ was the sinless One. Yet in these verses we can also see the sufferings of Christ. “Save me, O God!” was His cry when the Jews taunted Him by saying, “He saved others, himself he cannot save!” (Mk. 15:31).

Also, Hebrews 5:7 tells us that Jesus “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death.” We see in these verses the agony of Christ when He was subjected to the scorn and derision of His enemies.

Christ turned to His Father and poured out His grief in prayer to the One who knows and understands all things. It is this cry of those who acknowledge their holy dependence upon the Lord that is so pleasing to the Heavenly Father.

Psalms 51-100

69:6 - *“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.”* Here David clearly is indicating that because of his sin, he had caused many who trusted in God to suffer humiliation at the hands of unbelievers. Any time a pastor or leader falls into sin, the congregation suffers ridicule in the community.

69:7 - *“Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.”* In this verse, the narrative reverts to Christ. He endured the reproach of the multitudes because of His desire to do the will of God and become the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

69:8 - *“I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children.”* Even Christ’s own brothers did not believe in Him. John 7:5 records, “For neither did his brethren believe in him.”

69:9 - *“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”* But the zeal of the Lord of Hosts was upon Christ—consuming, leading,

Psalms 51-100

guiding, and driving Him to fulfill His Father's will. The reproaches directed against God and His ways came upon Christ.

69:10-11 - *“When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.”* The people criticized Christ no matter what He did. For example, they even called Him a winebibber (Mt. 11:19).

69:12 - *“They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.”* From the highest in the land, “those that sat in the gates” (the judges), to the lowest, “the tavern dwellers,” all mocked the Lord. Job experienced similar humiliation during his trial. Job 30:1 says, “But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.”

69:13 - *“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.”* The secret in such situations is to give ourselves to prayer (Psa. 109:4). We have to realize that there is a set time for God in His wisdom to

Psalms 51-100

answer our prayers. God is accomplishing much in many hearts besides our own in every trial. He waits until His perfect will has been fulfilled in each participating life.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16: “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?”

69:14 - *“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.”* Twice now the psalmist likens his and Christ’s sorrow to the feeling of one who is in a slime-pit. The hatred of our enemies engulfs and almost overwhelms our soul at times like these, and we seem to be like one treading in the “quicksand of despair” because of the assaults of our enemies.

69:15 - *“Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.”* In our helplessness, we plead with God not to permit the pit to close its

Psalms 51-100

mouth on us. Those who have seen hell in visions or have been taken there by the Lord know that this is a very good analogy of hell. Hell is very much like an all-devouring mouth that swallows its victims down into its throat and then into the darkness of its abyss forever.

These illustrations are not at all too graphic, but are the very essence of the spiritual warfare that we experience. Evil spirits, using our enemies' hatred as a conduit, seek to drag us down to the pit of hell from whence they themselves came.

69:16-18 - *“Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.”* This verse is the prayer of both David and Christ. They both pleaded with God to deliver them because of His lovingkindness. Truly, the enemy was too great for either of them to save themselves. Remember, spirits are fallen angels, and Christ Himself was made “a little lower than the angels” while upon earth.

Psalms 51-100

69:19-20 - *“Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee. 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.”*

Here we have the reason for our Lord’s seemingly rapid death upon the cross. His heart had been broken by the reproaches that He endured during His short ministry of three-and-a-half years. It culminated with the taunts of His adversaries while He hung upon the cross.

69:21 - *“They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”* Then they gave vinegar, which was normally a slaves’ drink, to the King of kings, and also gall, which was an infusion of myrrh given to convicts to lessen the pain of their sufferings (Mt. 27:34). This was an insult too, depicting Christ as the most degraded of criminals.

69:22-25 - *“Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.”* The psalmist pleads that his

Psalms 51-100

enemies' sumptuous fare may be the very means of their fall and disaster. He prays that they will be smitten with spiritual blindness, and that they will continually shake through fear like the wicked King Belshazzar (Dan. 5).

Also, he prays that their houses will become empty. I well remember such a judgment being meted out upon one of my elders, who rose up against me in a church I pastored years ago. He had a beautiful house that had been his home for decades. He had raised his children in this house.

After he turned against me, this elder was forced to leave his house because of certain circumstances, and it was sold without his consent while he lay helpless upon his deathbed. Yes, beloved, God's judgments are very severe upon those who refuse to walk in His ways.

69:26 - *"For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded."* Combined with Psalm 109:16, this verse depicts the absolute cruelty of David's and Christ's enemies. They were both going through difficult times because of God's purposes, when natural sentiments would have caused even the hardest heart to show sympathy and compassion. However, their enemies added to their sorrows.

Psalms 51-100

69:27-28 - *“Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.”* As in other psalms, David prays that his enemies may not be accorded the grace to know God's salvation. He also prays that their names, for they are obviously of the household of the redeemed, be removed from the list of the saved—that they might be eternally lost and suffer eternal damnation.

69:29 - *“But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.”* But both David and Christ are of the company of the contrite in spirit, which are dear to the heart of God. By contrast, they will be elevated and promoted by the Lord.

69:30-33 - *“I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs. The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God. For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.”* Both Christ and David offered the sacrifice of praise to the Father even when they were experiencing a time of great sorrow and it was a real sacrifice to praise the Father. Therefore, it is of much greater worth than all the offerings of bullocks and animal sacrifices.

Psalms 51-100

In due time, the humble will rejoice at God's great deliverance. Those who seek God diligently will know eternal life. The Lord's ear is ever toward the prayer of the poor and needy. Those of us who are like David and Christ—spiritual prisoners due to God's dealings in our lives—are, in reality, “prisoners of hope” (Zech. 9:12). There will be an end to our captivity, and we will be brought out into a wealthy place.

69:34-36 - *“Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein. For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.”* David terminates this prophetic psalm by commanding all in heaven, all on earth, and every creature that lives in the sea to praise the Lord for His infinite goodness.

David adds that God will save Zion, speaking of the defenders of Zion at the time of the Second Coming. All the cities of Judah, which will be overrun in the last days by the Arabs and the Antichrist, will be rebuilt in the Millennium. The descendants of His faithful servants and those who love the name of the Lord shall have them for their possession.

PSALM 70

Short but sweet adequately describes this little psalm. The purpose of Psalm 70 is to bring to remembrance King David's sufferings and the Lord's deliverance. It is reminiscent of the passage in the book of Lamentations that the prophet Jeremiah wrote some three hundred years afterwards: "Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me" (Lam. 3:19-20).

The purpose of remembering past sorrows can be seen in Lamentations 3:21: "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope." As we meditate upon our past trials, hope stirs up with-in our hearts.

Psalms 51-100

Remembering God's faithfulness to us in the past produces assurance in our hearts of His faithfulness in the future. Let us echo the cry of Jeremiah concerning God's goodness to His children—*great is Thy faithfulness!*

This psalm has many similarities to Psalm 40:14-17, and was obviously written at the same time—after the insurrection of Absalom. The whole theme is that God will come to David's rescue speedily.

We believe that this psalm is a great comfort for us when we are passing through painful trials of possibly long duration. It gives us hope that at the appointed time we will be granted a quick deliverance. May we pray that God would hasten our deliverance.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance

70:1-3 - *"Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD. Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt. Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha."* This psalm starts with the plea for God to come quickly to our aid. David prays that his enemies will be covered

Psalms 51-100

with shame and confusion because they have mocked him. Instead of covering his sin, they had openly spoken about it. Therefore, he prays that his enemies will be turned back.

Throughout my forty years of ministry, I have never seen those who wrongfully criticize downfallen Christians be blessed in the end. There is a manner in which those who have fallen must be lovingly corrected and disciplined. It is the duty of leadership to lead them to repentance.

David had already confessed and acknowledged his sin. Therefore, silence should have been appropriately maintained at this time, and the matter left in the hands of the priests and prophets.

70:4-5 - *“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. But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.”* All those who were seeking the Lord and knew His mind were rejoicing because of David’s penitent attitude. They contemplated David’s restoration and onward fruitfulness and usefulness.

Look at the beautiful attitude here of one who is broken and contrite in heart. David turns to God alone for his help and deliverance, beginning and ending his prayer with the petition that God will not

Psalms 51-100

delay. So often we plead with the Lord to make haste to our deliverance when we are in trials. What a consolation it has been to pray the words of this divinely inspired psalm.

It is fitting, in closing our notes on this psalm, to make mention of the prayer of the righteous: "May God be magnified." In the downfall of David, God was truly glorified. From David's penitent heart there poured forth psalm after psalm that has shown to all generations God's righteous and yet compassionate character.

We all wish that David had not fallen. However, who can help but receive encouragement from these psalms penned during this time of restoration. They have given hope and comfort to countless millions of saints.

Let us always adopt the same attitude. When a dear one has fallen from grace, let us believe God to bring something beautiful and wonderful out of those ashes to the honor and glory of His matchless name.

PSALM 71

Undoubtedly, Psalm 71 is a psalm of David, even though no superscription exists to confirm it. It was written in his last days, and would have been composed around the time of Psalm 37. In both psalms, the king refers to himself as aged. Psalm 71 is devoted to pleas against David's enemies, who were very powerful. Their last rebellion, led by Adonijah, took place when David was on his deathbed (1 Kgs. 1:5).

71:1-4 - *“In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. Be thou my strong*

Psalms 51-100

habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.”

Although David was the king, he was in mortal terror for his life. As we study the life of David, we see that throughout his lifetime, from his teen years, he was never at rest from his enemies. Even when he was anointed king and given rest from the heathen nations, those closest to him betrayed him and weakened him. David said in 2 Samuel 3:39, “And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.” Until his dying moments David did not know true rest. All of his life, he was constantly dependent upon the Lord for his protection. The Lord was always his strong fortress, and David lived in the knowledge that God had given command to His angels to save him from his enemies.

This is something that we need to understand in a deeper and more significant manner. God does issue decrees, and those decrees cannot be transgressed by man, Satan, or nature. Consider the

Psalms 51-100

command God gave to the sea in Job 38:11: “And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” The whole universe, heaven, hell, and life itself, all revolve around the decreed will of God. For this reason, David rested in the security of the knowledge of God’s command concerning him. Yet even so, his spirit was continually stirred within him to pray for God’s protection against those who sought to do him evil.

71:5-6 - *“For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth. 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.”* From his youth, David’s trust reposed in the Lord. Even from his mother’s womb, David had hoped in Him. Oh, let us fully put our trust in Him who made heaven and earth.

71:7-8 - *“I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.”* This verse may be best translated, “I am become a gazing stock to the multitudes.” Christ likewise suffered reproach and scorn, as will every true servant of the Lord who desires to go on with Him. Throughout the ages, the saints of God have been an object of

Psalms 51-100

derision to the world. Therefore, David asked for grace to continually praise the Lord while being treated with contempt by those around him.

71:9-11 - *“Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.”*

Now David is at the end of his life, and the great strength of his youth has declined. He can no longer take up the sword to defend himself. He prays that the Lord will not forsake him in his weakness. David's enemies were sure that the Lord had forsaken him, not only on this occasion, but also previously at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Yet just as during the time when his son rebelled, God was still David's strength at the time when old age had cast its cloak of weakness upon King David. David's enemies sought his death, but the Lord preserved His servant.

71:12-13 - *“O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.”* Picking up the often repeated refrain of the seventieth psalm, David pleads for God to

Psalms 51-100

make haste to aid him. Then, as he has been accustomed to do all his life, David also prays that God will bring his enemies to confusion and shame.

71:14-16 - *“But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.”* Realizing that he does not know how many days he has yet to live, David determines to praise the Lord increasingly, doing so in the strength of the Lord.

71:17-18 - *“O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.”*

Since David’s youth, the Lord had instructed him in His ways, and David had declared them unto his generation. Now aged, David asks the Lord not to forsake him. How important it is for those who have started life in the ways of God to finish life’s race triumphantly and rejoicing.

Psalms 51-100

71:19 - *“Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!”* In all this, David acknowledges that the righteousness of God, which has planned his life, is very high and far above any of his expectations.

71:20 - *“Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.”* Now the Lord confirms to David, who has been through so many deep valley experiences in his life, the promise that He gives to all overcomers—the promise of being resurrected from “the depths of the earth” in the last days to rule and reign with Him.

Ezekiel 37:24 says, “And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.” David will be resurrected and will be the prince in Jerusalem during the thousand year reign of Christ upon earth.

71:21-24 - *“Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. 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. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. My*

Psalms 51-100

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.”

David declares that because of all the goodness of God toward him, he will continually magnify the Lord upon musical instruments and sing forth His praises. God will increase the greatness of David throughout the millennial reign far in excess of all that He has done for David during his lifetime, while his enemies will be cast into the pit of eternal damnation.

PSALM 72

King Solomon is the subject of Psalm 72, along with the universal reign of peace he brought to Israel after the tumultuous times of war that characterized David's reign. However, although Psalm 72 was fulfilled in the person and reign of Solomon, we cannot help but see the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who is "greater than Solomon" (Mt. 12:42). He is the true Prince of Peace, and this psalm prefigures His millennial reign upon earth. This is a very beautiful prayer for Solomon and Christ.

Psalms 51-100

A Psalm for Solomon

72:1-2 - *“Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.”* David commences by asking the Lord to give His righteousness to him and to his son, Solomon. When the Lord met with Solomon in Gibeah, he asked the Lord to give him the ability to judge His people righteously. This is a requirement for all leaders. David wrote in 2 Samuel 23:3: “The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.”

72:3-5 - *“The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.”*

The whole land of Israel will enjoy peace by virtue of the Lord’s righteous judgments through the king. Solomon, and especially the One who is the “greater than Solomon,” will show forth compassion to the poor. The oppressor, taken here to mean the Antichrist, will be completely destroyed at Christ’s

Psalms 51-100

Second Coming. Certainly, the judgments of Solomon were feared, but the fullness of this verse could only be fulfilled by the Lord Himself, because it is He alone who is feared throughout all generations.

72:6-8 - *“He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.”* This verse should be linked by way of interpretation with Amos 7:1, which says, “Thus hath the Lord GOD showed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king’s mowings [or mown grass].”

These verses speak of the blessing of the Lord coming down by His Spirit upon those who have been cut down through divine abasement. They then spring up again even as does the grass that has been cut down and receives the rain and showers from heaven above. Then this verse continues by speaking in the first instance of the dominion of Solomon, who reigned from the Dead Sea to the great Mediterranean Sea, and from the Euphrates River south throughout the whole land of Palestine.

Psalms 51-100

However, with Christ it must be used in the prophetic sense, since it lauds His dominion that extends, in reality, to the ends of the earth.

72:9-11 - *“They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.”* The wilderness here described would be none other than the wilderness on the east bank of the Jordan River, and it refers to the nations of Moab, Ammon, and Edom in particular. Those peoples that have long been at enmity with Israel will bow before the Lord.

Likewise, the kings of Tarshish, speaking of Spain and the isles of the Mediterranean, shall bring their offerings from their commercial enterprises. Sheba (descendants of Ham) and Seba (descendants of Joktan from Shem) inhabit southern Arabia not far from each other. Both will bring gifts to the Lord even as did the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. All kings throughout the whole earth will pay homage to Jesus, the King of kings.

Psalms 51-100

72:12-14 - *“For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.”* Here the Lord is depicted as the great Deliverer of the souls of the poor and the needy. He is the One who will deliver them from the deceitful and unjust man, and such as deal violently against them. The blood of saints shed for their Lord is precious in His sight. Psalms 116:15 says, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”

72:15 - *“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.”* This verse speaks both of Solomon and of Christ. However, in the truest sense, as we have already stated, it is prophetic in nature. Its real fulfillment will be in the millennial reign of Christ upon earth, when He will be praised every day from the ends of the earth.

72:16 - *“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.”* This is written in

Psalms 51-100

the picturesque style of the Middle East, and depicts the extreme fruitfulness of the earth, both during Solomon's time, and above all, during Christ's reign upon earth.

72:17 - *"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."* Then turning from the fruitfulness of nature, the psalm now depicts the great blessedness of the Son of God, in whom all the nations of the earth shall rejoice, be nourished, and be multiplied. Even during Solomon's time the seed of Israel was as the sand by the seashore (1 Kgs. 4:20).

72:18-19 - *"Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."* This psalm ends with a doxology, bringing the second of the five books of the Psalms to a close.

It is a doxology which, although sung in the Church with great rejoicing and hope of His miraculous interventions on behalf of the sons of man, will be sung with added fervency in the millennial reign. There we shall see—no longer in a glass darkly, but face to face—the wonders of our blessed Lord.

PSALM 73

Psalm 73 is the second of the twelve psalms attributed to Asaph the seer, who lived in the days of David. 2 Chronicles 29:30 says, “Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.”

Nehemiah 12:46 says, “For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.” Undoubtedly, in the days of David there was a canopy of praise that covered the kingdom, especially the city of Jerusalem. From this canopy came forth Spirit-

Psalms 51-100

inspired psalms and hymns, of which possibly only a fraction still remain. This was the case with the proverbs of Solomon, of whom we are told in 1 Kings 4:32, “And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.” Only some nine hundred proverbs are preserved in the book of Proverbs, while only five of Solomon’s songs are preserved in the Song of Songs (or the Song of Solomon).

The theme of this psalm is the perplexity of the believer when he sees the prosperity of the wicked, and the sorrows and trials of the righteous. This situation was a consternation to Job’s friends as they beheld Job in the throes of such great suffering. However, by the attestation of God Himself, Job was the most righteous man of his generation (Job 1:1-3), and was also included as one of the three most righteous men in history (Ezek. 14:14). This psalm can be divided into five sections:

1. The psalmist’s affirmation of faith (73:1)
2. His description of his temptations (73:2-14)
3. The ultimate end of the wicked (73:15-20)
4. The deploring of his own ignorance of God’s ways (73:21-23)

Psalms 51-100

5. The psalmist's appreciation of God's tender, loving care for him (73:24-28)

A Psalm of Asaph

73:1 - *“Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.”* Here we see the assurance that rings through the annals of Holy Scripture, that God is good to those who seek Him for a clean heart. We commend to you the study of the following Scriptures for further meditation upon this very vital subject: Psalm 24:4; 51:10; and Proverbs 22:11.

73:2-3 - *“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”* All of us are prone to judge by appearances and not as our blessed Lord, who was made of quick understanding in the fear of God and did not judge after the sight of His eyes (Isa. 11:3). Solomon said in Proverbs 23:17-18: “Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.” Proverbs 24:1 states, “Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.”

Psalms 51-100

73:4-9 - *“For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.”*

As we have mentioned, Job describes the prosperity of the wicked (Job 21:7-13). Furthermore, as Asaph did in his psalm notes, Job mentions that the wicked live in wealth and are not troubled. But I feel that in Job 21:9 we have the key to the difference between the wicked and the righteous. The wicked do not pass under God’s rod of correction. As a result, they are *not* made partakers of His holiness (cf. Heb. 12:10).

Accepting God’s correction and discipline is the dividing line between the wicked and the righteous. The wicked never accept God’s correction. Instead, they become proud, and say to the Lord, “Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways” (Job 21:14). They also speak against God and

Psalms 51-100

actively oppose His people. The wicked who are rich and prosperous often persecute the poor (see Jas. 2:6).

73:10-12 - *“Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.”* This verse may be best interpreted as the actions of the wicked, who turn in whatsoever direction they desire. They consume water, a very precious commodity in the Middle East, in abundance, and they mockingly say, “Does God know or take knowledge of what we do?”

73:13-17 - *“Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.”*

Now the psalmist speaks of his dilemma and anguish of heart. Although he has continually sought to cleanse his heart, he has suffered, as Job said, “the terrors of God.” But he did not dare say that

Psalms 51-100

seeking after God is in vain, for that would dishearten other believers. When we are in a similar conflict and we realize that we have no one with whom we can share our anguish, we become overwhelmed. The secret is to go into God's presence, and ask Him to show us the end of the matter.

73:18-20 - *“Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.”* The end of the wicked is eternal destruction in hell. The righteous Lord will remove them from His presence forever.

73:21-22 - *“Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.”* Asaph berates his own foolishness for not comprehending the eternal judgments of God. It is similar to Agur's words in Proverbs 30:2-3: *“Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.”*

Psalms 51-100

As our knowledge of the Lord and His Word increases, we realize how little we really know. We can say with Asaph, Agur, and Paul, “For now we see through a glass, darkly ... now I know in part” (1 Cor. 13:12). On this earth we know and understand so little of the Lord’s ways and His wisdom that even the wisest of saints and the holiest of men realize their limitations. Therefore, in all humility, they decry their unworthiness.

73:23-24 - *“Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”* Asaph realizes, however, that the righteous are continually cared for by the Lord, and are most graciously guided by His counsel. At the end of their lives, they will be received up into heaven where they will enjoy all the glories that have been prepared for them.

73:25-28 - *“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But*

Psalms 51-100

it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.”

Then we see the psalmist's ending expression, so reminiscent of David's cry in Psalm 27:4, “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.”

Asaph declares that the one desire of the saint in heaven and upon earth is to fellowship with our blessed Lord—for He is our all in all. Those who have abandoned the Lord will perish with the wicked. Please heed the warning of Ezekiel 18:24, “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die” (cf. Mt. 24:48-51).

Psalms 51-100

Our solace is to draw near to the Lord and enjoy the fellowship of His presence. Let us put all of our trust in Him, irrespective of the sufferings that He has ordained for us. In so doing, the day will come when we will have the privilege of declaring all of the Lord's goodness to us in the land of the living.

PSALM 74

A further note on the author Asaph is necessary, since this psalm was not written during the time of David, but rather during the period of captivity. Asaph was a Levite of the Gershonite family during the reign of David (1 Chron. 16:5). Many of Asaph's descendants bore his name, and had the same mantle and anointing as their predecessor.

A historical note is necessary here to aid us in the comprehension of this psalm. Some commentators believe that this psalm was written during the time of the Maccabees, on the grounds that the word "synagogues" occurs only once during the Old Testament. Also, synagogues did not appear in Israel

Psalms 51-100

until after the Babylonian captivity. However, the word translated “synagogues” could also be rendered “meeting place of the congregations.”

Furthermore, it is clearly stated in this psalm that fire destroyed the Temple, and that the carved work of the sanctuary was broken down. As far as we can ascertain from every historical work written with respect to the period of Antiochus IV’s occupation of the land of Palestine, he did not destroy the Temple by fire. Another factor that should be taken into consideration with respect to ascertaining the time period of this psalm is that the compilation of the Psalms is generally attributed to Ezra, who lived and ministered just after the captivity and preceded the Maccabean period by some three hundred years.

This psalm can be conveniently divided into two parts:

1. The psalmist deplores the horrors that the nation has suffered (74:1-11).
2. The psalmist appeals to God to deliver His people as in times past (74:12-23).

Psalms 51-100

Maschil of Asaph

74:1-2 - *“O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.”* Certainly, with the overrunning of Jerusalem and the whole of Israel by the Babylonians, and the subsequent captivity, it appeared that God had cast off His people forever.

Knowing such times of seeming utter defeat in our own lives, we can easily empathize with the psalmist at this juncture in the history of the children of Israel. Yet God had given ample warning of the captivity in the Law (Deut. 28:48-57), and through the prophets (Jer. 51:49; Mic. 4:10). Still, even when God speaks aforetime as He so graciously does, we are often of feeble faith; and when adverse times come upon us, we wonder if we will see the turning of the tide.

74:3 - *“Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.”* Asaph asks the Lord to lift up His feet in judgment upon the enemy—the Babylonians who have marred the Temple of God—and crush them perpetually.

Psalms 51-100

74:4-8 - *“Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs. A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees. But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground. They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.”*

These barbarians uttered their uncouth sounds in the sanctuary, which had been dedicated to the harmonious worship of Jehovah by the Levitical choirs. The Levites would pluck their harp strings and sing the psalms and melodies of David and the first Asaph.

The beautiful wooden panels and doors of the Temple, carved by the master craftsmen of their days from the wood sent down by Hiram of Tyre, were destroyed by the ax blows of the Babylonians, who showed no respect for the delicate Temple art. God permitted all of this so that His Temple would be desecrated in the natural, as the Israelites had desecrated it spiritually. The Babylonians even burned it with fire, although they saved the furniture of the Temple (Jer. 52:12-23; Dan. 5:2-5). They also burned all the houses of the nobles and the dwelling places of the congregation of Israel.

Psalms 51-100

74:9-11 - *“We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever? Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.”*

There were five things that were lost by Israel after the destruction of Solomon’s Temple:

- 1.) The Ark of the Covenant
- 2.) The divine fire upon the Brazen Altar that had originally lit the first offerings
- 3.) The shekinah glory upon the Mercy Seat
- 4.) The Urim and the Thummim in the high priest’s garments
- 5.) The spirit of prophecy

To a limited extent, the spirit of prophecy flowed after this time through the three minor prophets—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. However, for the most part, the spirit of prophecy was missing from Israel until it reappeared on the day of Pentecost.

The duration of the Babylonian captivity had been prophesied by Jeremiah as seventy years (Jer. 25:9-11). However, the Jews did not understand this. The scales were not taken off their eyes until

Psalms 51-100

Daniel received the understanding of Jeremiah's prophecy (Dan. 9:2). In my own personal trials, I have cried out in agony many times, "O Lord, how long?" Then in conclusion of this passage, the psalmist asks the Lord to draw forth His hand to smite the enemy.

74:12-14 - *"For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness."*

In the second part of this psalm, the psalmist rehearses all of the Lord's marvelous works of old, such as His salvation, as seen through the marvels of the Passover and the opening up of the Red Sea for the children of Israel to pass over on dry ground.

The phrase, *"heads of the dragons,"* refers to the fact that the Lord not only destroyed Pharaoh and the Egyptian army, but also all the gods of Egypt (Ex. 12:12). Leviathan is believed to be a crocodile that inhabits the Nile River, according to Arabic lexicographers. *Pharaoh* in the Egyptian language signifies a crocodile. A medal from the Roman era has the head of Julius Caesar on one side, and on the other side, a crocodile with the inscription *Aegypto capta*, which means Egypt taken.

Psalms 51-100

In ancient times, a story circulated that the Zuzim, a wilderness people inhabiting the shores of the Red Sea, stated that their forefathers ate the crocodiles that were left high and dry when the Red Sea dried up in a most extraordinary manner.

74:15-17 - *“Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers. The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.”* Then the psalmist eloquently writes concerning the wondrous act of God in the wilderness when He caused the waters to flow from the rock (Ex. 17:6).

Speaking of the act of creation, he recounts how God made the night and the day, and ordained the sun to be the light of the day. He also made the boundaries of the earth and water, and ordained the seasons.

74:18-23 - *“Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name. O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever. Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor*

Psalms 51-100

and needy praise thy name. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.” In these closing verses, the psalmist pleads with the Lord to remember that the Babylonians have reproached the people of God, and that the foolish among them have even blasphemed His name.

It would appear from these verses and others that the psalmist was living in Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar left the poor of the people to remain in the land. That is why he cries out to God on behalf of the poor of the Lord’s congregation (2 Kgs. 24:14). He asks the Lord to remember His covenant with Israel, and deliver those who are precious to Him.

The dark places of the earth are where Satan rules. Certainly, one of those places was Babylon, as seen in Zechariah 5:5- 11. The Babylonians were noted for their cruelty, even as modern-day Iraq is today.

Psalms 51-100

The psalmist concludes by asking that Israel will not be ashamed when their captivity is turned, but that the Lord will have in constant remembrance those who have risen up against Him. In later psalms, and in the writings of the prophets, we see the enormity of God's judgment upon Babylon.

PSALM 75

This psalm would be applicable both to the times of Absalom and also the rebellion of Adonijah, who was seeking to be king in the place of his father David. However, both the Lord and David had clearly stated that Solomon would be the next king. This psalm contains a profound lesson for us all to realize—we must ask the Lord to show us the position or ministry that He has foreordained for us. Above all, we must not touch another person's ministry or position, for swift judgment will come upon us, as was the case with both these sons of David.

Psalms 51-100

To the chief Musician, Altaschith, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

75:1 - *“Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.”* The psalmist gives thanks for the imminent presence of the Lord, which is manifested through His wonderful works that are seen by one and all.

75:2 - *“When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.”* This verse has two valid interpretations. Firstly, when the congregation of Israel and the Church appear before God, He will judge them in righteousness. Secondly, when His ministers assume responsibility for a church, they must preach, teach, and govern His people uprightly (2 Sam. 23:3).

75:3 - *“The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.”* Verse three speaks of the power of the Lord upholding all things by His Word when the earth and all its inhabitants will be dissolved with “a fervent heat” (2 Pet. 3:10-11).

75:4-7 - *“I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn: Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”* The

Psalms 51-100

psalmist warns all those who would act foolishly in seeking their own advancement that it is God who determines those who will occupy positions both in the world and the Church.

Paul states in his epistle to the Romans: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (Rom. 13:1-2).

In humble submission, we should joyfully serve those who are in authority over us. If God has promised us a position, let us prepare our hearts before the Lord so that we may be faithful when we are promoted in His time. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had to suffer seven years of judgments until he realized that it is God who demotes one person and exalts another (Dan. 4:17, 25).

75:8-10 - *“For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and*

Psalms 51-100

drink them. But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.”

Awesome judgment is heaped upon the wicked who seek the positions that God has ordained for others. We need only cite the Scriptural cases of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who sought the positions of Moses and Aaron, and were slain by God (Num. 16:1-35).

Let us join the psalmist in exalting God in praises, for He does all things well. The end of the matter is sure—God will cut off the wicked and exalt the righteous!

PSALM 76

It is not always necessary to put a psalm into its appropriate historical time frame in order to derive a full appreciation of its spiritual contents. Surely, this applies to the seventy-sixth psalm. However, if we were to give Psalm 76 a time period, we would place it in Hezekiah's reign, probably at the time of his battles with the Assyrians.

The theme of this psalm can justly be entitled, "Eulogizing God for His Judgments."

Psalms 51-100

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

76:1-3 - *“In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.”* How wonderful it is to know the joyful sound, “Jesus Saves!” This is the God whom Judah and Israel knew. Their God had broken the power of their enemies. It was the time when the presence of God was known in Jerusalem and Zion.

76:4-9 - *“Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep. Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.”*

In this portion of Psalm 76, the great deeds of the Lord to past generations are recalled, particularly the overthrow of the Egyptian chariots and horses in the Red Sea. This was one of the most

Psalms 51-100

miraculous interventions of God in the history of the nation of Israel. They turned to this miracle for solace and comfort in times of later distresses.

76:10-12 - *“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared. He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.”*

The Lord uses the anger and passion of man for His own glory. We read in Romans 9:17, “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”

Because of Pharaoh’s hatred for the children of Israel and his hardened heart, the Lord was glorified when He poured forth the ten plagues. However, when He so desired, He restrained Pharaoh from further troubling Israel by slaying him and his Egyptian army in the Red Sea. This is also true of Sennacherib and the Assyrians, for they were called the rod of God’s anger against Israel (Isa. 10:5). However, when God’s work upon Zion was finished, the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 of the Assyrian army camped around Jerusalem (Isa. 37:21-38).

Psalms 51-100

It is the same today. Angry, violent men are raised up against us and the Church, but only in order that God may be glorified in some miracle of deliverance on our behalf.

As in Psalm 2:10-12, the psalmist closes by admonishing the kings of the earth to bring presents unto the Lord and be reconciled unto Him. Let us, beloved, ensure that we always maintain peace with the Lord, and whenever possible, with others too.

PSALM 77

With striking similarities to Psalm 73, Psalm 77 is recorded in two parts. First, we see the sorrows, doubts, and fears of Asaph during a long period of self-questioning, when he was trying to find the answers to painful situations. Second, we see Asaph's triumph over his sorrow made possible by the remembrance of God's past kindness to Israel as a nation.

This psalm was written, as the superscription tells us, by Asaph during a time when he was overcome and burdened with troubles that he had no power to change. It is written with all the beauty, tenderness, and pathos of a person going through one of life's valley experiences.

Psalm 77 can be divided into two parts:

1. The psalmist's grief (77:1-9)
2. His triumph over his grief (77:10-20)

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph.

77:1-2 - *"I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted."* Like David when he was in a pit of despondency (Psa. 40:1), the psalmist cried and God heard him. Many people turn to their own devices or to the world for help when they are in trouble. Such was the case of the princes in the time of Hezekiah (Isa. 30:1). By contrast, the godly, like the psalmist, turn to the Lord in their distress. Although he called upon the Lord without ceasing, Asaph's soul knew no rest.

77:3 - *"I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah."* When we complain, our spirit is brought down. Therefore, let us at such times adopt the triumphant

Psalms 51-100

attitude of David in Psalm 42:5, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”

77:4-6 - *“Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.”* Even during the night the Lord prevented him from sleeping. Now in a time of grief, the psalmist declares that he will think of past times of God’s blessing. This was the case with Job during his time of sore trial. “Oh that I were as in months past ... as I was in the days of my youth” (Job 29:2,4).

77:7 - *“Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?”* Does the Lord forsake us forever? At times in our lives, we are brought down to the place where we wonder if we will ever see the Lord’s blessing again. Let us hold fast to the Lord in such times.

77:8 - *“Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?”* God’s mercy and promises are two pillars of our faith. His mercy toward us will never end, as long as we walk in His ways. Also, God is not a man that He should lie. His promises are “yea and amen” to all those who

Psalms 51-100

believe. We should rehearse the promises that He has made to us, for He will surely bring them to pass in His good time.

77:9 - *“Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.”* Many of God’s people could reecho Asaph’s cry, even as the prophet did in Habakkuk 3:2, “O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.”

77:10 - *“And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.”* Now as hope rises in the psalmist’s heart, there is a fresh quickening in his spirit at the recollection of God’s might and power.

77:11-12 - *“I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.”* He determines to switch his thoughts, and meditate upon the Lord’s works and miracles. As another psalmist states, “My meditation of him shall be sweet” (Psa. 104:34). This spiritual exercise of meditating upon God’s works will produce a wholesomeness in our body, soul, and spirit.

Psalms 51-100

77:13 - *“Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?”* The key to overcoming all of our problems is to come into the presence of God, as Asaph himself says in Psalm 73:17, “I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.” God’s ways are revealed in His sanctuary, and also through the Tabernacle of Moses. (Please see our book on *The Tabernacle of Moses* for more details.)

77:14-19 - *“Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.”*

These verses deal with the great miracle that God performed in dividing the Red Sea. All of nature was afraid at His presence. As we meditate upon these wonders, we will begin to break forth in jubilation, “I will sing unto the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously.” God heard the cries of Israel in

Psalms 51-100

Egyptian captivity, and said in Exodus 3:7-8, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them.” How God works or how He is going to command deliverance and bring it about for us we do not know, but this one thing we know—He most certainly will!

77:20 - *“Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”* If we will be patient, the Lord will raise up a leader or comforter for us, even as He raised up Moses and Aaron in the past, to lead us into our promises and into our *Rehoboth* (our place of rest). Praise the Lord!

PSALM 78

Designed to draw from Israel's history several vital lessons that would cause future generations to hope in God, Psalm 78 is a psalm of instruction. The history of the nation is recapitulated here from the exodus out of Egypt under the direction of the prophet Moses, through the times of the Judges, until the days of David's reign. It was written by Asaph, who lived during the time of David and Solomon. This psalm can be divided into the following five parts:

1. An explanation of the purpose of the psalm (78:1-8)
2. An account of Israel's journey in the wilderness (78:9-41)

Psalms 51-100

3. A recounting of the events while Israel was in Egyptian captivity (78:42-53)
4. Their entrance into the Promised Land, their subsequent rebellion, and the Lord's judgments upon them (78:54-64)
5. The Lord's deliverance for His people; and His choice of Zion for His dwelling place and David as His servant (78:65-72)

Maschil of Asaph

Part 1 (78:1-8)

78:1-8 - *"Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as*

Psalms 51-100

their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God."

This section is similar to the admonition of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 13:9, where He said, "[He] who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Mark 4:24 says, "Take heed what ye hear ... unto you that hear shall more be given." In like manner, all the epistles to the seven churches terminate with the phrase, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Therefore, we see how important it is to listen to the Lord when He speaks to us. As in the case of this psalm, when the Lord commands us to give our full attention to Him, then what follows is of prime importance for us.

The section following the warning to listen is given in the form of parables and sayings that only the godly can understand (Prov. 1:1-6, Mt. 13:11,16).

The purpose of this psalm is to command Israel:

- 1.) To listen to the Law
- 2.) To listen to those things that the Lord speaks and keep His commandments
- 3.) To listen to what their fathers had taught them

Psalms 51-100

- 4.) To make these things known to their children, and their children to their children.
- 5.) To set their hope in the Lord
- 6.) Not to forget His works of old
- 7.) Not to be like the former generations, who were stubborn, half-hearted, and not steadfast

Part 2 (78:9-41) - The Wilderness Journey

78:9-22 - *“The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had showed them. Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can*

Psalms 51-100

he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.”

The psalmist recounts the marvelous wonders and miracles that the Lord did in the fields of Zoan, which was the location of the capital city of the Pharaohs in Egypt. This part commences with a rebuke to the children of Ephraim, who had received the privileges of the firstborn (1 Chron. 5:1-2).

They did not keep the Law, and turned away from God after the ascension of Rehoboam to the throne. This led to the rejection of the tribe of Joseph (and Ephraim), and the selection of the tribe of Judah (Psa. 78:67-68).

During these last few years, I have seen many Christians disqualify themselves from God's best for their lives, as did Ephraim. Like the Ephraimites, although they are talented and equipped for battle, they have turned back, and consequently missed the ministry that God had ordained for them.

In these verses, the psalmist is alluding to a specific incident that took place in the Promised Land. During the time of the Judges, Ephraim (the predominant tribe at that time) did not drive the

Psalms 51-100

Canaanites out of their possessions, and when the other tribes needed help, they did not go to their assistance.

Yet as a whole, this applies to all of the ten tribes which forsook the true worship of God, and as a result, lost the God-given privileges obtained by their father Joseph (v. 56-60).

This thought of turning back is repeated at least three times (v. 9, 41, and 57). It is an awesome warning to us not to leave the battlefield. The Lord Jesus gave a similar warning in Luke 9:62: “No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Consider King Edward VIII of England, who left his throne for an adulterous woman. He inherited a life of emptiness and vanity. O beloved, never, never give up!

Never leave your God-appointed post. Press on, as Paul says, to hit the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus for your life (Phil. 3:14).

78:23-28 - *“Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did*

Psalms 51-100

eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full. He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations."

In this passage, there is a litany of God's gracious dealings with His people to meet their desires as well as their needs. A true leader seeks to accomplish his task with the people that God has given him, using their abilities to their full potential, but also seeking, at the same time, to satisfy the desires of those under him.

Psalms 51-100

The following is a list of the Lord's gracious dealings with His people as described in verses 13-28:

- 1.) He divided the Red Sea.
- 2.) He led them by the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.
- 3.) He brought water out of the rocks.
- 4.) He gave them manna, the bread of heaven.
- 5.) He gave them flesh to eat.

78:29-41 - *“So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel. For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble. When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant. But he, being full of*

Psalms 51-100

compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.”

God gave the Israelites their own hearts' desires, which were very ungodly and certainly unnecessary for their journey. However, He judged them by slaying them as they gorged upon the meat that they had lusted for (Num. 11:31-35). The Lord also sent leanness into their souls—a terrible judgment (Psa. 106:15). Many times we might insist on having something, and although the Lord might give it to us, leanness comes into our spirits as a result of demanding the wrong things.

We should also be careful not to lust after the vanities and pleasures of this world. Let us be content with the Lord's provision for our lives, as Esther was. Queen Esther required nothing more than that which was given to her. She was content with the Lord's provision (Esther 2:15). We should learn to be content with whatever the Lord provides for us, as did the Apostle Paul (Phil. 4:11). However, we must ask *largely* of the Lord for the needs of others.

Psalms 51-100

Part 3 (78:42-53)

78:42-53 - *“They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy. How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan: And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink. He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them. He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham: But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.”* The psalmist describes the plagues that God poured out upon Pharaoh, the

Psalms 51-100

Egyptians, and the gods whom they worshipped. However, the psalmist chooses to enumerate only a few of the ten plagues:

- 1.) The first plague—the turning of the rivers into blood (Ex. 7:14-25)
- 2.) The fourth plague—flies (Ex. 8:21-32)
- 3.) The second plague—frogs (Ex. 8:1-6)
- 4.) The eighth plague—caterpillars and locusts (Ex. 10:1-20)
- 5.) The seventh plague—hail, frost, thunder, and lightning (Ex. 9:13-35)
- 6.) The tenth plague—the slaying of the firstborn in Egypt (Ex. 12:29-31)

The Israelites were protected by the Lord from all these judgments that came upon the Egyptians. They left Egypt like a flock of sheep under the guidance of their God-given shepherd, Moses. The Israelites did not fear their enemies, and neither were they overwhelmed by them. On the other hand, their enemies, the Egyptians, drowned in the waters of the Red Sea when they pursued the Israelites. God destroyed Israel's enemies.

Psalms 51-100

Part 4 (78:54-64)

78:54-64 - *“And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased. He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents. Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies: But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy’s hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.”*

Psalms 51-100

The Lord brought the Israelites to the border of the Promised Land, the land that He had promised to their forefathers— Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He then cast out all the heathen in the land of Canaan, and divided the land among the twelve tribes of Israel (see the book of Joshua).

Yet the children of Israel did not remember all the goodness that God had shown them, and rebelled in the land that God had given them. This was particularly evident at the time of Eli, the high priest (1 Sam. 1-2). Because of their rebellion during this time, God allowed the Philistines to take the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh (1 Sam. 4-6). Joshua had set up the Tabernacle of Moses in Shiloh several years before.

The enemy slew the Israelites with a great slaughter (1 Sam. 4:10). Some thirty thousand of the young men of Israel were slain. The priests, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain as well (1 Sam. 4:17). The Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant from the Tabernacle to their own land. Phinehas' wife died in childbirth when she heard the tidings (1 Sam. 4:19-20).

Psalms 51-100

Part 5 (78:65-72)

78:65-72 - *“Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach. Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever. He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.”* God smote the Philistines with boils, and the head and hands of their god, Dagon, were amputated by the angel of the Lord (1 Sam. 5:1-5).

Because the children of Ephraim (representing the ten northern tribes of Israel) did not walk with God, they were rejected. The primary teaching of Psalm 78 is Ephraim’s loss of the call of God because they turned back from walking in the ways of the Lord. It is an awesome warning for all of God’s children. The sorrow for those believers who do not walk in God’s ways will be not only now, but on

Psalms 51-100

Judgment Day. They will look at the Lord Jesus face to face, and see His crestfallen features filled with disappointment because they did not fulfill their calling.

God's plans, however, are not thwarted. When one person fails, God in His foreknowledge always has someone whom He has groomed to take up the baton. In this case, the tribe of Judah and Mount Zion took the place of Ephraim and Shiloh. May God grant that we have a part in the heavenly Mount Zion, and enter into all the promises of God for His people in these last days.

David, the man after God's own heart, then took the helm. He became responsible for feeding and caring for the people of God. This privilege that David received endured as an inheritance throughout the time of the monarchy.

Also, David will be resurrected to be the prince in Jerusalem during the Millennium. Therefore, let us take note of this solemn lesson, and not suffer eternal loss because we gave up or failed to appropriate the call of God upon our lives.

PSALM 79

Psalm 79 flows with Psalm 74. It would be appropriate to place Psalm 79 historically in the period of the Babylonian captivity. This psalm can be divided into three sections. In Part 1 (v. 1-4), Asaph declares to the Lord the pitiful state of the country, and Jerusalem in particular. Asaph is never more “at home” than when expounding on the history of his nation.

In Part 2 (v. 5-12), Asaph presents his prayer for God's judgments upon Israel's enemies, and he prays that He will graciously preserve the poor and the afflicted. In Part 3 (v. 13), Asaph declares that because of the anticipated deliverance by God, the nation will praise Him throughout all generations.

Psalms 51-100

A Psalm of Asaph.

Part 1 (79:1-4)

79:1-4 - *“O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them. We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.”* The only time the city of Jerusalem was laid in heaps was when the prophecy of Micah 3:12, mentioned in Jeremiah 26:18, was fulfilled. This took place when the Babylonians overran Jerusalem. As we review the prophecies of Micah and Jeremiah along with the accounts of 2 Kings 21:12-13 and 2 Chronicles 36:17-19, and Moses’ prophecy of this devastation (Deut. 28:49-68), we realize that the slaughter of God’s people was indeed very awesome. This flows along with the account of Asaph. The heathen rejoiced and mocked God’s people because of the devastation.

Psalms 51-100

Part 2 (79:5-12)

79:5 - *“How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?”* Again, as is so often the case when God’s people pass through trials and chastisements from the Lord, the question arises, “How long, O Lord?” In most countries, prisoners are told the length of their sentence when they are incarcerated. However, this seldom happens with God’s people. Yet Jeremiah prophesied that the captivity would only last seventy years, reckoned from the first captivity in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, circa 606 B.C. Although Jeremiah had given the prophecy, it had to be interpreted by a revelation from God to Daniel (Dan. 9:1-2).

79:6-7 - *“Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.”* Then the psalmist prays that the Lord’s judgment will come upon the heathen, who have inflicted great atrocities upon Jerusalem. It is noteworthy that God always chooses the most evil people to bring chastisement upon the righteous who have departed from His ways.

Psalms 51-100

This is then followed by God's judgments upon the evil ones. Babylon was later judged by several nations (who in turn suffered in like manner), being punished for what they had done to Jerusalem. The Medes and Persians, in particular, brought God's chastisement upon the Babylonians when they conquered Babylon (Isa. 13:17; Jer. 51:11).

79:8-9 - *“O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake.”* Then Asaph pleads with the Lord not to remember Israel's former sins. God's forgetfulness is one of His greatest attributes.

We must appropriate God's divine forgetfulness. When God forgives us, He forgets our sins; and we must forget our sins too. We must be careful not to remind people of their past sins, which have been forgiven and covered by the Lord's blood.

Remember, it is only to the degree that we forgive and forget the sins of others that God will forgive us. “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven,” said Christ in Luke 6:37. Many Christians, including pastors, have accused others of a certain sin, and then have been overcome with that same sin themselves.

Psalms 51-100

Let us always ask God for the Spirit of forgiveness and forgetfulness; for if we do, God will forgive and forget our sins. We not only want to be forgiven, but also to be purged from the very root of the problem.

79:10-11 - *“Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed. Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die.”* Asaph points out that the heathen are prone to say about us, as they did about Christ, “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him!” (Mt. 27:43). Asaph prays that everyone will know that God is on our side by the vengeance He wreaks upon our adversaries.

Those who are imprisoned for Christ's sake or pass through circumstances that are prison-like in nature, sigh in grief. All those who follow the Lord will experience the trial of their faith. In trials, we feel like we are going to perish unless God intervenes on our behalf.

79:12 - *“And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.”* Asaph prays that all those who have caused others to fall into traps

Psalms 51-100

and pits of sin will reap sevenfold of the tribulations they have brought upon others. Vengeance belongs to God. Beloved, in due time, God will repay our enemies if we will patiently wait upon Him and trust in Him.

Part 3 (79:13)

79:13 - *“So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will show forth thy praise to all generations.”* The people of God, here called *the sheep of His pasture*, will give thanks unto their Lord, the Good Shepherd, throughout all generations.

PSALM 80

Historical in nature, Psalm 80 was written during a time of great national disaster, when the nation of Israel was being overrun by foreign invaders. It was the time when Israel was suffering from one of the frequent incursions by the Assyrians, who are likened in this psalm to the boar out of the woods.

We suggest that this psalm refers to the period in the reign of Jeroboam II when the Lord heard this prayer and had mercy upon the ten northern tribes, restoring their borders to them according to the word of the prophet Jonah (2 Kgs. 14:25).

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 80 is a prayer that has five stanzas of four Hebrew lines each. It contains a progressive urgency of appeal to the Lord to meet their needs. This beautiful truth can be appreciated more in the Hebrew, where verse 3 uses the name “Elohim” (God); verse 7 uses the name “Elohim Tsebaoth” (God of Hosts); and verse 14 uses “Jehovah Elohim Tsebaoth” (Lord God of Hosts).

The superscription may be interpreted as a psalm that the chief musician should play upon the trumpet in a mournful tone or lament. A later Asaph than the one of David’s time was the composer. The family of Asaph produced a long line of prophetic musicians.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannimeduth, A Psalm of Asaph.

80:1 - *“Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.”* Joseph’s name is evoked here in a significant fashion. Joseph is sometimes called “the fourth patriarch,” simply because he was the leader of the predominant family of the Northern Kingdom. This appeal to shine forth is addressed to the Lord, the Shepherd of Israel, who dwells within the veil in the Holiest of all, between the wings of the cherubim in the Temple.

Psalms 51-100

80:2 - *“Before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us”* (NIV). The thought of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh being joined together has three explanations: Firstly, these three tribes were the tribes that followed the Ark in the march (see Num. 10:20-24).

Secondly, part of Benjamin’s inheritance was in the north with the northern ten tribes. That part of their territory was governed by the kings of Israel. Thirdly, Benjamin was the son of Rachel, as was Joseph. Therefore, the tribe of Benjamin is united here with Joseph’s two sons—Ephraim and Manasseh.

The psalmist Asaph pleads with the Lord to stir Himself up on behalf of these brothers. However, at the same time, Asaph recognizes that sin and sin alone has brought the enemy into their camp. Therefore, he cries out that the Lord will grant repentance.

80:3 - *“Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”* A truth that flows throughout the Word of God is that only the Lord can give grace for His erring people to return unto Himself. Moses made this same observation in Psalms 90:3: “Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.”

Psalms 51-100

The Lord Himself states this truth in John 6:44, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” Therefore, it behooves us, beloved, to walk humbly before the Lord all the days of our lives so that we may find grace and favor in His eyes. The psalmist then asks the question:

80:4 - *“O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?”* The Lord had not been listening to the supplications of His people because of their iniquities. This is confirmed by King David in Psalm 66:18, where he said: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” The Lord has to deal harshly with His people to make them willing to change.

80:5 - *“Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.”* In order to make us *willing* to walk in His ways, many times the Lord has to lead us through sorrowful circumstances. This is exactly what the Lord had to do when the Israelites were in Egyptian bondage. In order to make the Israelites willing to leave, He made Egypt like an iron furnace.

Psalms 51-100

80:6 - *“Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.”*

Sorrows can take on many forms. In this particular case, Israel was overrun by the cruel Assyrian invaders. Their neighbors, who should have been kind and affectionate toward them, derided them.

These neighbors were none other than those to whom they were, in fact, related: the nations of Edom, Ammon, and Moab—who were rebuked many times in the annals of Holy Scripture for their lack of care for their relatives, the Israelites (see Obad. 1:10-11).

We, too, should take special care that we heed the admonition of our Lord to always keep the second commandment, which summarizes the duties of man upon earth—namely, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Mt. 22:39).

As we have previously stated in these studies, on occasion the Lord stirs up the enemy against us to prove us and to bring to pass His purposes in our lives. But when even our neighbors mock us because of our faith in Christ, our prayers must increase in intensity.

80:7 - *“Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”* The psalmist is alluding to the blessing that the prophet Moses was commanded to pronounce upon the

Psalms 51-100

children of Israel, as recorded in Numbers 6:25: “The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.”

Israel - The Vine of God (80:8-16)

In many portions of Holy Scripture, Israel and also the Church of Jesus Christ are likened to a vine (see Isaiah 5 and John 15). The psalmist speaks of Israel in verses 8 to 16 as the vine of God.

80:8 - *“Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.”* In Egypt, principally under the tutelage of Joseph, Israel was being prepared to become like fine mellow wine that would glorify God, speaking of the richness of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of the nation.

Space was made for this vine to take root in the Promised Land by uprooting and destroying the seven nations that had dwelt there. Deuteronomy 7:1 says, “When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou.”

Psalms 51-100

These seven nations correspond spiritually to the seven vices that the Lord hates, seen in Proverbs 6:16-19: “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”

These things, likewise, must be rooted out of our own lives in order for the fruit of the Holy Spirit to come to maturity in us (Lk. 8:14). Through the removal of these sins, like the removal of those seven nations, God will plant His vine within our hearts.

80:9 - *“Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.”* The Lord desires the fruit of the Spirit to permeate every part of our being, even as Israel eventually conquered the whole of the Promised Land.

80:10 - *“The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.”* Many people found refuge under the vine of God. *“The [branches] were like the goodly cedars,”* means that Israel enjoyed the Lord’s strength.

Psalms 51-100

As believers, we also are called branches of the True Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 15:5, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” We need to partake of the Lord’s strength. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

80:11 - *“She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.”* Reiterating the thought of verse 10, the psalmist uses a Hebrew expression familiar to the inhabitants of the land of Palestine—from *“the sea”* meaning the Mediterranean, to *“the river”* meaning the Jordan River. This signifies that Israel had completely occupied their land of inheritance. We should occupy all the territory that the Lord has ordained for us personally as a spiritual inheritance.

80:12 - *“Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?”* As the psalmist contemplates the fact that Israel had occupied their geographic inheritance given to them by the Lord, he asks why the Lord has allowed the enemy to march into their inheritance.

Psalms 51-100

The phrase “*broken down the hedges*” needs an explanation, because it refers to a beautiful, spiritual truth and work that the Lord accomplishes in our lives when we accept Jesus Christ into our hearts. This is revealed in the book of Job by none other than Satan himself. In Job 1:10, Satan said that the Lord had made a *hedge* around Job to protect him.

This reminds me of the vision that the Lord gave me at the beginning of my Christian experience. He showed me a very undesirable piece of ground, filled with rocks and thorns. I then saw the Lord Himself walk onto that ground and begin to construct a wall around it.

This wall, we are told in Isaiah 60:18, is called the wall of salvation. It is erected to protect us from the enemy, and is maintained by obedience to the Word of God. When Israel disobeyed the Lord, He was no longer their protection against their enemies. Moreover, He raised up the heathen to come into their land—in this case, the Assyrians.

80:13 - “*The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.*” The *boar* is a name that is used to denote the Assyrians, for it is an unclean animal which typifies the inhabitants of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. However, in a spiritual sense, the boar symbolizes a

Psalms 51-100

sexually unclean spirit that comes into men and women when they have adulterous relationships. The same would be true of people who have illicit sexual liaisons. Thus the psalmist, beholding the ravaging of the land, cries out to the Lord for His deliverance.

80:14 - *“Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.”* This has been my own personal cry when I have had to pray for Christians to be delivered from unclean spirits. Often, these spirits have come because they left the paths of righteousness and went into the pit of lust and immorality. It is a cry that the Lord will again return to the piece of land that He had once owned and cleansed, and now has become polluted because of sin.

80:15-16 - *“And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.”* Ezekiel 16:15 gives us a very good description of the spiritual state of Israel at this time: “But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.” The Lord had made them very beautiful, but

Psalms 51-100

they turned into the ways of the prostitute. Consequently, at this time, Israel had become like a vine reduced, through burning, to its roots.

Regretfully, over the years I have known many Christians who have committed sexual sins. The consequence is that they are reduced to virtually nothing. Unless God gives them repentance, those who have fallen into sin will continue on their path to hell. However, God's mercy is so great!

I have seen many people saved by God's mercy, even as "a branch plucked from the fire." A certain young lady once testified that she literally felt the flames of hell all around her before the Lord delivered her.

80:17 - *"Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself."* Now the psalmist pleads for the Lord's intervention, and for Him to strengthen us and cause us to walk in His ways. This is also a prophetic reference to the Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry.

This verse should be read along with Ezekiel 36:27-29: "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the

Psalms 51-100

land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.” God will preserve us if we will just receive His grace to return to Him.

80:18 - *“So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.”* Those who have been delivered by the Lord from their bondages need to hear the reproof and solemn warning not to return to their old, sinful ways. Let the Lord speak to you through the pages of John’s Gospel where He said to the woman apprehended in the act of adultery, “Go and sin no more” (Jn. 8:11). Or consider His words to the impotent man in John 5:14, “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”

80:19 - *“Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”* The cry of the psalmist is that the Lord would turn them again to walk in His ways. King David knew what it was to have the Lord mercifully stretch forth His hand and bring him out of a horrible pit. In these circumstances, Israel found mercy, and under King Jeroboam II they regained all the lands that they had lost.

Psalms 51-100

However, unlike King David, the Israelites returned to their sinful ways in later generations. The result was that the Assyrians, under Shalmaneser V and Sargon, destroyed their land and took them captive in 722 B.C. May we learn this lesson, beloved, and not return to a life of sin. Let us resolve with the psalmist that we will not go back, but will rather seek the Lord's face forevermore.

PSALM 81

Psalm 81 was written by Asaph, who wrote extensively about the history of his country, Israel. This psalm is a recalling to mind of the history of the children of Israel from their days in Egypt onwards. It was composed to be sung on feast days and on the occasion of every new moon.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph.

81:1-3 - *“Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.”* The injunction at the beginning of this psalm is

Psalms 51-100

to sing in harmony and congregational praise unto the Lord. Psalm 81 was written with the intention of being sung while the Israelites were treading out the grapes. They were to shout aloud and make a joyful noise unto God their strength. The sense of shouting and making a joyful noise is the thought of the triumph which we see reflected in sporting events. It is a tremendous release of joy that reflects a spirit set free.

It is good for us to sing the psalms. As we do, we often feel victory in our own souls. The book of Psalms was the hymnal of Israel. It is conjectured that Jesus sang a psalm on the way to the Mount of Olives after the Last Supper (Mt. 26:30).

The King James Version translates it as “a hymn,” but in the Greek it simply means a religious ode or song. It could mean a psalm or hymn. In virtually every revival in Church history, the Spirit of God has caused men and women to put the Psalms to music, resulting in a great spiritual blessing for the people of God.

Psalms 51-100

81:4-6 - *“For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not. I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.”*

This is a commandment of God that was established at the time of Joseph. It refers primarily to the Passover, which was first celebrated when the children of Israel left Egypt under the direction of Moses. They went out with the high praises of God in their mouth (Psa. 149:6). Their enemies were unable to stop them. They are referred to as *Joseph* because that is how they were known in Egypt. Joseph was the protector and ruler of his brethren during that time. That is also evident from Exodus 1:8, which says, “Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph”—again signifying his preeminence.

Therefore, this jubilee applies particularly to the Passover, which is the feast that prefigures the death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In this feast, the children of Israel were obliged to slay a lamb.

Exodus 12:3-8 says, “Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for

Psalms 51-100

an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

Psalm 81:5 is Joseph’s testimony when he was sold into slavery by his brothers and dwelt in Egypt—a land where he did not understand the language. All who have experienced this can certainly empathize with Joseph when he was in Egypt. It is difficult enough to be in a foreign land, away from father, mother, brothers, and sisters.

Psalms 51-100

However, the added humiliation of not being able to make one's desires known and converse with those around you is truly frustrating. When I lived in France, the little children wondered what language I was speaking when I tried to speak in French.

Often when a person is in a strange land, as Joseph was, he is reduced to doing menial tasks such as washing the pots and pans. When I was an assistant pastor at a church in France, the pastor's wife would often send me into the village to gather the scraps from the market for her rabbits.

Beloved, if you are in a situation like this, as I was many years ago, wait patiently on the Lord. He will enable you to learn the language, and in His good time you will be delivered, like Joseph, from the pots and pans and from the burdens of menial servitude to fulfill His calling upon your life.

81:7-10 - *“Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah. Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”* Joseph cried out to God when he was in trouble in prison, and the

Psalms 51-100

Lord delivered him. The psalmist then speaks of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage and servitude.

We read of their Egyptian bondage in Exodus 1:8-11: "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses."

81:11-16 - *"But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee."*

Psalms 51-100

There then follows a dialogue in which the Lord says to His people that if they had hearkened unto Him, then He would have fed them with the finest of wheat and quickly subdued their enemies under them. Yet Israel would not hearken unto the Lord, and so He gave them up to their own hearts' lust and they walked in their own counsels.

When we become born again, we experience Christ as our Savior and Passover Lamb, as the Israelites did. We rejoice in His salvation, but afterwards how do we walk? The Lord has such wonderful things in store for us if we will continue to walk with Him and listen to His voice and counsel. However, if we choose not to, He will give us up, as He says in Romans 1:21-28, to a reprobate mind and a life of sin.

Psalms 81 affords us a very clear understanding of the problem not only with Israel, but also with Christians today—disobedience. When we do not obey the Lord, He does not swiftly subdue our enemies. Instead, our enemies are permitted to plague us.

Psalms 51-100

Some of our problems come not because God is unwilling to change our circumstances, but because we do not deal with sin in our lives. May we heed this admonition to walk in God's ways all the days of our lives.

PSALM 82

Unlike Psalm 50, which speaks of God's judging His people, Psalm 82 speaks of God's judging the rulers, lawgivers, and judges of the nation of Israel. Those who were ordained to be the witnesses and teachers of God's righteous ways were themselves in dire need of correction.

Something that I have seen again and again throughout my long years of ministry is that often it is pastors, teachers, and ministers who lead God's people astray and prevent them from first knowing and then experiencing the whole counsel of God.

Psalms 51-100

A Psalm of Asaph

82:1-4 - *“God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.”*

This psalm is an admonition to the Lord’s ministers to deal uprightly, even as the Lord Himself has set before us His example. It opens with the statement that God judges His people.

Psalm 82 is an indictment against ministers and leaders who are not walking in the ways of their divine Counselor.

1. They actually said that the wicked are just.
2. They no longer cared for orphans and the poor.
3. They did not save the poor and needy from the oppression of the wicked.
4. They lacked discernment and knowledge of God’s ways. They ceased to walk in the light.

82:5 - *“They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.”* Leaders of congregations are the foundations of the works of God and

Psalms 51-100

His Church. However, when the leaders are out of alignment, the churches will crash down like a house built upon the sand.

82:6 - *“I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.”* The word “gods” refers to the Lord’s people, as Christ Himself acknowledged when He quoted verse 6 in John 10:35. Because we are the offspring of God (Acts 17:29), we are made partakers of His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). Therefore, we should manifest His likeness. Christ said in Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” The Lord also said, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16).

82:7-8 - *“But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.”* God’s appointed leaders had elevated themselves in their own eyes, and in the eyes of the congregation. Because of their unrighteous ways they would die like any heathen prince, going down into the pit of hell. The psalmist pleads that God would manifest His righteousness and make plain to all that He is the King, and that all the kingdoms of this world will become His.

Psalms 51-100

As we have already stated, this psalm is an awesome indictment against church leaders who do not walk in God's ways. Those who are called to the ministry should meditate often in this psalm. We need to hear the continual exhortation of Psalm 82 to do the works of God in the midst of the congregation, and seek to be examples for others to follow.

PSALM 83

The setting of this psalm is placed historically at the time of Judah's fourth king, Jehoshaphat, when Assur (Assyria) was an emerging power. The rationale behind this is that the only other possible time setting would have been during King Hezekiah's reign.

However, Psalm 83 could not have possibly been written during the time of Hezekiah because Amalek is mentioned in Psalm 83:7, and the Amalekites had ceased to exist by the time of Hezekiah.

This is made very clear in 1 Chronicles 4:41-43: "And these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and smote their tents, and the habitations that were found there, and

Psalms 51-100

destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their rooms: because there was pasture there for their flocks. And some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day.”

This psalm deals with the invasion mentioned in 2 Chronicles 20:1: “It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.” The chronicler, none other than Ezra, used this portion of history to encourage those of the Restoration Era when the descendants of the invaders were again afflicting those who sought to rebuild the ruins of the city of Jerusalem.

A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

83:1 - *“Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.”* The psalmist’s cry is directed to-ward God, not toward man. His prayer is not that God would raise up a deliverer, but that God Himself would arise on their behalf.

Psalms 51-100

83:2 - *“For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.”* Israel’s enemies were many. Their enemies’ hatred was directed against God through His people. The adversaries of the Church are almost always a noisy, boastful crowd.

83:3 - *“They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.”* All of these nations were in alliance with each other. Our enemies use much treachery and cunning in arranging their schemes. They are allied to fight against Israel and God’s *hidden ones*—those whom He loves, cherishes, and protects.

83:4 - *“They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.”* Even to this very day, the wicked have always desired to eliminate Israel from the face of the earth.

83:5 - *“For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee.”* All of Israel’s foes were of one consent. What united these nations was their common hatred for Israel. This is similar to the alliance between Herod and Pilate years later. Although they were bitter enemies, they joined forces for a common cause—to crucify the Lord (Lk. 23:12).

Psalms 51-100

83:6 - *“The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes...”* The Edomites were descendants of Esau, who despised his birthright and then despised the one who received it, Jacob his brother. Edom was always the implacable enemy of God's people. This is often the case with those who have despised the blessings of God. They oppose those who have taken their place of ministry.

The Ishmaelites represent those who mock the spiritual (Gen. 21:9). Galatians 4:29 says, “But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.” The Moabites are the descendants of Lot. The Hagarenes were an Aramaean tribe (mentioned by Tiglath Pileser III), who lived in East Gilead and were attacked by the Israelites in the days of Saul. 1 Chronicles 5:10 says, “And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand: and they dwelt in their tents throughout all the east land of Gilead.”

83:7-8 - *“Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them: they have [helped] the children of Lot. Selah.”* Gebal was an important Phoenician city. Ezekiel 27:9 says, “The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers: all

Psalms 51-100

the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.” The Ammonites were descendants of Lot through Lot’s incestuous relationship with his daughter (Gen. 19:38). Amalek was the grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:12).

The Philistines are the modern-day Palestinians, who are a constant thorn in Israel’s side. The inhabitants of Tyre were also allied against the nation of Israel. Assur (the emerging Assyrians) had joined in an unusual alliance with the children of Lot.

83:9-11 - *“Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison: Which perished at Endor: they became as dung for the earth. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna.”*

Then the psalmist cries out that the Lord would do unto their enemies as He had done unto Israel’s enemies in the past. He then cites the Midianites who were destroyed by Gideon and, in particular, their two princes Oreb and Zeeb (Judg. 7:25), as well as Zebah and Zalmunna (Judg. 8:10-21). He also mentions the time when Barak destroyed Sisera and Jabin at Endor (Judg. 4:22-24).

Psalms 51-100

83:12 - *“Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.”* All of these wicked people had said that they wanted to take the houses of God for their own possession. They wanted the inheritance of the people of God. In so doing, they were seeking the inheritance that the Lord had reserved for Himself.

83:13-15 - *“O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.”* The psalmist cries out that God will burn the wicked like stubble. He prays that their destruction will be like the mountain fires that burn with great intensity because of the strong winds in mountainous regions. He prays that God will totally destroy Israel’s enemies.

83:16-17 - *“Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish.”* The prayer of God’s saints should ever be that our enemies will be put to confusion. The Lord brings the counsel of the enemy to nought, as He did with Haman.

Psalms 51-100

83:18 - *“That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.”* The psalmist prays for the Lord to judge the wicked, to the end that all men might know that Jehovah is the most high over all the earth.

PSALM 84

Psalm 84 begins the second half of the psalms written by the sons of Korah. The sons of Korah were doorkeepers in the house of the Lord (1 Chron. 9:19). During the composition of this psalm, the sons of Korah were living in the country of Gilead, close to the slopes of Mount Hermon, and were separated from the Temple.

They had an intimate knowledge of the Temple precincts, including the birds that inhabited the courts of the Lord. This psalm is written with all the tenderness and love of one who is devoted to the service of the house of the Lord.

Psalms 51-100

Psalm 84 can be divided into three parts:

1. The blessedness of those who have access to the house of the Lord (84:1-4)
2. The blessings of a life lived in fellowship with our lovely Lord (84:5-8)
3. The blessings of trusting in the Lord (84:9-12)

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah

84:1 - *“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!”* Here is the cry of one who appreciated the presence of the Lord in the Temple. We should all seek to cultivate this same appreciation for God’s presence, and seek not to willingly miss a church service. We should look forward to every church service with great anticipation, where among the company of the saints we can meet with the Lord afresh.

84:2 - *“My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.”* The righteous long for God’s presence so much that it consumes their hearts. As Job 23:12 says, we should esteem “the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.” God’s

Psalms 51-100

people should long to hear the Word of God and the unsearchable riches of Christ preached from the pulpit.

84:3 - *“Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.”*

As we have mentioned in the introduction, the dear psalmist now reflects upon the birds that contentedly flew around the courts of the sanctuary. He declares that they are at rest in their souls, likening them to those who are privileged as priests to take up their abode in the Temple buildings where they live under the anointing of the Lord continually.

84:4 - *“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.”* Those who dwell in the house of God are blessed of the Lord. Many pastors are content to actually live in their churches at times when it is necessary.

The second part of the psalm dwells upon the fact that although the psalmist was separated from the courts of the Lord, he could, nevertheless, find rest and repose for his soul.

Psalms 51-100

84:5 - *“Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.”* One of the most precious truths concerning our walk with the Lord is that we can be partakers of His strength. Our God, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, desires to impart His divine strength to us. Paul writes in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

The second part of this verse speaks of God’s ways being written upon the fleshly tables of our hearts, so that we walk in them, even as did Moses.

84:6 - *“Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.”* The ways of God enable us to transform our valleys of sorrow (Baca) into wells of victory, from which we are enabled to draw inspiration to help others in their sorrows.

84:7-8 - *“They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.”* From one level of glory to another, we slowly, but triumphantly, ascend Mount Zion. We gain new heights every day, until we come to His dwelling place at the top of the mountain. The psalmist yearned to climb the heights of spiritual Mount Zion.

Psalms 51-100

84:9 - *“Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.”* The psalmist recalls, as any warrior would, that the Lord is our shield. He protects us from the fiery darts of doubts and fears that the enemy hurls at the saints continually. The psalmist pleads that the Lord would deign to look upon his face. It is a symbol of blessing, that the Lord, or for that matter any great man, would condescend to look upon and notice a person of lesser stature.

This thought is used in the negative sense by God in Deuteronomy 31:17: “Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?”

It is also used in the negative sense in 2 Samuel 14:28 concerning Absalom, who murdered his brother: “So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king’s face.” We should live our lives in such a manner that the Lord will be pleased to look upon us.

84:10 - *“For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”* Those who are doorkeepers by divine

Psalms 51-100

appointment in the Lord's house rejoice in their post, for it gains them access into the Temple of God. The psalmist declares his profound gratitude and appreciation for that privilege, declaring it to be better than a thousand days spent in the vain pursuits of life—with the pleasures of sin found in the tents of the wicked.

84:11 - *“For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”* The sun is a natural symbol of the Lord, because it is the center of the whole solar system, and gives life and light to everyone on the earth. The Lord is our *sun*—giving us strength and joy, shedding light upon our ways, and at the same time protecting us as a shield from our enemies. Furthermore, He blesses us with an abundance of His grace (divine enablement) and favor to accomplish every task He commissions us to do.

Added to this, the Lord gives us His glory—the expression of His presence and goodness—to be with us at all times. In fact, He does not withhold any good thing from those who walk uprightly. This goes along with Romans 8:32, which says, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,

Psalms 51-100

how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Thus, as we walk in the light as He is in the light, all these blessings will be ours.

84:12 - "*O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*" In awe at the Lord's goodness toward His people, the psalmist now exclaims, "How happy and full of joy is the one who places his unreserved trust in the Lord!" Dear ones, may this indeed be our unfailing testimony and experience throughout our earthly pilgrimage.

PSALM 85

Written during the time of the Restoration Period, Psalm 85 takes place after the Israelites had returned from Babylonian captivity (in 536 B.C.). The Lord had most graciously fulfilled His word by the prophet Jeremiah. The Israelites were once again in their own land.

The cry of this psalm is now for a personal, as well as national, revival. This is a cry that we, who perhaps are living in a period of prosperity and relative tranquility, would do well to meditate on.

When material blessings abound, or at least are our primordial concern, we are very prone to become like the Laodicean church—content not only with our possessions, but with our spiritual status as well.

Psalms 51-100

Instead of pressing on the upward way to gain new heights every day, we are tempted to think that we are rich and have need of nothing. Psalm 85 opens with a note of thanksgiving to the Lord for being gracious to His land again.

As we have mentioned in previous psalms, the sons of Korah were a family singularly blessed by God in the realm of prophetic songs. How wonderful it is to pass on the blessing and anointing of the Lord from generation to generation.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

85:1 - *“LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.”* Here the psalmist acknowledges with deep gratitude that it is the Lord who has turned the captivity of the people of God, not just circumstances occasioned by the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire by Cyrus, the king of Persia. The Lord has been gracious to forgive the Israelites’ iniquity and transgressions, and has restored them to their own land.

85:2 - *“Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.”* What a blessing it is know that our sins are forgiven by the Lord! May each of one us know this wonderful

Psalms 51-100

blessing by personal experience. When we look into the Lord's face, we need to realize that His blood has washed away our sins so that there is no longer any barrier between us and our Savior. Psalm 32:1-2 also expresses the same thought about the covering and forgiveness of our sins.

85:3-4 - *“Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.”* Realizing that the Lord's anger has abated, the psalmist continues with the plea that the Lord will indeed turn us unto Himself. Here he repeats his theme that it is by the sovereignty of God alone that our hearts can be turned toward the Lord. Jesus said in John 6:44, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”

This is echoed in James 4:8, which says, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you ...” We need to realize, beloved, that we are dependent upon the grace and mercy of the Lord. When the reality of this truth grips our soul, it produces a deep humility within us that is pleasing in the Lord's sight. We need to find favor in His sight in order to be received into His eternal kingdom.

Psalms 51-100

85:5 - *“Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?”* God’s judgment came upon the generations that lived during and after the reign of Manasseh. The inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah went into Babylonian captivity because of the sins of King Manasseh. 2 Kings 24:3 says, “Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did.”

85:6 - *“Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?”* Personal and national revival come from the Lord. This is borne out also by Habakkuk 3:2, where the prophet says, “... O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.”

85:7 - *“Show us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.”* It is to God’s mercy that we must appeal for a revival and fresh move of God. Remember, the Lord said to Moses in Exodus 33:19, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

Mercy is God’s sole prerogative. The choice to show mercy is His and His alone. We can only show mercy if God shows mercy.

Psalms 51-100

85:8 - *“I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.”* After this prayer of petition to the Lord, the psalmist adopts very much the same attitude of the prophet in Habakkuk 2:1, where he said, “I will stand upon my watch and set me upon my tower and will watch to see what he will say unto me.”

Here the psalmist exudes the confidence of one whose petition has been heard. He has assurance that the Lord will speak kindly to His people. However, there remains an awesome warning, as in 2 Peter 2:20-22: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

85:9 - *“Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.”* Psalm 50:23 says, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show

Psalms 51-100

the salvation of God.” The goal of the Christian life is succinctly stated—that the glory of God might dwell within the hearts of God’s people and in His churches. This is achieved through the Lord’s mercy being manifested in our lives and churches.

85:10 - *“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”* The highest revelation of God is His mercy, as is seen in Moses’ Tabernacle. Within the veil, above the Mercy Seat, resided the shekinah glory, the visible manifestation of God’s presence. Mercy was the first virtue that the Lord mentioned when He visited Moses in Exodus 34:6: “And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.”

In reality, truth is the incarnate Word of God—the Lord Jesus Christ. In Psalm 138:2, it is written that the Lord has magnified His Word above all His name. In other words, His Word is higher and more authoritative than any manifestation of one of His names. When mercy and truth are in a person or in a congregation, there will also be righteousness and peace, which are always linked together in the

Psalms 51-100

Word of God. Peace is a fruit of righteousness. Isaiah 32:17 says, “And the work [or product] of righteousness shall be peace ...”

85:11-12 - *“Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her in-crease.”* When truth is in the inhabitants of this world or in the Church, the righteous Lord beholds them, and we will become the recipients of God’s goodness in every sense of the word.

85:13 - *“Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.”* The righteousness of God will lead His people in the pathway of light, causing us to walk in His ways. In closing, we commend this precious psalm to you, dear reader. It contains several keys for the blessing of God to be continually upon our lives.

PSALM 86

As the superscription indicates, Psalm 86 is a prayer of David, inspired by the Holy Spirit for all generations to enjoy. It is one that we would commend our readers to pray to God when passing through times of oppression by the enemy. We will consider this psalm in three parts, each ending with an expression of thankfulness.

1. The Plea for Help (86:1-7)
2. The Greatness of God (86:8-13)
3. God's Great Compassion and Comfort (86:14-17)

Psalms 51-100

A Prayer of David

Part 1 - The Plea for Help (86:1-7)

86:1 - *“Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy.”* As on other occasions, the psalmist identifies himself with the title of the poor and needy one, which can also refer to the Lord. The Lord Jesus is prophetically called “the poor and needy man” in Psalm 109:16, which depicts His betrayal by Judas. As followers of Christ, we also will be reduced to nothing at times. Why? So that we might qualify to be in the category of those who are described in the first beatitude: “Blessed are the poor in spirit”—that we might be partakers of the kingdom of heaven in all the fullness of its joys.

My wife once had a vision of a small rubber ball being pushed into a lake. According to the degree that it was submerged, to that same degree it shot up above the water line when it was released. The Lord then gently said to her, “To the degree that we are abased, to that same degree we will be exalted.” The Lord’s ear truly is open to the poor and needy ones.

86:2-4 - *“Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O*

Psalms 51-100

Lord, do I lift up my soul.” David continues by pleading with the Lord to save him because he is holy. In the New Testament, Paul addresses many of his epistles to the “saints,” including Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. The word “saint” comes from the Greek word *hagios*, meaning “holy.” God is holy; therefore, all those who belong to Him must likewise be holy.

86:5-7 - *“For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.”* As David says, we who are called by the Lord’s name have a special place in His heart. Therefore, with confidence we may call upon Him in the day of trouble, even as He says in Jeremiah 33:3, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”

Part 2 - The Greatness of God (86:8-13)

86:8 - *“Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.”* David lauds the greatness of God, for who is comparable to Him? He is the Lord, the Creator of the universe, who has made the heavens, the earth and all that dwell therein according to His

Psalms 51-100

infinite wisdom. He is the Omniscient One, the All-Knowing One who can say, “Not a sparrow falls to the ground, but your Heavenly Father knows,” and “every hair of your head is numbered.” “Such knowledge,” said David in Psalm 139, “is too wonderful for me.”

86:9-10 - *“All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.”* All nations shall bow down and worship the Lord. This will be fulfilled during the Millennium, as seen in Zechariah 14:16: “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

86:11 - *“Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.”* In beholding, musing, and meditating upon the Lord’s greatness, we need to pray as did David that He will teach us His ways so that we might walk in a manner which is well pleasing to Him all the days of our lives.

Psalms 51-100

Then King David asks the Lord to unite his heart. There are “four unities” in the Word of God, the first of which appears in this psalm. They form a pathway to the true unity of the brethren:

- 1. Unity of the Heart** - that we might walk in a reverential manner before the Lord all the days of our life (Psa. 86:11).
- 2. Unity of the Spirit** - that we might be at peace with one another (Eph. 4:3).
- 3. Unity of the Faith** - that we might all say the same things (Eph. 4:13).
- 4. Unity of the Brethren** - that we might all be one unified body (Psa. 133:1).

86:12-13 - *“I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.”* In closing this second section, David eulogizes the Lord for saving him from the lowest hell. In hell, as well as in heaven, there are different dwelling places. In heaven there are different plains of glory for the redeemed according to their lifestyle and spiritual development upon earth.

Psalms 51-100

In hell, according to the life of the rebellious, there are different degrees of torment. In the lowest hell is where the most painful and excruciating forms of eternal torture are experienced by the impious, especially those who have induced others to leave the way of eternal life and spend their lives in sin and pleasure.

Part 3 - God's Great Compassion and Comfort (86:14-17)

86:14-17 - *“O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them. But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid. Show me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast [helped] me, and comforted me.”*

In closing this psalm, King David makes mention of his foes which are of the nation of Israel— assemblies and congregations of those who worship God, but have become proud, violent and no longer God-fearing. They were seeking his destruction. Who has not known, in seeking to walk with

Psalms 51-100

God, the persecutions and opposition of church members, or even whole congregations? It is common for God's children to suffer in this way.

However, because of His merciful and compassionate nature, God promises to show David a token for good, showing others that He favors David. All those who hate David will be ashamed when they see God's blessing come upon him. May we pray that God will do the same for us, beloved.

PSALM 87

Various psalms, including Psalm 87, were written by the sons of Korah, who had a very intimate relationship with God even though their forefather, Korah, rebelled against Moses. This is often true in life. The children of Israel (twenty years of age and above) were told that they would perish in the wilderness after they refused to enter into the Promised Land at Kadesh-Barnea.

Their children, however, passed over the Jordan River, saw new wonders, and inherited the land. John Wesley also made this observation: the sons of the mobs who had broken up his meetings

Psalms 51-100

became some of his most ardent admirers and devotees. The theme of this psalm is, *“God’s Love For Zion.”*

A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah.

87:1-3 - *“His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.”* Not only was Israel God’s land and nation, but in particular, He had chosen Mount Moriah as the Temple site, and Mount Zion as His dwelling place (Psa. 15; 24; 78:68).

This is very important for us spiritually. The Lord loves all of His children, but it is those who have dedicated their lives to holiness and separation that are the most pleasing to Him. They are the ones who dwell in spiritual Mount Zion.

87:4-6 - *“I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the*

Psalms 51-100

people, that this man was born there. Selah.” Those who knew God in Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia would hear of His wonders in Zion.

In order to dwell in spiritual Zion, the vision of Zion must be birthed within our hearts—a similar experience to being born again, which is required for us to enter heaven. When we are born in spiritual Zion, God does something deep within our hearts and spirits whereby we know that we are called to Zion and to be partakers of His holiness.

To be citizens of heavenly Zion, the vision of Zion must be birthed within our hearts. If the vision of Zion is not birthed within us, we are not born in Zion. It is that simple! We should pray that the Lord would cause us to be born in spiritual Zion.

However, only knowing that we are called to Mount Zion is not sufficient. We then have to qualify to ascend unto His holy mountain. Those qualifications are given in Psalm 15:2-5 and Psalm 24:4. Let us now quote four of the qualifications from Psalms 24:3-4: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.” To ascend Zion’s hill, we must have clean

Psalms 51-100

hands (speaking of our works), and pure hearts (speaking of our motives), and be cleansed of vanity and deceit.

The Apostle Paul makes it clear in Hebrews 12:22 that the ultimate destination of Christians is spiritual Mount Zion: “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.”

87:7 - *“As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.”*

When the roll is called in heaven, there will be Zion’s roll, upon which are inscribed the names of those who have qualified for Zion. The musicians who have moved under the anointing of God will be there—those who have, as do all Zion dwellers, that singleness of desire to behold the beauty of Jesus and to inquire in His holy temple. Paul states this truth in Philippians 3:8: “That I may win Christ.” All of our desires should be in the Lord, and not spring from our selfish human nature.

PSALM 88

The superscription may be entitled “a song of triumph.” However, this psalm of the sons of Korah is a plaintive psalm. As all the psalms do to one degree or another, Psalm 88 speaks of Christ. In particular, it speaks of Christ’s vicarious sufferings for the sins of the world. It is one of the saddest psalms, because there is very little hope given in it, whereas although the other psalms express fears and sorrows, they end with hope.

It ends with the word “darkness”—but there is one ray of hope, for the psalmist calls the Lord “the God of his salvation.” Seemingly, there was a shaft of light that penetrated the psalmist’s darkness.

Psalms 51-100

It may well be, dear ones, that in contemplating your present condition you, too, feel that it is one of abject darkness. Hold fast to this ray of light as you cry out to Him who is the God of your salvation, and this psalm will become your song of triumph. Psalm 88 can be suitably divided into three parts:

1. The Terrors of the Grave (88:1-7)
2. The Mourning Psalmist (88:8-10)
3. The Fierce Wrath of God upon the Sin-Bearer (88:11-18)

A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

Part 1 - The Terrors of the Grave (88:1-7)

88:1-3 - *“O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.”*

One of the mysteries of the Incarnate Son of God concerns the so-called “hidden years,” when He was in the shadow of His Heavenly Father’s hand (Isa. 49:2). This period covers the years from the

Psalms 51-100

age of twelve to thirty in the life of our Savior. During this time, He was being subjected to the terror of God (cf. 2 Cor. 5:11).

Psalm 88:15 states that the Lord was afflicted and ready to die from His youth up. Hebrews 5:7 speaks of the days of His flesh when He offered up “prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death.”

We are further told that the purpose of these sufferings was that He might learn obedience (Heb. 5:8). Thus, much of this psalm deals with the formative years of our blessed Savior.

Psalm 88 commences with the fact that the psalmist, as did the Lord Jesus, cried out to God to save Him from the grave. This cannot refer to the death of the cross, for there Christ prayed to His Father, “Not my will, but thine be done.” Therefore, when applied to the Lord, this must refer to His “hidden years” when He was being made “perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10).

Although the nature of His sufferings has been withheld from mortal eyes, it is clear that His youth and manhood were far from tranquil. God the Father dealt with His precious Son in His formative years so that He would learn sovereign dependence upon God for His very life and salvation.

Psalms 51-100

88:4-7 - *"I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah."*

Now we will consider this psalm from the perspective of the psalmist who composed it. As we meditate upon these first seven verses, we are confronted with the fact that the Lord is the author of many troubles in our lives that invade our soul's rest, so that we are brought nigh unto the grave and death. These troubles affect us physically, making us very weak. Death seems just a step away.

Often, others count us as already dead, as they did the psalmist. These dark times in our lives make hell very real to us. They serve two purposes in this respect—to make us very grateful that we are saved, and to enable us to fervently warn others about their eternal destiny.

The psalmist notes that the dead are cut off from God's remembrance, and suffer the damnation of eternal suffering. The psalmist suffered spiritually the darkness of the lowest hell, as God's anger seemingly came upon him.

Part 2 - The Mourning Psalmist (88:8-10)

88:8-10 - *“Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.”*

As Job said in Job 19:15-22, the psalmist in his anguish and sickness experienced the rejection of his friends. The nature of the affliction was such that he was unable to save himself. He became a prisoner of his circumstances. Day after day he wept and pleadingly asked the Lord what profit his untimely death would have, for then he would no longer be able to praise Him.

Part 3 - The Fierce Wrath of God upon the Sin-Bearer (88:11-18)

88:11-14 - *“Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?”*

Psalms 51-100

The psalmist takes up this refrain again by asking God how he will be able to declare the wonders of the Lord if he is dead. He inquires again why the Lord has cast him off and afflicted him in such a seemingly unjust manner.

88:15-18 - *“I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.”* He concludes by stating emphatically, once again, that he has known and endured the sufferings of God’s terror throughout his lifetime.

This psalm terminates abruptly, without a positive note (as do other psalms of suffering). All I can say is that the reason may well be that the psalmist, when penning this ode, had not yet experienced the turning of his captivity. He was still experiencing the horrors of great darkness and had not yet been brought out into the light at the end of his tunnel experience. Beloved, hope in the God of your salvation, for as David said in Psalm 43:5, “I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God.”

PSALM 89

Called the “Covenant Psalm,” Psalm 89 rehearses the promises the Lord made to David and to his seed (which the tribe of Judah inherited). The theme of this psalm is Ethan’s appeal to the Lord to remember His covenant with David, and to rescue His people from the troubles that plagued the nation. This psalm closes the third book of the Psalms according to the Jewish traditional method of arrangement.

It is indeed probable that Psalm 89 was written during the latter years of the Jewish monarchy, and perhaps, as some suggest, during the reign of King Jehoiachin, who was taken into Babylonian

Psalms 51-100

captivity. This psalm contains several passages that apply specifically to the Lord Jesus, the Son of David.

1. The Mercies of the Lord (89:1-4)
2. The Greatness of God in the Universe (89:5-18)
3. God's Promises to David (89:19-37)
4. The Casting off of the Anointed One (89:38-45)
5. "How Long, Lord?" (89:46-48)
6. "Remember the Reproach of Your Enemies, O Lord." (89:49-52)

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite

Part 1 - The Mercies of the Lord (89:1-4)

89:1-4 - *"I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah."*

Psalms 51-100

When we sing the songs of Zion and magnify the Lord, we ourselves are uplifted. As we sing of His mercies and meditate upon past promises, we are encouraged in the Lord. Here the psalmist, Ethan, sings of the Lord's mercies and faithfulness, and rehearses God's promises to David and his seed.

Part 2 - The Greatness of God in the Universe (89:5-18)

89:5-9 - *“And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.”*

Remembering David's contemplation of the wonder of the celestial bodies that God has placed in space, we can understand why Ethan the psalmist can declare that the heavens and the earth have been founded by our great God. All the saints are commanded to worship and reverence the Lord, for none is like Him.

Psalms 51-100

It is a wonderful exercise in meditation to contemplate the greatness of the heavens and how they reflect the greatness of God with respect to His handiwork. He has placed the sun, the moon, and the stars in their orbits.

Compared to them, the earth and all who dwell therein are so small and insignificant. However, God has placed His heart upon His creation, man. The power of the Lord's enemies and those who rise up against His people is incomparable to His great power.

89:10-13 - *“Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name. Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.”* The Lord has broken Egypt (Rahab) by His strength. The mountains of Tabor (just south of the Sea of Galilee and Hermon to the north) speak of God's creative power.

Psalms 51-100

89:14-15 - *“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.”*

Then the psalmist breaks forth into singing, declaring that those who know the Lord’s name are partakers of His righteousness, and are joyful. The Lord is their strength and defence against all of their foes.

89:16-18 - *“In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the LORD is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.”*

The psalmist closes with an exultant shout of joy, contemplating that the Lord’s people will be lifted up above all of their enemies through the strength of their God. The Lord is our King—the great King of the whole earth. The Lord is the One who defends us and fights for us, causing us to be more than conquerors in every situation. By His grace and holiness, we will go from strength to strength, triumphing over all of our enemies.

Part 3 - God's Promises to David (89:19-37)

89:19-24 - *“Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.”*

This speaks of Samuel's anointing of David to replace Saul. Samuel anointed young David with a horn of oil in the midst of his brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day (1 Sam. 16:11-13). The Lord proceeds to delineate the promises that He made to David—namely, that He would protect him from all of his foes.

89:25-37 - *“I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand*

Psalms 51-100

fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness [or mercy] will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.”

Here Ethan is developing the Lord’s covenant with David as recorded in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17. The promises in verses 25-37 become distinctly Messianic. In fact, when we consider that Acts 4:27 states that God the Father anointed Jesus of Nazareth, then we could apply all of these precious promises to David’s greater son—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ, the firstborn of God, is exalted above all the kings of the earth. His heavenly throne will endure forever. To His seed, the Church, the same precious promises are given that we may live eternally with Him.

Psalms 51-100

The Lord gave some very precious promises to David for his children. Speaking of David's children, the Lord said that He would discipline them if they erred from His ways. However, the Lord made a promise to David that He would not take away His mercy from them as He did from Saul. We need to obtain this promise from the Lord for ourselves and our children. In Isaiah 55:3, there is a promise for us to enter into the sure mercies of David. If we do so, then God will chastise our children if they transgress, and correct them so that they return to the straight and narrow path.

Part 4 - The Casting off of the Anointed One (89:38-45)

89:38-45 - *“But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.”*

Psalms 51-100

Having carefully rehearsed God's promises to David and to Christ, the psalmist cries out in horror at the destruction of the land of Judah. All of its strongholds had been destroyed.

Judah's adversaries seemed to triumph on every side because God no longer went out to fight for them in battle, and the throne of David ceased. The phrase "*the days of his youth hast thou shortened*" can apply to the boy kings on the throne of David, whose reigns were very short, especially the last four—Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. However, there is also clear reference made to Christ Himself. In the words of Isaiah 53:8, the Lord Jesus was cut off in the midst of His years.

Part 5 - "How Long, Lord?" (89:46-48)

89:46-48 - *"How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire? Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he de-liver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah."*

Psalms 51-100

Again, the psalmist asks the same question that we all are so prone to ask in a trial, “How long, Lord?” Sometimes the Lord answers, but sometimes He does not. The psalmist possibly was thinking of his own painful predicament, as we do when we turn to the Psalms during our trials.

Death seemed to be looking him right in the face. His prayer is similar to Hezekiah’s prayer in Isaiah 38:10: “I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.” The psalmist is saying here that his life has been short, and he pleads for an ex-tension.

Part 6 - “Remember the Reproach of Your Enemies, O Lord.” (89:49-52)

89:49-52 - *“Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth? Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people; Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed. Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.”*

Psalms 51-100

The psalmist concludes by drawing the Lord's attention to the reproach that His enemies have brought upon His name. This is also a valid prayer when our enemies try to bring down the work of God for which we are responsible.

Then we have the doxology (hymn or words of praise to God)—“Blessed be the Lord for evermore”—which terminates not only this psalm, but the third book of the Psalms. In every situation, God is to be praised, for His ways are perfect. As we come to understand Him more and more, we realize that He is always right in every circumstance.

I well remember the time when I was caught up into heavenly places to observe God's future judgment upon a certain pastor who had turned from the pathways of righteousness to walk in wickedness. All I could say concerning the Lord's judgment upon him was: “It is right. It is right.” I could not even offer a plea for this man, because I could see that it was the only right thing for God to do in his life. Incidentally, God's judgment upon him was to terminate his life early because of the evil influence that he was having upon the lives of those for whom he was responsible.

PSALM 90

Irrefutably the oldest of the recorded Psalms, Psalm 90 was written by Moses, the man of God. Much could be said of this great leader and shepherd, who was chosen by God to lead His people out of Egypt into the Promised Land. Moses was the meekest man who ever lived, and was endued with more wisdom than King Solomon. Moses was filled with the glory of God, so much so that the Israelites could not even look upon his face, which he had to cover with a veil.

Psalms 51-100

Paul stated that Moses was faithful in all his house (Heb. 3:2,5). Moses built the Tabernacle according to the pattern he was shown in Mount Sinai, where he passed two periods of forty days each, seeing God face to face.

Moses is one of the two anointed ones (along with Elijah) who stand by the Lord of the whole earth (Zech. 4:14). He was with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, and is one of the two witnesses, along with the prophet Elijah, mentioned in Revelation 11.

Moses was the lawgiver (Jn. 1:17), and he knew the ways of God (Psa. 103:7). Through this psalm we see and understand the cry of someone who is very near to the Lord's heart. It begins with a profound reflection upon the greatness of almighty God.

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

90:1 - "*LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.*" This alludes to the fact that the Lord fills all the earth. King David elaborates upon this truth in Psalm 139:7-10: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I

Psalms 51-100

make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

The same thought is also expressed by Paul in Acts 17:28: “For in him we live, and move, and have our being.” Then, as if contemplating the eternal existence of God, Moses soliloquizes in saying:

90:2-3 - *“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.”* This is a truth that pervades Holy Scripture, in which we see the awesome sovereignty of the Lord in the affairs of mankind.

It is the Lord Himself who causes people to embrace wrong doctrines and walk in paths that are detrimental to their good. It is He who hardens people’s hearts. However, let me also say that God never hardens the hearts of those who soften their hearts; He only hardens those who have already hardened their own hearts. As King David says in Psalms 18:25-26, the Lord deals with each one of us according to the condition of our hearts: “With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an

Psalms 51-100

upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.”

The Lord deals with us according to the state of our heart, especially in the realm of doctrine, as we read in Ezekiel 20:24-25: “Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers’ idols. Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.”

God’s dealings with the children of Israel when they were in Babylonian captivity are an example of His great compassion and faithfulness. God had sent them to Babylon because of their idolatrous ways, but after they were there seventy years and repented, He restored them to their land.

90:4 - *“For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.”* Now the great prophet of God muses upon the shortness of our sojourn here upon earth. Our time on earth is like a vapor, for it soon vanishes away. To our eternal Lord, time passes like a flash. This is also echoed in 2 Peter 3:8, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

Psalms 51-100

As we grow older, we realize all too well how time “flies by.” When I was in my twenties, I thought a person in his forties was old. But now, looking back, I view a forty-year-old as quite youthful. It seems just like yesterday that I was a schoolboy. My childhood memories are more vivid to me than my later years. I have been told that this is a common occurrence.

This illustrates the truth that the things we learn in our formative years make a greater impression upon us than those that we learn later in life. Therefore, we should do all that we can to carefully teach children the ways of the Lord. King Solomon said in Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

90:5-6 - *“Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.”* Moses first compares life to a flood that carries away everything in its path, and removes that which was once there. Then he compares life to sleep. When we awaken in the morning, our dreams disappear, and we do not remember the night any more.

Psalms 51-100

Lastly, Moses compares the shortness of our life here upon earth to grass, which grows and is then quickly cut down. The prophet Isaiah used this same illustration several hundred years later to describe the life and ministry of John the Baptist. Isaiah 40:6-8 says: “The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness there-of is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

It is only the things of God that remain. Therefore, we should seek to have, as King David stated, truth and wisdom formed within our inward parts through prayer and the study of the Scriptures (Psa. 51:6).

90:7 - *“For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.”* Those who quest for true holiness and the presence of God Himself are well aware that there are continual fires that we must pass through in order to be purified. At times, it feels like God’s anger is upon our sinful nature. Job said: “For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is

Psalms 51-100

come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came” (Job 3:25-26).

For us to be close to the Lord in eternity, we must allow Him to purify us and make us holy like Him. Although Job was the most righteous of all the men of the east, he went through a time of great suffering to purge him of all self-righteousness. Job suffered like few others ever have. Moses is another saint who experienced great purification.

90:8 - *“Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.”* Throughout our lifetime, the Lord deals with our sins, and we suffer because of them so that He might prepare us for eternal life with our holy God. King David said in Psalms 69:5, “O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.”

90:9 - *“For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.”* Moses reiterates that our lives are quickly over, as a story that is told around a campfire or read at night to children before they go to sleep.

Psalms 51-100

90:10 - *“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”* Moses here states that the maximum life span of those who perished in the wilderness was about seventy or eighty years.

However, even if one’s lifetime is extended, it is often filled with heartaches—even as King Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:13-14: “And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” At its very longest, life passes away very quickly.

90:11 - *“Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.”* This theme is taken up by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:11: “Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men.” In order to live a life of holiness and purity before the Lord, we must experience His anger and wrath against our sinful nature. It is a privilege to know the fear of the Lord. One could say that to the degree that we know His fear, to that same degree we understand His wrath.

Psalms 51-100

90:12 - *“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”* The Apostle Paul takes up the same theme in Colossians 4:5: “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.” We need to spend our time wisely, using every minute to learn and apply our hearts to wisdom. Every person in the world is given the same amount of time. It is those who make wise use of their time that are successful in life, even in the secular world.

When I study the life of Christ, I am amazed at how He did not waste even one minute. He was a man of purpose. He had a course to finish, and He was determined not to let anything deter Him. We need to be like Christ and make wise use of our time. Some people waste their time, and in the end, they have nothing to show for their lives.

It can perhaps best be explained by David in his admonition to his beloved son, Solomon, in Proverbs 4:7: “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” The most valuable possession in life is wisdom. Our life is so short and fleeting that all of our efforts and time should be devoted to obtaining God’s wisdom.

Psalms 51-100

Wisdom is the gift of God, and is given to those who find favor in His sight. Ecclesiastes 2:26 says, “For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy ...”

90:13 - *“Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.”* This psalm was written by Moses, undoubtedly during the wilderness journey. It is very likely that it was composed during their sojourn at Mount Sinai when the children of Israel turned their backs on the Lord. Moses uses wording that is very similar to that which is recorded in Exodus 32:12, where he pleads with the Lord to “turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.”

90:14-15 - *“O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.”* These two verses express the longing that comes from one who has endured years of heartbreak in the confinement of God’s corral, experiencing the breakings of the Lord and being disciplined by Him. Moses spent forty long years in the backside of the desert watching his father-in-law’s sheep. It was during this time that the Lord disciplined him and molded him into His image.

Psalms 51-100

It is so comforting to know that the Lord gives us joy and gladness according to the measure that we have suffered and been afflicted. The Lord made the children of Israel glad according to all the days that they were afflicted in Egypt.

90:16 - *“Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.”* The word “work,” (*poal* in Hebrew), occurs about thirty times in Scripture. It can be seen in Deuteronomy 32:4: “He is the Rock and His *work* is perfect.” It is used again in Ruth 2:12 by Boaz when he pronounces a blessing upon Ruth: “The Lord recompense thy *work*.”

Therefore, *work* can be defined as a particular act, deed, or labor that God is doing which is veiled to the children of men. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, “He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”

Moses is pleading for the Lord to manifest His hidden purposes to His people so that they might appreciate and see the glorious work that He is accomplishing among them.

Psalms 51-100

90:17 - *“And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.”* In concluding this psalm of profound thought and meditation, the prophet asks for the beauty of the person and character of God to enshroud His people. It was that same cry that came from his heart when he pleaded with the Lord in Exodus 33:18, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.”

Seeing the wonders of God produces a longing within our hearts to know our Maker and Creator. We can no longer be satisfied with ministry or even His works, but we must see Jesus. As we see Him as He is, we will become like Him—clothed upon with His nature and loveliness (1 Jn. 3:2).

As the chorus says, *“Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me, all His wondrous passion and purity. O thou Spirit Divine, all my nature refine; till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.”* The desire of the Lord’s people should always be to experience the depths of His love, as expressed in Ephesians 3:19: “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Psalms 51-100

Moses closes this psalm by praying that everything we have labored and toiled for in the ministry will be established, and that we will have fruit that abides forever for the glory of God.

PSALM 91

Best described as deeply devotional in character, Psalm 91 applies to the life of the believer, but also has special reference to the person and life of the Lord Jesus. Psalm 91 was written by King David, and therefore, must be considered Messianic in nature. This psalm opens with a reference to the special privileges of those who understand the spiritual applications of the Tabernacle.

91:1 - *“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”* The secret dwelling place of the Lord is none other than the Mercy Seat within the veil in the Holy of Holies.

Psalms 51-100

The Lord dwelt in the form of the shekinah glory over the Mercy Seat between the cherubim. Spiritually, this means that those who dwell with the Lord within the veil know what a comfort it is to be under His loving care and protection. Such a one may truly say:

91:2 - *“I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”* Those who dwell in the Holy of Holies with the Lord know His strength in times of need. Truly, it is the righteous who know the Lord as their strong tower and refuge, as Solomon said in Proverbs 18:10: “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” This protection is not just from the fear of man, but it extends toward all the harmful things that plague our existence here upon this sin-smitten earth.

91:3 - *“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.”* Undoubtedly written by King David, the shepherd king of Israel, this psalm develops the concern of a shepherd for his flock. He is concerned about the predator who is seeking to attack his flock.

Spiritually, the hunter could represent an adulteress, even as David warned Solomon in Proverbs 6:26: “For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will

Psalms 51-100

hunt for the precious life.” In Ecclesiastes 7:26, there is a promise that the Lord will preserve those who please Him from adultery: “...Whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.”

The Lord also promises to preserve those who abide under the shadow of His presence from the *noisome pestilence*. We read in Leviticus 26:6, “And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.” Also, there is the thought here of protection from the plagues that came when the Lord sent evil angels among the Egyptians (Psa. 78:49).

91:4 - “*He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*” This verse can be illustrated from two very beautiful portions of Scripture. The first one is Deuteronomy 32:11, which says, “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings ...” Here we see that the Lord watches carefully over the children of Israel like an eagle.

Psalms 51-100

Christ said in Matthew 23:37, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

Well did this illustration come to mind when we were in the Cameroons, where I saw a chicken hawk try to attack a little chick with her claws. The hawk swooped down, but before the hawk could attack the little chick, the mother hen gathered her chicks under her wings, and beat off that ferocious predator. In much the same way, the Lord wanted to preserve Jerusalem from the Roman army that He knew would come in A.D. 70, but the Israelites would not come unto Him. Let us not be foolish like Israel, beloved, but let us draw near to the Lord.

91:5 - *“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day.”* A great concern of every soldier is a night attack by the enemy, a favorite approach of the Orientals. The beaches in Normandy in World War II were breached under the cover of night. Also, in olden days, no amount of training could prepare a soldier for the fusillade of enemy arrows. The soldier who kept his post could never rest assured that he was out of the line of fire of the trained enemy archer, who

Psalms 51-100

could hit him from the cover of a nearby dense thicket. Even the most adept soldier was vulnerable to an arrow shot at hazard.

King Harold of England was slain in battle by an arrow that hit him in the eye even though he was surrounded by his bodyguard. The consequence of this was that England was captured by the Norman invaders under the command of William the Conqueror in 1066 A.D.

There is a similar example in Scripture of the arrow that “flieth by day.” 1 Kings 22:34 says, “And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.” An archer shot an arrow into a crowd, and it killed the wicked King Ahab.

The Chaldee rendition of Psalm 91:5 reads, “Thou shalt not fear the demons that walk by night; nor the arrow of the angel of death which is shot in the daytime.”

91:6 - *“Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.”* The *pestilence* speaks of the destroying plagues that are peculiar to nighttime. In many countries, the night air brings with it all kinds of diseases. In addition to this, there is the danger that

Psalms 51-100

comes at the height of noonday, striking like the black death of the Middle Ages, which was responsible for the decimation of nearly a third of the population in London.

91:7 - *“A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.”* Now we have perhaps one of the most triumphant verses attributed to the warrior king. I have included a quotation from an unknown source that I thought was very apropos for this occasion:

“As the general who carries within him that conviction that he is called to a great work, and will stand firmly before all the barrage of bullets, so stands the man of prophetic faith in the hour of danger.”

It is recorded that George Washington was seemingly immune to the attacks of the Indians. Moreover, General MacArthur, when he was trying to retake the Pacific Islands, remained calmly erect while others around him fell to the ground as ammunition shells bombarded them.

91:8 - *“Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.”* The godly king, Jehoshaphat, was protected by the Lord when he went to battle against the Syrians, whereas the wicked king of Israel, Ahab, was killed. Jehoshaphat saw with his own eyes the reward of the wicked.

Psalms 51-100

We read of this account in 1 Kings 22:32-34: “And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.” The reason for Jehoshaphat’s protection was that he had walked in the ways of the Lord all the days of his life.

Well do I remember, with gratitude to the Lord, the time during World War II when my family and I left our house one evening for an unscheduled visit to my grandmother’s house. That very night almost all of the houses on our street, including ours, were destroyed in a German air raid. Many people were killed, but we were spared by the mercy of God; and that was before I had given my life to the Lord. The Lord is so good!

Psalms 51-100

91:9 - *“Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation.”*

The change of person here denotes the prophetic, Messianic nature of this psalm. This and several other verses apply particularly to Christ, but also to us His children as we abide in Him. Abiding in Christ and Christ in us is the theme of the Parable of the Vine in John 15.

91:10 - *“There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”* Here we see the immunity that the Lord seemingly grants to many doctors and members of the medical profession when they treat patients who are afflicted with all kinds of diseases. We should ask the Lord to give us this same protection from sickness.

91:11-12 - *“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”* Now Psalm 91 becomes distinctly Messianic. These two verses were quoted by Satan in the temptation of Christ (Mt. 4), and are directly attributed to Christ. However, the Holy Spirit can quicken these verses to our own personal lives, and speak to us from them.

Psalms 51-100

91:13 - *“Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.”* This promise is very similar to the promise spoken to Job in Job 5:23: “For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.” Also, Christ said in Mark 16:18, “They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” As we appropriate these promises by the grace of God, we will be assured of the Lord’s divine protection in these kinds of situations.

91:14 - *“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.”* Continuing in the Messianic thought, we have here the reason Christ obtained favor with the Heavenly Father—not because Christ was His Son, but because He placed His love upon the Father. This seeming conundrum can be clearly understood from the example of a family. I have known parents who, quite frankly, have disavowed their children because of their disobedience and lack of natural affection for them. And it is the same with the Father. He wants His children to love Him. The Father protected His Son because He did only those things that pleased Him (Jn. 8:29).

Psalms 51-100

Furthermore, Christ was exalted because *He knew the Father's name*. This brings us to a very important point—it is vital for us as Christians to know the Lord's names by experience. Obviously, this does not speak of knowing His names in an intellectual capacity, but rather experientially.

What name, in particular, is being referred to here, for the Lord has many names? We humbly suggest the name of God—*the Father*. In one sense, the Father is an all-encompassing name from which flows all the other qualities and names of God. Christ knew the heart of the Father to such an extent that He Himself is called “the Eternal Father” in Isaiah 9:6.

91:15 - *“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.”* The Father's ears are always open to the cry of His obedient Son. If we walk in obedience to our Heavenly Father, His ears will be open to our cry as well. The Lord said, “He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me” (Jn. 14:21).

91:16 - *“With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.”* Although the earthly life of the Lord Jesus was curtailed by His obedient sacrifice and His death on the cross, He has inherited

Psalms 51-100

eternal life. If we walk in the light and in the Lord's ways, we will inherit and experience the precious promises of the Father in heaven.

PSALM 92

Psalm 92 is one of the most delightful psalms. It is a song meant to be sung with a beautiful mixture of joy and solemnity on sabbath days. Psalm 92 contains much instruction for us as believers in our spiritual walk. It speaks of the fruitfulness of the righteous.

A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day.

92:1-4 - *“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithful- ness every night, Upon an*

Psalms 51-100

instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.”

One of the most delightful and meaningful spiritual exercises is expressing thankfulness unto the Lord with our whole being —body, soul, and spirit. We can express our thankfulness to the Lord through our *body* by clapping our hands, dancing, whirling around, and marching victoriously; through our *soul* by rejoicing and singing praises to the Lord with a loud voice; and through our *spirit* by worshipping the Lord either vocally or silently. The Lord said in John 4:24, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

We are instructed by Paul to give thanks *in* every situation, for this is the will of God (1 Thess. 5:18). In Ephesians 5:20, however, we are given a higher degree of spirituality. Paul exhorts us to give thanks *for* all things. God wants us to be thankful people so that we give thanks in every situation and for all things, ever becoming more and more thankful.

In an attitude of thankfulness and praise, we should glorify the Lord for His lovingkindness and faithfulness. By doing so, we are saying that every situation works for our good, and that He will be

Psalms 51-100

faithful not to give us more than we can bear (1 Cor. 10:13). The result of such an attitude is that we will be triumphant in every situation in life.

92:5-6 - *“O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.”* The thoughts of the Lord are profound and impenetrable to the mind of man. We cannot understand His ways except through a gracious revelation of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10-11). Certainly, the unsaved cannot fathom the Lord’s thoughts and ways, for within their hearts is the love of this world, which blinds them to the deep workings of God (Eccl. 3:10-11).

92:7-9 - *“When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever: But thou, LORD, art most high for evermore. For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.”*

Now the psalmist turns to the subject of his enemies. All who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). Therefore, we must always realize that the enemy will, from time to time, raise his ugly head against us in one form or another. But there is an end to the wicked, as the

Psalms 51-100

psalmist now says. When the cup of iniquity of the wicked is full, then comes sudden destruction, and hell opens up its mouth to receive them (cf. Gen. 15:16).

92:10-11 - *“But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil. Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.”* For the psalmist and all who live uprightly in Christ Jesus, there comes a time when God will exalt us and promote us.

Also, there is the blessedness of being anointed day by day with fresh oil, fresh revelation, and a fresh word from God, so that we are constantly moving forward with God. By His grace, we must not camp around the same old mountain. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we need fresh manna from heaven every morning. We need our ears opened morning by morning to hear as the learned (Isa. 50:4).

92:12-15 - *“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; To show that the LORD is upright: he is*

Psalms 51-100

my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.” Those who are planted in the house of the Lord are not spiritual butterflies that go from one congregation to another, or from one doctrine to another, or from one cause to another. On the contrary, they remain and flourish in the place (or church) where the Lord has planted them.

When a tree remains in one spot, its roots grow deep and it becomes firm, stable, and unmovable. This is a picture of the righteous who are planted in the house of the Lord. Also, we see here that the righteous will grow like palm trees and cedars in Lebanon—strong, upright, and erect, having deep roots.

The righteous bring forth fruit, more fruit, and much fruit in an ever-increasing manner all the days of their lives. There is no retirement for the saint who is spiritually planted and rooted. Instead, the busiest and most productive years of his life are his later years, as he increases in the knowledge, love, wisdom, and grace of God.

PSALM 93

How beautifully the Psalms, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, portray the majesty and excellency of our God. Psalm 93 is certainly no exception. Even though it is very short, Psalm 93 depicts the strength and might of God.

93:1-4 - *“The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved. Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many*

Psalms 51-100

waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.” The psalmist mentions several aspects of God’s strength. They are as follows:

1. The Lord has clothed Himself with strength.
2. The world, which the Lord created, reveals His strength, for it cannot be moved from its course.
3. The Lord’s throne is set from time immemorial.
4. The Lord is greater and stronger than the waves of the seas.

The Lord promises us that if we will wait upon Him, our strength will be renewed like the eagle’s. Our strength will be *exchanged* for His strength (Isa. 40:28-31). The Apostle Paul experienced this, saying in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

We need to realize that when we are weak, it is then that we are made strong. The Lord said to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” To this, Paul responded, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Let us rejoice in every situation so that the power of God may rest upon us as we lean upon Him and appropriate His strength.

Psalms 51-100

93:5 - *“Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.”* In conclusion, the psalmist lauds the Law of the Lord. When His Law is written upon the fleshly tables of our hearts, we will be enabled to enter into the Holy of Holies with God, and we will be holy as He is holy.

PSALM 94

The awesome vengeance of God is the theme of this psalm. The author and time period of Psalm 94 are unknown. In this psalm, we see the cry of God's children when they are in sore distress for the Lord to avenge them. We can pray the words of this psalm when we are tempted and oppressed by the wicked, who, at least for a season, seem to have the ascension over us.

94:1-4 - *“O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself. Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud. LORD, how long shall*

Psalms 51-100

the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?"

One of the truths that flows throughout Holy Scripture is that vengeance pertains to the Lord, and not to man. This is reemphasized by the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:19: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Therefore, the psalmist asks, as we have noticed so often in the Psalms, "How long will the wicked be permitted to triumph?"

94:5-6 - *"They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless."* This is an account of the wrongdoings of the wicked. Like the Pharisees and religious leaders at the time of Christ, the wicked at this time were oppressing the people, and actually slaying those who could not defend themselves—widows, orphans, and strangers in the land.

Psalms 51-100

94:7-11 - *“Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.”*

In their wickedness and deceitfulness, they were deceived into thinking that the Lord would not take knowledge of their evil acts and ways. The psalmist takes issue with their folly and asks them concerning the Lord, the Creator of the universe, “He that [made] the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?” (see Isa. 28:23-26). In other words, the psalmist was saying that the Lord saw and heard their wickedness, and would punish them in His time.

Therefore, the Lord knows all the thoughts of man, and even more, He knows their acts. In a sense, we may say that the bookkeeping in heaven is very similar to that of a very advanced computer age, for in heaven all of our thoughts, words, and deeds are recorded by the angels. The Lord Himself said

Psalms 51-100

in Matthew 12:36, "...Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

94:12-15 - *"Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law; That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked. For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it."*

What a blessing it is to be corrected at an early age so that we do not fall into all the sins of youth. It is so important to be taught by our loving Heavenly Father the Ten Commandments and His ways so that we know of a surety what is pleasing in His sight. In so doing, we inherit the promise that we will know the rest of God in our latter days (Heb. 4:9).

Then we will see God's judgments upon those who have walked in a perverse manner—those who have chosen not to come under the rod of God. Job 21:9 says, "Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them." It is very difficult at times to be under God's chastening and to

Psalms 51-100

see others, who do not walk uprightly, seemingly prosper. However, the end of the matter is always good for the righteous.

94:16-19 - *“Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.”* When we are surrounded by the wicked and all their evil machinations, we often feel like we are sinking beneath the waves. Yet it is then that we realize, as never before, that unless the Lord shows us mercy, we will be overwhelmed by our enemies.

In meditating upon the Lord, our soul enters into quiet serenity and joyfulness, which are our strength in times such as these. Writing of the Lord, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:4, “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” From our troubles, we receive strength to console others when they go through similar trials.

Psalms 51-100

94:20-23 - *“Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood. But the LORD is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off.”*

The throne (or a governmental authority) which changes the ordinances of God (Isa. 24:5), and thus defiles the earth by legitimizing wickedness, can never be in communion with God. We have seen throughout history, and currently in several Western countries, including the United States, that God’s judgment comes upon those nations that legalize abominations such as divorce, adultery, and homosexuality.

Even after being afflicted by God’s judgments, these nations go one step further and turn against the righteous, condemning the Church by the laws which they pass. But as we have repeatedly written throughout this book, with all assurance of God’s holy Word, the Lord is the defender of the Church; and at His appointed time, He will cut off every evil doer.

PSALM 95

Quoted twice in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul declares that Psalm 95 was penned by David (Heb. 3:7; 4:7). Some feel that the next six psalms (Psalms 95-100) portray the plan of God throughout the ages. We will examine that theory as we come to these successive psalms.

The Journey of the Children of Israel in the Wilderness

95:1-5 - *“O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the*

Psalms 51-100

earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.”

Throughout all generations, the people of God have been a singing, joyful people. More than perhaps any other generation, we need to sing the praises of Jehovah, for joyful singing strengthens our whole being—body, soul, and spirit. King Solomon said, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Prov. 17:22).

We can sing to God for many reasons, some of which (as the psalmist lists here) are the wonders of God in creation. As we are permitted to discover more and more of the complexities of nature through science, we cannot but marvel and exclaim to the Lord, “How Great Thou Art!”

95:6 - *“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.”* In contemplating the Lord’s greatness, we can understand why the psalmist enjoins us to worship by bowing down or kneeling in abject humility before our wonderful God.

Psalms 51-100

95:7 - *“For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice...”* The Lord is our Good Shepherd, and we are the sheep of His pasture. It is He who nourishes us, cares for us, and gives His life for us.

The psalmist utters the warning that we must listen to the Lord in an attitude of obedience when He speaks to us. The thought is that the Lord wants to speak to us afresh so that we may move on into an ever-unfolding revelation of His purposes and plan for the Church, and for our own lives, in particular.

95:8-11 - *“Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.”* We must guard our hearts and not let them become hardened and offended, as was the case with the children of Israel when they came to Kadesh-barnea in their wilderness journey.

Psalms 51-100

That generation spent forty years wandering around the wilderness in rebellion against the Lord. Their lives consisted of eating, drinking, and getting up to play (Ex. 32:6). They did not understand the ways of God or His Law. Therefore, in His anger, the Lord stated that they would not enter into His rest.

The “rest of God” refers to the rest that He had prepared for them in the Promised Land. The concept of spiritual rest is developed by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 4. The spiritual rest that God has for every believer is a spiritual sabbath in which we cease from performing our own works, and we are controlled by the Holy Spirit in everything we do.

PSALM 96

With slight variations, Psalm 96 is similar to 1 Chronicles 16, which was sung when King David brought the Ark of the Covenant up to Mount Zion and placed it in the tent that he had prepared for it. This suggests that David was the author of Psalm 96. This is the second of the so-called “*Psalms of Purpose*” which develop the Messianic kingdom.

Certainly, Psalm 96 is very appropriately placed here in this series of historical Psalms. King David, along with Moses and Joshua, is one of the three great leaders who led Israel into their inheritance. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt to the border of their inheritance; Joshua led them across the

Psalms 51-100

Jordan River and into the Promised Land; and David led them led them into their full inheritance, which included Mount Zion, and into rest from all of their enemies.

The Entrance into the Promised Land and the Overthrow of the Heathen

96:1-3 - *“O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.”* As in Psalm 95, we are exhorted to sing unto the Lord a new song—a song of triumph as the Israelites entered into the Promised Land. We are to bless His name and show forth His salvation.

96:4-5 - *“For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.”* Let the gods of the heathen (which are actually demons), know that the Lord is God—a terrible God who made heaven and earth.

96:6 - *“Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.”* Now the psalmist lauds four aspects of the character and nature of God which totally transcend those of the idols which the heathen worship.

Psalms 51-100

- 1. His honor** is due Him because He is King of kings and Lord of lords. All must bow before Him.
- 2. His majesty** speaks of His glory and matchless demeanor befitting His position as the King of heaven and earth.
- 3. His strength** is an aspect of God's nature that is emphasized very often in Scripture. It is only when we face spiritual battles and powers of darkness that we truly realize the greatness of God's strength and our need for His strength.
- 4. His beauty** may be expressed as the harmonious flowing together in perfect balance and unity of the fruit of the Spirit. He is altogether lovely.

By the eye of the Spirit, we are enabled to perceive His wondrous nature in His sanctuary.

96:7-8 - *“Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.”*

Psalms 51-100

In verses 1-2, there is a trilogy of the phrase, “Sing unto the Lord.” Now the phrase, “Give unto the Lord,” is repeated three times. Basically, we are exhorted to give Him the glory due unto His name and bring an offering into His courts. By God’s grace, we should seek to sing unto the Lord at all times—singing in our “valley experiences” as well as in our “mountaintop experiences.” Let us also have a bountiful eye to minister unto the Lord by giving to those in need whenever the occasion arises.

96:9-10 - *“O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.”* How we worship God is very important, since worship is also the act of coming into the literal presence of the King of kings. Because He is holy, we must likewise be holy.

A holy person is meek, lowly, sweet to all, separate from sin, and in constant union and communion with God, who alone is holy. Therefore, because of His awesome holiness, the whole earth should

Psalms 51-100

fear Him with reverence. The message of His saints to the heathen is that the Lord reigns and He will judge in righteousness.

96:11-13 - *“Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”* Now we have four admonitions to the heavens, earth, sea, and nature as a whole to rejoice before the Lord when He comes.

We can best understand this from Romans 8:19-21, where Paul declares: “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

Psalms 51-100

At the Second Coming of the Lord, the whole of nature will be delivered from the bondages that it has inherited from the fall of man. Even the nature of animals will be changed. The wolf and the lamb will feed together (Isa. 65:25). It will be a time of great peace for both mankind and nature alike.

PSALM 97

Psalm 97 is the third of the cluster of psalms that depict the progressive unfolding of God's purposes for the ages. Psalm 97 reveals the time of the Second Coming when the Lord will come in judgment as a consuming fire to burn up all His enemies.

The Joy of Zion and Jerusalem When the Lord Comes to Fight for Them

97:1-3 - *"The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about."* After all the works of the Antichrist

Psalms 51-100

and his hordes of demons have ceased, there will come the glad tidings, “The Lord reigneth!” In the last days, the whole earth will suffer under Satan’s rule (Isa. 14:16-17), but when Christ comes, the world will rejoice with great gladness. All the *isles*, speaking of the Gentile nations who have known the Lord during the Church Age, will rejoice as well.

In Scripture, clouds are very often associated with the Lord’s appearing (Dan. 7:13; Mt. 24:30). Righteousness and justice are always associated with His coming, as well as the fire that will engulf His enemies.

97:4-6 - *“His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.”*

Lightning and brightness are also associated with the Second Coming, as seen in Habakkuk 3:4-5: “And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet.”

Psalms 51-100

The land will be consumed by the fire that will emanate from Christ when He returns. This is developed in Isaiah 34:8-10: “For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.”

Everyone around the world will see the Lord when He comes again, even as He Himself declared in Matthew 24:30: “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” His coming will not be a “secret appearance.” Every eye shall see Him when He returns.

97:7 - *“Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.”* At that time, all those who have served dumb idols will be ashamed. Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 10:19-20: “What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice

Psalms 51-100

to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.” Therefore, all of these so-called “gods” (1 Cor. 8:4-6), which are actually devils, are commanded to worship the Lord at His appearance.

97:8-12 - *“Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods. Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”*

Zion and Jerusalem, which will hold out until the end against the enemy forces that will surround the holy city in the last days, will rejoice as they see the coming of their Messiah. They will see the judgments of God come on their besiegers.

The Lord is higher than any of these devils, whose thrones are in the air above the nations, cities, and towns which they reign over. These evil beings receive homage from those who worship their idols.

Psalms 51-100

Those of us who are called by the Lord's name must hate wickedness in whatever form it manifests itself.

The Lord preserves us and delivers us from the hand of our enemies. Praise the Lord! For the righteous, there is light and joy. Let us continually rejoice in our God and give thanks for His holiness.

PSALM 98

The fourth psalm in this series, Psalm 98 is a psalm of victory describing the time when Israel greatly rejoiced after the Lord had defeated their enemies (the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites). These adversaries came out against the Israelites during the reign of the godly king, Jehoshaphat. The host of the heathen was far greater than Israel's army.

One of the remarkable aspects of this battle was the fact that Jehoshaphat, in ordering his troops to meet the enemy forces, placed the singers in the front line. They praised the Lord in the beauty of

Psalms 51-100

holiness. The result was that the Lord fought for His people on that notable day (2 Chron. 20). Therefore, the unnamed psalmist exhorts God's people to praise Him.

A Psalm

The Second Coming of the Lord When He Will Judge the World

98:1 - *“O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.”* The Israelites are told to sing a new song to celebrate this new thing that the Lord has done. He caused the three opposing nations to fight each other. All that the Israelites had to do was pick up the spoils that were left in the valley of Berechiah, which means “where Jehovah blessed.” They clearly attributed the victory to the Lord.

Their attitude was very different than the attitude of the young people in Israel after the Yom Kippur War of 1973. They marched down the streets of Jerusalem with their fists clenched, declaring that they themselves had won the battle and recaptured the land by their right arm and strength.

Psalms 51-100

However, just prior to that war, the Lord had shown my wife and I upon the Mount of Olives that Israel would have nothing but trouble and unrest afterwards, and would gradually give up their land. This will terminate with the final division of the land, presided over by the Antichrist (Dan. 11:39).

98:2 - *“The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen.”* Because of Jehoshaphat’s just cause, the Lord showed forth His righteousness in giving His people the victory. All the heathen nations around Israel had to acknowledge the Lord’s miraculous victory.

98:3 - *“He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”* Because the Israelites acknowledged the Lord, He had mercy upon them. This is very similar to what happened during the battle for the Falkland Islands, when the forces of the United Kingdom fought against Argentina. I well remember seeing the news reports when I was in New Zealand of the invasion by the Argentinian forces.

With the backslidden condition of my country at that time, it seemed impossible that the Lord would give the British army the victory. However, God was merciful, and many miracles and small revivals

Psalms 51-100

occurred upon the ships of the British Armada, including an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. According to one chaplain, a thousand sailors received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. And England won the battle!

98:4 - *“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.”* When the Lord goes forth in triumph, the whole of His creation should break forth into singing. God has gone up with a shout. When we sing praises unto Him, all the angels in heaven move simultaneously with the saints on earth to obtain the victory.

In a football or other sports stadium, the crowds shout with all their might when their team is winning. How much more should the children of God shout when He is defeating His enemies. We should shout at the top of our voices until we cannot shout any more!

98:5 - *“Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.”* The harp, so beloved of David, is to be employed, as well as the psalms of victory, to glorify the Lord on such an occasion.

98:6 - *“With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.”* How wonderful it is when the trumpets, with their triumphant notes, take up the refrain as well. Trumpets

Psalms 51-100

are very majestic and triumphant, and at the same time, solemn. Pastors and parents should encourage the young people in their congregations to learn how to play the trumpet (as well as other musical instruments), so that they may sound out a note of triumph on this battle instrument. The cornet, not as frequently used today as the trumpet, is an instrument that was used particularly in olden times to express joy.

98:7 - *“Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.”* Not content with the Lord’s people simply recognizing God’s wondrous works, the psalmist commands all of God’s creation, under the unction of the Holy Spirit, to acknowledge His greatness.

This is very reminiscent of our Lord’s remarks on Palm Sunday at the time of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. He said that if the crowds of people refrained their voices, the stones would cry out (Lk. 19:40).

98:8 - *Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together.* Verse 8 is very similar to Isaiah 55:12, where the Lord promises the children of Israel that they shall go out with joy, and the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. In other words, the whole of God’s creation, which has been subject

Psalms 51-100

to vanity (not willingly, but because of the fall of mankind), earnestly desires to see the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:21). Creation longs to be liberated from the bondage of sin to which all the earth has been subjected until the coming of the Lord.

98:9 - *“Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.”* In this last verse, the psalmist makes an allusion to the soon advent of our glorious Lord. The first time, He came as the meek Lamb of God. He entered Jerusalem riding upon a donkey (Mt. 21:5), but when He returns, He will descend from heaven with a shout, riding upon a white horse.

The Lord Jesus will come to make war and overcome His enemies. He will defeat the kings of the earth who raise up their heads against Him in league with the unholy trinity of Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet (Rev. 19:11-21). Then the Lord will rule for a thousand years in righteousness upon the earth. Praise the Lord!

PSALM 99

In this psalm we see the Lord in His millennial reign and glory. Psalm 99 is the fifth of the cluster of psalms depicting the Lord's plans and purposes for the ages.

Exhortation For All Nations to Worship the Lord Who Reigns in Zion

99:1-2 - *“The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. The LORD is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people.”* This psalm opens with the triumphant declaration that the Lord reigns. Everyone should give glory unto Him. We also should have a reverential fear of Him who dwells between the cherubim in the Holy of Holies.

Psalms 51-100

99:3-4 - *“Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy. The king’s strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.”* Time and again in this psalm, as elsewhere in Scripture, the Lord’s holiness is emphasized. Holiness is one of the aspects of the Lord that we need to really appreciate, because it is holiness that makes it possible for mortal man to draw near to God. The Tabernacle of Moses was constructed so that a holy God could dwell with mortal, sinful, man (Ex. 25:8).

Certainly, the millennial reign of Christ will be characterized by righteousness and equity. Equity, which means that which is just, fair, and impartial, is above the law. The law does not fit every situation, and if applied in every case, it can cause an injustice. However, equity makes all things right and fair.

99:5-7 - *“Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy. Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.”* We return to the thought of the Lord’s holiness and the eminent

Psalms 51-100

saints—Moses, Aaron, and Samuel—who spent their lives in close communion with the Lord. They were faithful to respond to Him when He spoke to them, and they kept the law of God.

99:8-9 - *“Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions. Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.”*

The Lord hearkened unto these three faithful intercessors who turned away plagues, as did Moses when he pleaded for those who had committed idolatry (Ex. 32:10-32), as did Aaron for those who rebelled (Num. 16:47), and as did Samuel for the whole nation (1 Sam. 7:3-10). Nonetheless, the Lord judged and punished the malefactors who had perpetrated these sins.

In closing, the psalmist returns to the theme of the Lord’s exaltation upon His holy hill of Zion, for that is where He will reside throughout His millennial reign of righteousness upon earth.

PSALM 100

Finally, we arrive at the last psalm in this precious cluster of psalms that depict the Lord's plans and purposes throughout the ages. It is also the last psalm in this commentary of the Psalms. Psalm 100 refers to the time of the Millennial Temple, as depicted in Ezekiel 40-48. Instruction is given here concerning the worship that is pleasing unto the Lord.

Psalms 51-100

A Psalm of praise

Joyful Times of Worship in the Millennial Temple of Ezekiel

100:1-2 *“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.”* The emphasis that is placed upon joy should not be overlooked in these psalms. Joy honors the Lord. When we are joyful, in actuality, we are saying that it is wonderful to be in His kingdom and to have the privilege of serving Him.

By contrast, the Lord’s judgments came upon those of old who did not serve Him with joy. Deuteronomy 28:45-47 says: “Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things...”

Psalms 51-100

This theme is repeated in Joel 1:12: “The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.”

100:3 - *“Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.”* Another truth that is repeated often in Scripture is the fact that we did not make ourselves—the Lord created us and formed us from our mother’s womb. This is amplified by King David in Psalm 139.

The book of Revelation, recording for us worship in heaven, tells us that the twenty-four elders sing forth these words, saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11). We are truly His sheep whom He has both created and purchased with His precious blood. Now with a joyful heart, we are ready to enter into the temple.

100:4 - *“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”* Thanksgiving and a thankful heart bring us into God’s holy presence, into the

Psalms 51-100

gates of His temple. Through praise, which comes from a thankful heart, we can progress into the courts of the Lord. Oh, let us be a thankful people that count His blessings one by one, and, as the chorus goes, “we will be surprised at what the Lord has done for us.”

There is a progression here of personal and corporate worship. Thankfulness leads us into praise, and praise leads us into worship. In a church service and also in private devotions, it is often good to begin the song service with songs of praise and thanksgiving. Praise songs prepare our hearts for worship (slower songs), which, in turn, will lead us into worship in the Spirit (in other tongues).

100:5 - *“For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”*

Truly, the Lord is filled with goodness, which means He is incapable of doing evil. He has purposed for our lives that goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives. His liberating truth will be ours throughout all eternity. Praise the Lord!

As we close this study of the Psalms, let me say that we should seek to be a joyful and thankful people, thereby glorifying our Heavenly Father and our precious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

CONCLUSION

Thus, dear reader, we come to the end of Part Two of our devotional study on the Book of Psalms. The third book of Psalms will complete Psalms 101-150. However, having read the Psalms, which are perhaps unlike any other literature available to mankind, we can never in one reading assimilate all of their beautiful truths. It takes a lifetime of browsing, sampling individual verses, and meditating upon them to really appreciate all that the blessed Scriptures contain.

May we commend a daily reading of the Psalms to give you a well-nourished soul, and to lift your spirits into new heights and bring you into deeper depths of communion with our blessed Lord! We pray that this short, devotional commentary of the Psalms has been a blessing to you.