

PSALMS

BOOK THREE

CHAPTERS 101 - 150

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ZION CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

“Psalms - Book Three”

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ISBN 1- 890381-82- 9

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Produced and Distributed by:

Zion Christian Publishers

Waverly, New York

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to extend our thanks to all the following:

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

To Tarah Derrick, Sarah Humphreys, and Beth Humphreys—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.

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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 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

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 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.

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 101-150

We have provided a brief summary of Psalms 101-150. A key verse or key thought from each psalm is given to help summarize the overall tenor of the Psalms.

Psalm 101 - King David speaks of behaving wisely and walking perfectly in his own house.

Psalm 102 - The set time to favor Zion will come when the Lord builds up Zion, and at that time He will appear in His glory.

Psalm 103 – David exhorts us not to forget all of God’s benefits:

- a) Who forgives all thine iniquities
- b) Who heals all thine diseases
- c) Who redeems thy life from destruction
- d) Who crowns thee with lovingkindness
- e) Who satisfies thy mouth with good things
- f) So that thine youth is renewed like the eagles

The difference between Moses and the children of Israel is illustrated.

Psalm 104 - The manifold works of the Lord’s creation reveal that He has made them in wisdom.

Psalm 105 - The seed of Abraham remembers the mighty works of God from Abraham to the Exodus.

Psalm 106 – A continuation of the history of Israel from the desert to the Promised Land, and the time of the Judges.

Psalm 107 - The rejoicing of the redeemed from their captivity is followed by precious verses showing the Lord's methods of bringing down their hearts with hard labor to the shadow of death. Then they cry out to the Lord and He sends His Word to heal and deliver them. Whosoever is wise will understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.

Psalm 108 - A cry to God to exalt Himself and deliver His Beloved (Christ): "Save with thy right hand, and answer me." God speaks in His holiness that He will triumph over Moab, Edom, and Philistia.

Psalm 109 - The wicked man spoken of is Judas Iscariot, who persecuted the poor and needy man, the Lord Jesus. Verse 8 is quoted by Peter in Acts 1:20 when the apostles decided to give Judas' vacated office to Matthias (cf. Psa. 69:25).

Psalm 110 – The Lord Jesus is our High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, which is the New Testament priesthood.

Psalm 111 – The Lord is gracious, full of compassion, holy, and reverend is His name. A good understanding have all they that keep God's commandments.

Psalm 112 – This psalm speaks of several qualities of a righteous man: he shows favor by lending to those in need, guides his affairs with discretion, fixes his heart upon God, and he gives to the poor. The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.

Psalm 113 – This psalm speaks of the humility of the Lord, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are on earth and in heaven. He raises up the poor, lifts up the needy, and makes the barren woman to keep house.

Psalm 114 - A call for the earth to tremble at the presence of the Lord, calling to mind the parting of the Red Sea and also the Jordan River.

Psalm 115 - The greatness of the Lord and the impotence of idols are described. Those who make and trust in idols become like them.

Psalm 116 - Because of the goodness of the Lord to him, the psalmist asks what he shall render unto the Lord in return. The answer is to call upon the Lord and pay his vows to the Lord.

Psalm 117 - A command for all nations to praise the Lord.

Psalm 118 - Two verses in Psalm 118 are very well known: verse 22, which refers to Christ and His rejection by the elders of Israel; and verse 27, which speaks of binding the sacrifice upon the altar and not taking it back.

Psalm 119 - This is a beautiful psalm exalting the Word of God and His righteous judgments. There are 22 stanzas in this psalm, corresponding to the 22 letters of the Jewish alphabet. In each stanza there are 8 verses, making 176 in all. Each verse consists of two sections. The first line of each couplet begins with a letter of the alphabet, and the letters are in alphabetical order.

Psalm 120 – This psalm describes the distress of the psalmist who has dwelt for a long time in Mesech and Kedar, among those who have deceitful tongues and hate peace. What a victory it is to conserve a love for righteousness in the midst of such a people. Sometimes the Lord causes us to dwell among the unconverted.

Psalm 121 - The Lord is the keeper of Israel. He does not slumber or sleep, but carefully watches over the children of Israel.

Psalm 122 - Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Psalm 123 - The closeness of our walk with Christ is exemplified in keeping our eyes on Christ, waiting on Him for the slightest direction.

Psalm 124 – Israel testifies that she survived only because of God’s help. We, too, survive by His help alone.

Psalm 125 - It is not good for the wicked to rule over the righteous lest the righteous do wickedly as well.

Psalm 126 - When the Lord turned the captivity of Israel, they were filled with laughter and singing. The sorrows of the captivity faded away like a distant dream.

Psalm 127 – Unless the Lord builds the house, we labor in vain. There is only value and permanency in something if the Lord is the One who builds it.

Psalm 128 - The blessings of those who fear the Lord are enumerated.

Psalm 129 - Verse 3 foretells the scourging of Christ, and the punishment of those who took part in it.

Psalm 130 – There is forgiveness with the Lord so that He may be feared.

Psalm 131 - The humility of David is illustrated. His soul is tender like a weaned child and he does not occupy himself with things too difficult for him.

Psalm 132 – The psalmist calls to remembrance the vows of David concerning the building of the temple. The psalmist prays that the priests will be clothed with righteousness and the saints with joy.

Psalm 133 - The unity of the brethren is described.

Psalm 134 - Those who stand by night before the Lord are com-

manded to bless Him.

Psalm 135 - The mighty acts of the Lord are exalted. His victories over the heathen kings are listed. The reassuring statement that He shall judge His people is given.

Psalm 136 - The theme of this psalm is, “For His mercy endureth forever.”

Psalm 137 - By the rivers of Babylon, the Israelites wept at the remembrance of Zion and asked God to judge Edom and Babylon.

Psalm 138 - There are two words of assurance in this psalm: “Thou wilt revive me,” and “the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.”

Psalm 139 - David declared that the all-seeing God knows even the words on his tongue and knew him before he was made. With such knowledge, David prays, “Search me O God ... and see if there be any wicked way in me.”

Psalm 140 - This psalm speaks of deliverance from the evil man, who sharpens his tongue like a serpent, with poison under his lips.

Psalm 141 – David speaks of his prayers being as incense and the lifting up of his hands as the evening sacrifice. He asks the Lord to set a watch before his mouth.

Psalm 142 – David says that no man cared for his soul. He cries to the Lord to bring his soul out of prison so that he might praise Him.

Psalm 143 – The psalmist prays, “Teach me to do thy will.”

Psalm 144 - Let there be no complaining in our streets. This brings happiness.

Psalm 145 – God’s greatness is unsearchable and beyond human comprehension. He satisfies the desire of every living thing. He is acquainted with the needs of everything that has breath.

Psalm 146 - An exhortation not to put our trust in man, but to look to the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 147 – This is a psalm of restoration, speaking of the building up of Jerusalem and the gathering of the outcasts.

Psalm 148 - All of creation is commanded to praise the Lord.

Psalm 149 - The children of Zion are commanded to be joyful in their king. The honor of the saints is to execute the judgment written upon the heathen.

Psalm 150 – The Book of Psalms fittingly closes with a psalm of praise. We are to praise God with various instruments of praise. Everything that hath breath, praise the Lord!

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, Death, and Resurrection 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 16:12
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 17:4-50
4. Conqueror of Philistines - 1 Samuel 17:32-54
5. Jonathan's friend - 1 Samuel 18:1-4
6. Man of 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 the shewbread - 1 Samuel 21:6; Matthew 12:3-4
5. Feigns insanity in Gath - 1 Samuel 21:10-15
6. Dwells in a cave - 1 Samuel 22:1-8
7. Saves Keilah - 1 Samuel 23:1-13
8. Experiences God's deliverance - 1 Samuel 23:14
9. Makes 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 the 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 5:11-25
5. Strikes down the Philistines - 2 Samuel 5:17-25
6. Escorts the ark to Jerusalem - 2 Samuel 6:1-15
7. Organizes worship - 1 Chronicles 15:16-28
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 7:4-29
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 a song of deliverance - 2 Samuel 22:1-51
26. Speaks his last words - 2 Samuel 23:1-7
27. Lists his mighty men - 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. Completes forty-year reign - 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)

The Book of Psalms

EXEGESIS OF BOOK THREE

PSALMS 101-150

PSALM 101



psalm of instruction for householders, Psalm 101 can be entitled, “The House of the King.” It was written by King David when he was about to ascend the throne. This psalm contains maxims that are applicable to everyone in leadership. It also shows us how a Christian home should operate.

A Psalm of David

101:1 - *“I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.”* David develops many themes in this psalm. First of all, he declares his explicit intention to sing unto the Lord. It is so important for our homes to be filled with the songs of Zion. Christian music and choruses inspired by the Holy Spirit create a very beautiful atmosphere in which faith can flourish.

Christians should be very careful about the type of music they play in their homes, because some so-called “Christian rock music” can bring evil spirits into a person’s home. Let only the anointed “songs of Zion” be heard in your home.

In this psalm, David majors on the mercy and judgment of the Lord toward him. We should make much of the Lord’s mercies towards us. In so doing, our homes will be filled with

gratitude and thankfulness to our Lord. Then there will be no complaining or murmuring in our streets (Psa. 144:14).

101:2 - *“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.”* All of our actions, especially toward those of our own household, should be directed by the wisdom of God. Our hearts must be perfect and upright toward those for whom we have responsibility. Job spoke of this when he said in Job 31:13, “If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me.” We commend that you read Job 31:16-20,32.

We also must be genuine, and free of any hypocrisy in our lives. We must act in our homes like we do when we are in church. Many ministers’ children turn away from serving the Lord because their parents do not practice what they preach. It is the doers of the Word that are rewarded. Hearing and preaching the Word is not enough; we must live it!

101:3 - *“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.”* Many people turn aside because they desire something that is not God’s best for them. This is one of the greatest heartaches of being a pastor. You love the people in your congregation and you warn them, but often they ignore your counsel and make the wrong decisions. Many people miss out on God’s “high calling” for their lives because they do not fully consecrate their lives to the Lord (Phil. 3:14).

101:4 - *“A froward [or perverse] heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.”* David speaks here of the importance of having right relationships. We must not permit wicked people to dwell with us, because they will turn our hearts away from the Lord. Remember, one bad apple can ruin a box full of good apples (cf. 1 Cor. 15:33).

101:5 - *“Whoso privily [secretly] slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.”* We should not keep company with those who “tattletale” or criticize others behind their backs. In over forty years of ministry, I have seen that those who spread abroad the faults and weaknesses of others are an abomination to the Lord. After all, we are what we are only by the grace of God.

Those who criticize others or uncover their faults invariably fall themselves, and they are turned out of the way by the Lord. God creates a stumbling block for them and they leave the pathway of righteousness. Therefore, do not criticize others and when you have to deal with someone who has sinned, do it with love and mercy.

101:6 - *“Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.”* On the other hand, we should surround ourselves with those who are upright in heart and those who will be faithful to their duties. We can trust this kind of people with leadership positions because we know that they will

strengthen our hands and ease our burden. David wanted to surround himself with men who would be loyal to him.

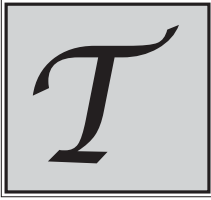
101:7 - *“He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.”* We must not allow those who are deceitful and liars to remain in our fellowships or churches, and we certainly must not permit them in our homes. Lying and deceit are very serious sins in the eyes of God. If you have a problem in this area, ask God to cleanse you of all deceit as He did Jacob, who was transformed from a deceitful man into a very upright man.

101:8 - *“I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.”* Speaking as only a king can, David declares in this last verse that he will slay the evil doers that the land may enjoy peace.

As a postscript to this psalm, I would like to make two additional observations. First of all, let us remember the admonition of the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3:5: “For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?”

Secondly, our ministry is only as strong as our home life. We are truly ourselves when we are in the privacy of our own home. Our relationship with our spouse and children is the truest indication of our spiritual condition and our leadership capabilities. Let us meditate often on our duties toward one another as enunciated in Ephesians 5:21-25.

PSALM 102



his psalm is the prayer of the afflicted one. It flows very well with the woes of Job, as well as with the woes written by Jeremiah, called “The Lamentations.” This psalm shows us that when we are overwhelmed with afflictions and trials, we can pour out our hearts before the Lord and He will hear us.

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed,
and poureth out his complaint before the LORD

102:1-2 - *“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily.”* The psalmist pours out his afflicted soul unto the Lord and cries out for help. In times of trouble, it is wonderful to have the blessed assurance that the Lord’s ear is open to our cry, and that He not only hears us, but He will respond quickly.

102:3 - *“For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.”* One of the constant themes of Scripture is that this life is very short and transitory. Moses spoke of this in Psalm 90:9: “For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.” The message of John the Baptist was that “all flesh is as grass ...

and the grass withereth” (cf. Isa. 40:6-7).

In this passage, the psalmist compares this life to smoke that passes away and vanishes. Job said that his days were “swifter than a weaver’s shuttle” (Job 7:6). Those who are more than a few decades old will surely agree that life passes by very quickly. It is essential that we heed the admonition of the Apostle Paul to redeem the time (Eph. 5:16). Make every minute count for eternity!

102:4-5 - *“My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.”* Days spent in sickness or sorrow seem like wasted time. In times of despair, even food loses its appeal. Our physical condition depends very much upon the spiritual condition of our heart. In the positive sense, a merry heart does good like a medicine, while a mourning heart is emaciated by grief.

102:6-7 - *“I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.”* To depict his sorrowful state, the psalmist first uses the pelican, which is the epitome of mournful solitude and grief. Then he compares himself to an owl, which is an emblem of gloom, amongst other things.

Thirdly, he likens himself to a sparrow, which loves to fly and feed in flocks. However, when it is alone, it is quite different, resembling one who is in solitary vigil. Concerned by the at-

tacks of a predator, the psalmist is forced to assume the role of the lone watchman. This is the pitiful state of the author at this time.

102:8 - *“Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.”* In the midst of all his trials, the psalmist also had to endure the calumnies of his enemies. They heaped ridicule and cruel mockings upon him in addition to all his physical afflictions. His adversaries took an oath to hasten his demise.

102:9-10 - *“For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.”* The psalmist tossed ashes upon himself, which was the typical action of mourners in the Middle East in days of yore, and the ashes fell into his food. When he ate they grated his teeth.

Tears rolled down his face and into his cup as he drank. Such were the emotions stirred by the deep dealings of God in the life of the author of this psalm. God had elevated him to a position of honor as He had with Job, but then He brought him very low. As Job, he sat in abject despair.

This, beloved, is what is known as the dealings of God. Often we feel like the Lord has tossed us up and down like wheat. What is the purpose behind all these trials? The purpose is to separate all the chaff from our lives so that we are prepared and equipped for our eternal ministry.

102:11 - *“My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.”* The psalmist poetically describes his days as failing in strength and purpose. His strength and hope declined with each passing day.

102:12-16 – *“But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.”*

The psalmist lifts his vision above his circumstances and contemplates the eternal Lord who always shines like the sun in spite of all the clouds, darkness, and despair. I often think of this when I am in an airplane. On ground level the sky looks dark and rainy, but once the airplane soars above the clouds, the sun is shining. Such is the case when we soar by the wings of prayer through the clouds of despondency into heaven’s joy, serenity, and peace.

God will remember and fulfill His promises to Zion, His elect. In the providence of the Lord, there is an appointed time in the annals of history for Him to visit His people with deliverance. Mourning does not last forever. The night gives way to the dawning of the sun. Winter is replaced by the new life of spring. There is light at the end of the tunnel, for the Lord will not cast us off forever (Lam. 3:31). God will remember Zion,

the city that was destroyed by the Babylonians but later restored at *the set time* in the days of Nehemiah.

The psalmist is looking forward to the great day of the Lord's coming when He will come and deliver Israel from the armies of the heathen that will surround Jerusalem in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:12). The Lord's feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives when He comes again (Zech. 14:4).

These verses also reflect God's great visitation to His Church in the last days. When the Lord comes for His Church, it will be a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. It will be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27).

102:17-20 - *“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.”*

In verses 17-20, the psalmist reflects upon the compassion of God. The Lord hears the prayer of the poor and needy, and from His heavenly throne of glory He beholds the plight of the prisoners and releases them from the jaws of death. God is a God of comfort and compassion. Paul calls Him the “Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3). These truths were recorded for a generation to come, for the Church.

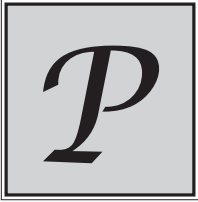
Those who will be created will show forth the praises of God (1 Pet. 2:9).

102:21-22 - *“To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem; When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.”* The Lord will be glorified in Zion when He comes again, and all the kingdoms of the world will come to worship Him in Zion (Zech. 14:16-19).

102:23-28 - *“He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.”*

In conclusion, the psalm becomes veritably Messianic in nature. The Lord Jesus is pictured as the suffering Savior. Paul quotes these verses as referring to the Messiah (Heb. 1:10-12). They should be studied in the context of Isaiah 53:10-11, where the thought is that after Christ has made His soul an offering for sin, a seed belonging to His servants in the Church Age will serve Him forever and forever. Praise the Lord!

PSALM 103



salm 103 is a psalm of David. It is an exhortation to bless the Lord with all that is within us. David exhorts us not to forget all of God's benefits. He lists six benefits of the Lord.

A Psalm of David

103:1-5 - *“Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”*

This first section of the psalm is well beloved of all those who have experienced the goodness of the Lord in their lives. It commences with David's determination to bless the Lord with all of his heart at all times. As we start to bless the Lord, it releases us from negative thoughts and attitudes. Praise cleanses our spirits of complaining and murmuring.

David exhorts us not to forget all of God's benefits and then speaks of six benefits in particular:

1. Who forgives all thine iniquities
2. Who heals all thine diseases
3. Who redeems thy life from destruction
4. Who crowns thee with lovingkindness and mercies
5. Who satisfies thy mouth with good things
6. So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's

Then David specifically speaks of forgiveness for all of our iniquities. King David, who was the recipient of God's kindness in this area after his sin with Bathsheba, also knew the healing power of God.

Out of his own experience, David proclaims that as we know God's forgiveness for all of our sins, we can also know His healing power for all of our sicknesses. David was stricken with disease as a consequence of his sin, but God delivered him from the bed of sickness and destruction. He experienced the healing power of God. Praise His matchless name!

David also declares that God blesses and shows forth the superabundance of His mercies by strengthening us, so that our youth is renewed like the eagles. An amazing thing happens to the eagle. It goes into premature decline only to spring back to regain the strength of its youth. Job likewise was promised this in Job 33:24-25: "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth." Let us press in to the Lord, beloved, to obtain similar precious experiences in God.

From verses 6-18, David speaks of the history of the children of Israel. This section begins with an absolute statement concerning the character of the Lord.

103:6 - *“The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.”* The Lord Himself assumes responsibility for pleading the cause of the oppressed, the poor, and the neglected. He is a Father to the fatherless.

103:7 - *“He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.”* There is a great difference made in this verse between Moses, the servant of the Lord, and the children of Israel. Moses knew the *ways* of God, whereas the children of Israel only saw His marvelous *acts*. They saw His miracles, but did not enter into His presence within the veil. They heard God’s words, but did not understand them or obey them.

Moses, however, was the lawgiver, and he intimately knew the ways of God. Therefore, if we adhere to the teachings of Moses, we will know the Lord in an intimate way. We are told that His ways are found in the Tabernacle of Moses (Psa. 77:13).

103:8 - *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.”* In a didactic song of praise, the psalmist speaks of the nature of the Lord. This verse conveys the thought that God has an abundant supply of mercy; He is plenteous in mercy. His mercy is without limit. God delights

in being merciful. The Lord said to the scribes and Pharisees that He desires mercy and not sacrifice (Mt. 9:13; 12:7). Paul said in Ephesians 2:4 that God is “rich in mercy.”

The greatest attribute of the Godhead is mercy. Above the tables of the Law, which rested inside the Ark of the Covenant, lay the Mercy Seat, the thin sheet of gold that covered the Ark. This is symbolic of the fact that God’s mercy is higher than His law. The Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies is the seat of the All-merciful God.

God is also gracious. The virtue of graciousness portrays the thought of a person of vastly superior rank condescending to speak to one of inferior rank or abilities, hear their petition, and extend help to them in any way possible.

The next virtue of the Lord that David praises is that He is slow to anger. He is very patient with His people. This is a very rare quality, because most people are quick to become upset and angry. A person who is slow to anger is able to bear with someone’s shenanigans without losing his temper. This enables him to think clearly, assess the situation properly, and make the right decision.

Anger clouds our judgment and reasoning abilities. If we allow the Lord to deal with our temper, we will be able to always act in the best interest of those around us. May we pray that the Lord will make us slow to anger so that we do not “lose our cool.”

103:9 - *“He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.”* In Isaiah 57:16 the Lord tells us, “For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.” The Lord knows our capacity and ability to support correction, and, therefore, He knows when we are near the breaking point. He has no desire to destroy us, whom He has created. Rather, He wants to encourage us and bring us into all that He has preordained for us.

103:10 - *“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”* God certainly does punish us when we roundly deserve it, as David now testifies. However, even when He punishes us, He does not give us the punishment we actually deserve. Even in judgment, the Lord is merciful. God delights in showing mercy to His sinful creation.

103:11 - *“For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.”* Who can measure or comprehend the goodness of God towards those who reverently fear Him? It is greater than the heavens. Oh how great is our God! We must remember that these psalms, although credited to David, were given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they express the longing of the Lord for us to know Him. He desires for us to especially know His mercy, which has a preeminent place among all His virtues.

103:12 - *“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he*

removed our transgressions from us.” Oh what bliss it is to know the blessedness of having our sins forgiven, never to be remembered! The prophet Micah paints a similarly vivid picture of the Lord’s graciousness towards us. “He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic. 7:19)

103:13 - *“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.”* The Holy Spirit then paints the portrait of a tender, loving Heavenly Father who caresses His children, whom He has not only birthed in the natural, but also in the spiritual. The Hebrew word, ‘*racham*’ here translated ‘pitieth’ could also be translated as ‘fondle’.

I was privileged to see such a scene in heaven. I saw the back of the Heavenly Father with several young children around Him. He was touching them with such loving care and affection. Oh what love and mercy flows from God to us who, apart from His grace, are miserable fallen sinners!

Now follows a passage describing the frailty of mankind. In spite of our frailty, God is ever merciful toward us.

103:14 - *“For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”* In the beginning the curse was pronounced upon fallen man. “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19).

103:15 - *“As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.”* David compares man to the grass of the field. In reality, we are only upon earth for a fleeting moment of time. These verses are in sync with the message of John the Baptist, which was recorded in Isaiah some 700 years before John was even born.

“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof 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” (Isa. 40:6-8). Matthew 3:1-3 describes the beginning of John’s ministry and quotes Isaiah 40:3 to confirm that John was the messenger of whom Isaiah prophesied.

Moses wrote in Psalm 90:4-6: *“For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. 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.”*

103:16 - *“For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.”* The psalmist continues describing the temporality of mankind. We last but a moment during the 7,000 years of man’s life span upon earth (from Creation to the end of the Millennium).

103:17 - *“But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children.”* The Apostle Paul echoes this theme in Ephesians 2:6-7: “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Throughout the ages to come, we will be learning more and more about the mercy and grace of God.

103:18 - *“To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”* David said that God’s mercy is always upon those who fear Him and keep His covenant. Let us, dear ones, love God’s law and meditate therein day and night.

103:19 - *“The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.”* The Lord has very graciously called us to participate in an eternal and everlasting kingdom. Of His kingdom there will be no end. His purpose is to make us kings and priests who will rule and reign with Him forever.

In verses 20-22, three categories of God’s creation are commanded to bless the Lord:

1. God’s angels (v. 20)
2. God’s ministers (v. 21)
3. God’s works (v. 22)

103:20 – *“Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.”* The angels are commanded to bless the Lord. They know God’s strength because they keep His commandments (Isa. 40:28), for they continually wait upon Him to perform only His good pleasure.

103:21 - *“Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.”* Now God’s ministers are commanded to bless the Lord. This verse speaks of ministers who do not seek to please themselves or others, but only to please the Lord, seeking to do only those things that please the Majesty on high. They are those who bless Him for who He is, for the beauty of His wondrous Person and not for what He has done for them.

103:22 - *“Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.”* The whole of creation should bless the Lord in unison. King David concludes this beautiful psalm of mercy and praise by commanding his own soul to bless the Lord.

So let us determine, beloved, to praise the Lord at all times so that His praise will continually be in our mouths. Oh, God, let all of Your works praise and bless Your holy name. Amen and Amen!

PSALM 104



e may well entitle this psalm, “The Wisdom of God Manifested in Creation.” In this psalm, we see the absolute greatness and brilliance of our God through His acts of creation in heaven and upon earth.

Psalm 104 can be divided into seven parts: (1) verses 1-4; (2) verses 5-9; (3) verses 10-13; (4) verses 14-18; (5) verses 19-23; (6) verses 24-30; and (7) verses 31-35. These seven groups of verses correspond to the seven days of creation. This psalm commences by exalting God who created the earth and the heavens (the first day of creation) and concludes with an allusion to the Sabbath day (the seventh day of creation) and the psalmist’s desire for the impious to be removed from the earth.

104:1 - *“Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.”*

The psalmist commences by commanding his soul to laud the greatness of the Majesty on high. The greatness of our God is the joy of His saints. We are to encourage our soul to bless the Lord because of His greatness.

104:2 - *“Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.”* In verse 2, the psalmist singles out one of God’s attributes. God is light (1 Jn. 1:5), and in Him is no darkness at all. That is why one

aspect of eternal judgment is that all things shall be brought to the light of His presence where nothing is hid. He has laid out the heavens in such a fashion that they provide a canopy that covers the whole earth, as in the second day of creation (Gen. 1:7).

104:3 – *“Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.”* With true Hebraic poetical license, the psalmist depicts the Lord as using the waters to hold the beams of His upper heaven. In the strict sense of the word, “chambers” means “the place where one rests.” So God rests upon the waters of the clouds, which are His chariot. The Lord is depicted often in Scripture as coming in the clouds. Here He is also described as walking upon the winds, signifying the swiftness with which He appears to help His loved ones.

104:4 – *“Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire.”* The angels are God’s messengers and they perform His holy will. They are spiritual beings, distinct from being mere mortals such as we are. One of the angels’ duties is to care for the Lord’s people upon earth (Heb. 1:14). On occasions I have seen angels tenderly care for their charges, and in more than one situation, I owe the preservation of my life to angelic intervention.

104:5-9 – *“Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy*

rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.”

Now the psalmist addresses the creation of the earth, whose foundations are laid by God. It is stable, sure, and unmovable. Its landmass does not change. Giving us an insight into creation, the psalmist speaks of the fact that, in the beginning, the waters covered the earth even to the highest mountain (see Genesis 1:9). But God spoke and the seas departed down the mountains into the valleys there to assume their ordained boundaries.

104:10-13 - *“He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.”*

The Lord sends water to the earth through springs and by showers from above for the needs of His creation. God also provides for the birds and animals. As in the third day of creation (Gen. 1:9-13), the waters nourish the grass and the herbs of the field.

104:14-18 - *“He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and*

herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the LORD are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted; Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies."

Part 4 mentions the earth bringing forth food for man. Wine is a type of joy, and oil typifies the anointing for peace, wisdom, and the service of God. Bread speaks of the Word of God, which like its natural counterpart, strengthens our inner man. It is so wonderful to contemplate the wisdom of God in nature, and how each need of the animal kingdom is provided for by the mineral and vegetable kingdoms.

104:19-23 - *"He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening."*

In the fifth group of verses, the psalmist passes from the third to the fourth day of creation where he speaks of the celestial bodies. The moon governs the seasons while the sun is the master of the day. At nightfall the beasts who inhabit the for-

ests come forth in search of their prey, which in turn is provided for by God. When the sun arises to mark the beginning of a new day, they creep back to their lairs to sleep. Man, by contrast, is made for the day's work from daybreak to sundown.

104:24-30 - *“O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.”*

The psalmist opens part 6 of this psalm with an exclamation of the great wisdom of God manifested in creation. This is expounded upon by the Apostle Paul (Rom. 1:20), as well as by Solomon in the book of Proverbs (1 Kgs. 4:29-34). The more we study nature, the more we are amazed at God's infinite wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

Now the psalmist turns to God's wonders in the sea. The greatest of all fish, the whale, as well as the smallest, wait upon the Lord to receive their food from Him. However, if He withholds, they perish. Verse 30, in particular, applies to the first

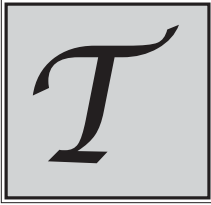
creation that perished. In the second creation, God renewed and replenished the earth (see Genesis 1:28). Thus the psalmist here covers the fifth and sixth days of creation.

104:31-35 - *“The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke. I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD. Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.”*

Now as he closes the psalm, our inspired poet becomes sabbatical in that he meditates and muses upon the glory of God, which shall endure forever. His heart will ever sing of the Lord, and as Isaac of old, he will meditate upon the sweetness of the Lord. As all those who know Him in spirit and in truth, we also will rejoice greatly in the Lord at all times (1 Thess. 5:16; Phil. 4:4).

In order that the Lord might have perfect joy in the works of His hands, the psalmist implores the Almighty to remove sinners who are a blemish upon His creation. He terminates with the doxology with which the psalm opened, a command to his soul and ours to remember to bless the Lord at all times. Let us praise the Lord forevermore!

PSALM 105



his historical psalm should be attributed to King David, since the first fifteen verses were sung when David brought up the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Obed-edom, as recorded in 1 Chronicles 16:17-

22. The psalm can be divided into the following sections:

1. A call to sing the joyful praise of Jehovah (105:1-7)
2. The journeys of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (105:8-15)
3. The descent into Egypt under Joseph (105:16-23)
4. The Exodus under Moses and Aaron (105:24-38)
5. The wilderness journey and the entrance into the Promised Land (105:39-45)

One means of conserving the history of Israel as a nation was for the fathers to rehearse orally the great acts and wonders of God on their behalf to their children. It was not until the days of Moses and Joshua that the history of mankind, and Israel in particular, was recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

This was continued by King David, the sweet psalmist of Israel. The succeeding historical psalms are an account of Israel's journey from its earliest beginnings under Abraham until the time of the divided kingdom. Then follow the beautiful Messianic psalms: Psalm 109 and Psalm 110.

*Part 1**A Call to Sing the Joyful Praise of Jehovah (105:1-7)*

105:1-7 - *“O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth.”*

This psalm opens with an encouragement to rehearse the glorious deeds of God. It is a spiritual exercise that glorifies God, but it is also very beneficial to the one so engaged therein. As Revelation 12:11 declares, the saints in the last days will overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

Make much of the holy name of Jesus. Rejoice and glory in the name of the Lord. Let us spend time day by day seeking His face, receiving strength for life’s battles. Call to remembrance His many blessings to you personally, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

In verse 6, the psalmist speaks to the seed of Abraham. As sons and daughters of Christ, we are also the spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29). We have been chosen by His sovereign

grace before the world's foundation. Oh what grace divine—so unmerited by us mortals. He humbles Himself to be called our God. He judges uprightly in every situation throughout the world. Nothing escapes Him, and although at times the Lord seems to move slowly, He moves surely on behalf of His loved ones. Praise the Lord!

Part 2

The Journeys of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (105:8-15)

105:8-15 - *“He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes; Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”*

God is a God who remembers His promises, which are yea and amen to all those who believe. They are innumerable and from everlasting to everlasting. What the Lord has decreed for us individually, He will surely perform. This applies in particular to the Abrahamic Covenant. God promised Abraham and his seed the land of Palestine, or the land of Israel as we now know it. Although the land is now heavily contested and

will be divided again according to Joel 3:2, when the Lord returns, Israel shall border from Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates, and from the Jordan to the great sea, the Mediterranean, under the leadership of the resurrected King David.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were small in numbers and strangers in the land, as the book of Numbers tells us. They were among fierce nations but no one was permitted to harm them. What security there is in knowing that none can do ought against us except God permits, for we know that all things work together for our good (Rom. 8:28).

Part 3

The descent into Egypt under Joseph (105:16-23)

105:16-23 - *“Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom. Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.”*

To bring about His sovereign purposes, the Lord decreed a famine in the lands of the Middle East to force all countries to

come to Egypt for sustenance. In Egypt He had already placed Joseph as ruler of the land. The way to the throne is succinctly illustrated here. Joseph, betrayed by his brethren, was sold to the Midianites and became a slave in Potiphar's house. He was elevated to be steward of Potiphar's household and then was falsely accused, imprisoned, and laid in irons. During this time, the word of the Lord was trying him as to whether he could trust God for the fulfillment of the promises the Lord had made to him.

We, too, will experience betrayal by relatives and close Christian friends and leaders, as well as times of slave-like existence in order to be tested. We must be tested in order to be promoted to the position that God has ordained for us.

When God is satisfied that we have passed our tests, we will be released from captivity. One morning Joseph was a prisoner, but by the evening of that same day he had become second to the ruler of Egypt, living in Pharaoh's palace.

Part 4

The Exodus under Moses and Aaron (105:24-38)

105:24-38 - *“And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies. He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants. He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen. They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against*

his word. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts. He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number; And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength. He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.”

The Lord greatly multiplied the people in the land of Egypt, where they dwelt for some 430 years from Abraham’s original visit until the Exodus. Then according to His plan and purpose, the Lord turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate His people.

How true is Proverbs 21:1, where Solomon states that, *“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water. He turneth it whithersoever He will.”* He then raised up Moses and Aaron, His appointed leaders, for His people, and used them to show forth His wonders against the Egyptians.

There were ten plagues that came upon the land of Egypt, of which the psalmist chose the ninth to start with (Ex. 10:21-29). This plague speaks of the ultimate eternal judgment upon

the disobedient among mankind, “to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (Jude 13). The psalmist writes about the first plague (Ex. 7:14-25), which is repeated in the last days (Rev. 16:3,6). Because the wicked shed the blood of the saints, they will have to drink blood. The second plague of frogs then follows (Ex. 8:2-14), typifying evil spirits that shall be loosed in the last days (Rev. 16:13-14).

Next he touches on the fourth plague of flies (Ex. 8:21-31), followed by the third plague of lice (Ex. 8:16-19). Now the psalmist mentions the seventh plague, the hail (Ex. 9:13-35, also see Rev. 16:21).

The flaming fire is an allusion to Exodus 9:23-25, and reoccurs perhaps in a different form in Revelation 16:9 (see also Rev. 9:18). He goes on to mention the eighth plague of the locusts (Ex. 10:1-20).

However, the fifth plague of the pestilence (Ex. 9:1-7), and the sixth plague of boils (Ex. 9:8-12), perhaps replicated in Revelation 16:11, are not mentioned and the account ends with the tenth plague, the slaying of the firstborn (Ex. 11:1).

The psalmist concludes the account of the Exodus with the fact that they spoiled their masters, the Egyptians, coming out with great wealth (Ex. 12:35). Also, God gave them the singular privilege of divine health. The Egyptians, whom God threatened with total extinction, were glad to get rid of the Israelites, for the fear of God had fallen upon the land.

*Part 5**The Wilderness Journey and the Entrance into
the Promised Land (105:39-45)*

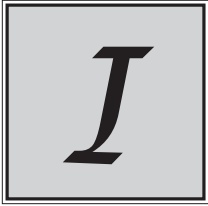
105:39-45 - *“He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river. For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant. And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness: And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people; That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD.”*

This final episode deals with God’s providential protection for the children of Israel in the wilderness journey, the flaming fire by night to warm them, and the cloud by day to protect them from the burning rays of the desert sun (Ex. 13:21). Through the miraculous provision of God, they were given quail to eat for meat, bread of heaven, which was the manna that they picked off the ground day by day for forty years, and water from the rock (Ex. 16:6). Thus they came forth from Egypt with joy as expressed in Exodus 15, when they sang that song of triumph given by Moses.

The psalmist concludes by declaring God’s faithfulness in fulfilling His promises to Abraham, by giving the lands of the heathen in Palestine to his seed, the children of Israel. They

received the vines and fields of their enemies for which they had not labored. The purpose of all these blessings was that they would keep God's statutes and commandments in that land, so all peoples would know and recognize God's wisdom. This event really was fulfilled in the reign of Solomon. Praise the Lord!

PSALM 106



In the previous psalm, David was intent upon showing God's goodness to Israel. In Psalm 106, he confesses the nation's sin, which was primarily rebellion. This historical psalm is parallel to the preceding one, wherein David shows Israel's reaction to God's provisions from the Exodus until the times of the Judges. As we meditate upon this psalm, let us reflect upon our own attitudes toward the dealings of God in our own lives.

This psalm can be conveniently divided into the following ten sections:

1. A co-mingling of praise and prayer that David may see the good that God has purposed for His chosen ones (vs. 1-5)
2. David confesses the sins of Israel committed in Egypt and at the Red Sea (vs. 6-12)
3. The lusting for flesh in the wilderness (vs. 13-15)
4. The envying of Moses and Aaron (vs. 16-18)
5. The episode of the golden calf worship (vs. 19-23)
6. Their failure to enter into the Promised Land at Kadesh-Barnea (vs. 24-27)
7. Their sin at Baal-Peor (vs. 28-31)
8. Their murmuring at the waters of Meribah (vs. 32-33)
9. Their disobedience when they entered the land (vs. 34-

44)

10. David recounts God's comparison to them during the times of the Judges and closes with a prayer and doxology (vs. 45-48)

Part 1

106:1-5 – *“Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? who can show forth all his praise? Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times. Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.”*

As in the previous psalm, David again exhorts us to praise and give thanks to the Lord for all His wondrous acts. David reminds us that those who keep God's laws at all times are blessed by the Lord. Because of his personal devotion to God, he pleads that the Lord will personally visit those who walk uprightly. We should pray in similar fashion, “Lord, meet us with your great salvation—a complete salvation for body, soul, and spirit.” (See Heb. 7:25; 1 Thess. 5:23; Jude 24).

Part 2

106:6-12 - *“We have sinned with our fathers, we have com-*

mitted iniquity, we have done wickedly. Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea. Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they his words; they sang his praise."

David now comes to the kernel theme of this psalm, the national sin of Israel—rebellion. David acknowledges and confesses the sin of Israel in great detail. One of the extraordinary facts of the journey of the children of Israel is that during the time of the ten plagues in Egypt, right until they came to the River Jordan, the people did not understand God's purposes for them. This is often the case in our lives. Quite often we do not understand what God is doing in our lives when we are in a trial.

It was only at the Jordan River that God gave the Israelites a heart to understand. Even at the Red Sea, the children of Israel provoked the Lord (Ex. 14:11-12) by saying that Moses, and by implication God, had brought them into the wilderness to kill them. They would have preferred to stay in Egypt and serve the Egyptians. Many people become comfortable in their bondage and do not really want to be delivered.

However, in spite of their attitude, God in His mercy, performed a miracle and they crossed over the Red Sea on dry land, while Pharaoh and his host were destroyed as the waters rolled back (Ex. 14:27). Then they believed the Lord and sang a song of victory unto the Lord (Ex. 15).

Part 3

106:13-15 - *“They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.”* When they were in the wilderness, they did not seek the counsel of the Lord, but in their impatience they demanded meat. They were tired of the manna that God miraculously provided day by day. God satisfied their lusts, but gave them spiritual leanness and barrenness. How sad it is when our god is our belly and we long for those things that satisfy our own evil desires. At times God will grant those requests, but we will fall short of the goal that God has for our lives, for we lose that holy contentedness that is of great price in the sight of God.

Part 4

106:16-18 - *“They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.”* The sins of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were envy and jeal-

ousy. They were envious of the positions of Moses and Aaron. Envy is judged with great severity by God.

One of the most common forms of rebellion on the part of those who are appointed to secondary positions in a church is insurrection against top leadership. Very often the assistant pastor or the elders rise against the senior pastor out of envy. Beloved, do not seek a position that God has not given you. Be content with the position that God has given you and if you are faithful with little, God will make you faithful over much. Remember, godliness with contentment is great gain!

Part 5

106:19-23 - *“They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea. Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.”*

Now David reverts to the days of the encampment around Mount Sinai when Moses tarried forty days and nights in the presence of God. Aaron was pressured by the people into making a golden calf. In only a short space of time, the Israelites had forgotten the Lord who had delivered them in such a spectacular fashion from Egyptian bondage. Our memories

of God's goodness are too short. We are very prone to turn to our own devices when we are perplexed. If Moses had not intervened on their behalf, the Israelites surely would have been destroyed.

The true test of leadership came when God offered to make of Moses a great nation. Moses was willing to have his own name removed from the Book of Life in order to spare the children of Israel (Ex. 32:10-14, 30-32). He had the same attitude of the Apostle Paul in Romans 9:1-3.

Part 6

106:24-27 - *“Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word: But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD. Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness: To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.”*

At Kadesh-Barnea, the Israelites did not enter into the Promised Land because of an evil heart of unbelief (Num. 14:1-12; Heb. 3:19). They murmured because they saw the great giants rather than contemplating the greatness of God.

Thus God sent them back into the wilderness for another thirty-eight years until all those of that generation, who were over the age of twenty and had come out of Egypt, had died in the wilderness.

It appears that this spirit of rebellion, murmuring, and unbelief remained in the nation until the time of Jesus. Jesus healed the man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years as a sign of the thirty-eight years the Israelites spent wandering in the wilderness (Deut. 2:14; Jn. 5:5).

Jesus came to save them from their sin, but He was rejected. The national sin of hardness of heart will only be cleansed at Christ's Second Coming (Zech. 13:1).

Part 7

106:28-31 - *“They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them. Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.”*

Here King David addresses the time when, through the wiles of Balaam, they succumbed to Moabitish worship, which involved prostitution (Num. 25:2). God smote them with a plague, which was halted only by Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, who had a great zeal for God's holiness.

For this he was granted an everlasting priesthood, thus entering into the privileges of the Church Age through our High Priest, the Lord Jesus (Heb. 5:6).

Part 8

106:32-33 - *“They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.”*

Now we have the sixth principal sin recorded—namely, the insurrection against Moses and Aaron in the fortieth year because of the lack of water. God instructed Moses to speak to the rock, which represented Christ (Num. 20:8). This was the second time they had come to this rock. This rock in the wilderness represents Christ (1 Cor. 10:4).

In the first instance the rock had to be smitten in order to bring forth water, signifying the crucifixion of Christ, who died once for the sins of His people and the world. In striking the rock twice, Moses was signifying that Christ would have to die for our sins more than once. The spirit of Moses was provoked through impatience and perhaps unbelief, and because he lost control of his spirit, he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. As leaders we must seek God for grace to always control our spirit (see Prov. 16:32).

Part 9

106:34-44 - *“They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood,*

even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry.”

Now the psalmist addresses the disobedience of Israel when they entered into the land. They failed to destroy the idolatrous nations, and then even partook of their idolatrous ways (Ex. 23:32). Thus the heathen became a snare to them. As punishment, God gave them repeatedly into the hands of the heathen during the time of the Judges. In fact, the book of Judges records a cycle of events: Israel’s disobedience, God’s punishment upon Israel through the oppression of a neighbor nation, Israel’s repentance, and God’s raising up of a deliverer (or judge) to overthrow the oppressing nation.

Part 10

106:45-48 - *“And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.*

Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise. Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.”

God remembered His covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Even when the children of Israel were taken into captivity, God ensured that they were treated with compassion by their captors. We see this illustrated in the life of Joseph, who was treated well firstly by Potiphar and then by the keeper of the prison. The Israelites were also carefully cared for by God when they were taken into Babylonian captivity.

This psalm ends with a plea that God will gather Israel from among the heathen where they have been scattered. In its entirety, this will be fulfilled at the Second Coming. In anticipation of this glorious event, and in contemplating the mercies of God, David concludes this psalm as he does so many others, with a doxology that extols the Lord and commands all of the Lord's people everywhere to give assent to this by saying a hearty “Amen.” Amen and Amen to the goodness of our God!

PSALM 107



psalm 107 is a psalm of rejoicing for the Lord's care for His people in their distress, which was caused by their sin. This beautiful psalm may be easily divided into seven sections:

1. The psalm opens with the theme, "The Redeemed of the Lord" (vs. 1-3)
2. Their wilderness wanderings (vs. 4-9)
3. The rebellious delivered from their cruel bondage (vs. 10-16)
4. Delivered from their sickness (vs. 17-22)
5. The plight of the seafarers (vs. 23-32)
6. God's judgments upon the wicked and His compassion upon the poor (vs. 33-42)
7. The closing admonition to those who would be wise (vs. 43)

Part 1

107:1-3 - *"O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south."*

This choice song of the redeemed starts with the command to give thanks, due to the fact that the Lord is intrinsically good, meaning that He is incapable of doing evil. On one occasion, the Lord appeared to me, and holding forth His arm, said to me, “Touch me, for I am altogether goodness.” I well understood that He wants us to be filled with His goodness as well (2 Chron. 31:20-21; 32:32). The redeemed in the time of Israel were those who had been delivered from Egyptian bondage, and at a later date, from Babylonian captivity.

Part 2

107:4-9 - *“They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”*

Once again the psalmist recounts the wilderness journey of Israel, but also alludes to the Babylonian captivity. Certainly, from our spiritual point of view, we as Christians do experience this period of wandering in our lifetime—having no place to call home. At times we are very much alone and often without food and drink, knowing the abjectness of poverty and its dire and distressful circumstances. But in His infinite mercy,

the Lord leads us in the good and right way, passing us by a desert oasis at times, until He brings us to our Rehoboth (meaning “room”), a resting place that we can finally call our own (cf. Gen. 26:22). He then surrounds us with those of like mind and calling. There we are satisfied with His goodness.

Part 3

107:10-16 - *“Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.”*

The psalmist now turns to the fate of God’s children who rebel. They experience times of painful and severe afflictions. They are placed under hard taskmasters, and their hearts are broken by long hours of hard labor.

How often have I seen those who have rebelled against God’s call upon their lives reduced to working in very menial jobs, having little to show for all their hard work. Often they are alienated by friends and family. However, those who repent

of their sin and cry unto God, are restored by the Lord and delivered from their terrible bondage. They also find release from their spiritual bondages of hatred, anger, frustration, and bitterness, which have been permitted to come upon them in their rebellious state.

Part 4

107:17-22 - *“Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.”*

Those who foolishly continue in their sins and transgressions also are prone to suffer physical ailments, bodily disorders, and severe sicknesses. They are afflicted to such a state that they can no longer experience the pleasure of eating good food.

They sink right down to the gates of death, but even at this low and seemingly impossible point, they cry unto the Lord and He is there to restore them. God’s Word comes and they are healed. Oh, let us come before the Lord with thanksgiving for His infinite goodness.

Part 5

107:23-32 - *“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.”*

Those who journey far abroad and whose voyages include trips by water into distant places see the wonders of the Lord. This is as true today as it was most certainly the case in Biblical times. They experienced the most harassing and life-threatening storms upon the Mediterranean Sea, even as Jonah and the Apostle Paul recount.

But often in our journeys we give the Lord an opportunity to show us and bring into our lives all sorts of conditions that would not be possible in the familiar surroundings of our home life.

Many of God's people desire to be homebodies, and thus they are deprived of many trials and pressures that those who abandon themselves wholeheartedly to God's will experience. Remember, you cannot see the miraculous unless there is a corresponding need. We must be prepared to hazard everything for the Lord.

Knowing the depths of despair, loneliness, and frustration is the prerequisite to know the greatness of God's goodness and power to deliver. We must know what it is like for the Lord to make the hostile storms of life a placid calm and what it is to experience His miraculous power in bringing us into our desired haven of rest. In order to be able to give such a testimony of His great goodness before the congregation of the elders, we must pass through His ordained storms of life.

Part 6

107:33-42 - *“He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wan-*

der in the wilderness, where there is no way. Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock. The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.”

The psalmist now contrasts God’s judgments upon the wicked and the goodness of His compassion to those who are poor in spirit, who put their trust wholly in Him. The fruitful lands of the wicked are turned into fields of thorns and thistles. However, if we turn to the Lord with all our hearts, that very wilderness can become a Garden of Eden. As we seek the Lord, clear springs of refreshing water gush forth from a place where there was no water. Those who were hungry are situated in places of sure habitation. There the fields yield their bounty and God multiplies His people both spiritually and naturally.

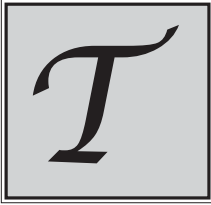
People often become self-assured and wallow in their blessings, forgetting the One who turned their mourning into dancing. As a result, the Lord brings them down again through oppressors. God casts them out and pours contempt upon them. But the poor, as Hannah declared, are raised up out of the dust and sit among princes, inheriting the thrones of glory (1 Sam. 2:8). The righteous shall rejoice at God’s judgments and the mouths of sinners shall be stopped.

Part 7

107:43 - *“Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.”* This

psalm closes in a manner similar to Hosea 14:9, and exhorts the wise to meditate upon these things so they may understand the goodness of the Lord. Even so be it, dear Lord; grant unto us an understanding heart to know Thy ways!

PSALM 108



his psalm of David is similar to Psalm 57:7-11 (verses 1-5) and Psalm 60:5-12 (verses 6-13). Since all Scripture is given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is evident that there must be a reason that the Lord combined these portions of Psalm 57 and Psalm 60 to form Psalm 108. Repetition is used in Scripture for emphasis when God desires to firmly implant a certain truth or sequence of events in our hearts. Since the combination of verses in Psalm 108 is different than in Psalm 57 and 60, this psalm clearly merits our attention. The three divisions of this psalm are:

1. The heart fixed on praise (vs. 1-5)
2. The decreed deliverance for David (vs. 6-12)
3. The triumphant finale (v. 13)

A Song or Psalm of David

Part 1

108:1-5 - *“O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and*

thy glory above all the earth.” In our times of worship, it is important that we do not allow our hearts and minds to wander and begin meditating on something else. As Paul exhorts in Colossians 3:2, we are to set our mind, heart, and affection upon heavenly things and not upon things of this world. Wherever we are, we should praise the Lord all day long, beginning early in the morning.

God’s mercy is the highest revelation of the Godhead, as is seen by His introduction of Himself to Moses: “The Lord God merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Ex. 34:6). He has exalted His Word even above His name (Psa. 138:2). David exalts the Lord above all spiritual blessings, heavenly positions, and possessions.

Part 2

108:6-12 - *“That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me. God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine; 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; over Philistia will I triumph. Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts? Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.”*

David’s cry for deliverance pertains to his enemies that sur-

rounded Israel. David rehearses what God in His holiness has declared concerning them. In order to conquer the enemy, homelands like Shechem had to be put in order. May we remember this important truth. Our churches must be put in order first, and then we can face the enemy without. Succoth is the other side of the Jordan.

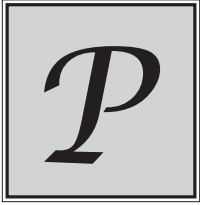
Now Gilead, Manasseh, and Ephraim are purged, and Judah takes his rightful place as lawgiver. Moab and Edom are places where the Lord cleanses His people (Psa. 60:8). In the last days, those nations will be places of tremendous slaughter (Isa. 63:1-4), but God will absolutely destroy the Palestinians at His Second Coming. David triumphed over the Philistines as well as over Moab and Edom (2 Sam. 8:12-14).

Part 3

108:13 - *“Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.”* David triumphed through God because the Lord was with David wherever he went. Beloved, we will also experience victory over our enemies as we walk with God like King David.

If we set our hearts totally on the Lord and our hearts are fixed upon Him, we will surely triumph over every obstacle and enemy we face in life. Be assured of the victory, beloved, that we have in Christ Jesus!

PSALM 109



salm 109 is a prophetic utterance of Christ, and it primarily deals with the betrayal of Judas. Several verses reveal this and specifically verse 8, which was quoted by the Apostle Peter in Acts 1:20 speaking of Judas. Judas' untimely death early in life is also spoken of in this psalm. This psalm can be divided into three main parts:

1. A plea for deliverance from his adversaries in general (vs. 1-5)
2. The pleas for the severest judgment upon his foes (vs. 6-20)
3. The cry of the poor and needy man to God for help in his distress (vs. 21-31)

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David

Part 1

109:1-5 - *“Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.”*

Christ was surrounded throughout His earthly ministry by those who slandered Him and tried to trap Him with His own words. He showed them nothing but love and compassion, yet they in turn were hateful toward Him.

In similar circumstances, let us seek to guard our hearts with all diligence and not become bitter. Jesus gave Himself to prayer. That was the key to His life. As we seek the Lord daily, there is a fresh flow of grace that cleanses our heart from all anger and frustration toward the wicked who seek to defile our spirits.

Part 2

109:6-15 - *“Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.”*

Here we see the flow of wrath from the lips of the righteous Judge concerning the betrayal of the wicked. As we have said already in the preface to this psalm, this pertains to Judas Iscariot of whom Christ Himself said it would be better for him had he never been born.

The judgments Christ asked God to bring upon Judas were:

1. That he would be tortured by Satan, the arch betrayer (verse 6). How difficult it is for the righteous to be ruled by an evil man, but they can receive grace to endure. However, the wicked find it excessively galling to be oppressed by another wicked person.
2. When brought before the bar of divine justice, that he would be found guilty (verse 7). So often on this earth crooked lawyers obtain acquittal for their criminal clients on technicalities. However, the wicked will not escape eternal judgment from the Lord. The very pleas of the wicked in themselves would be accounted sinful.
3. That he would be cut off in the midst of his years, possibly near the early age of thirty, and that his eternal apostolic office would be forfeited to Matthias (verse 8; cf. Acts 1:26).
4. That God's judgments would descend upon his children and wife, who would be reduced to poverty and be obliged to beg, with no secure dwelling place (verses 9-10).

5. That they would be at the mercy of the usurer, who would be intent upon extracting everything he could from them, and that all their labor would be for the benefit of others (verse 11).
6. That they would not be shown pity by anyone in their penniless and destitute plight (verse 12).
7. That there would be no one to bear his name in the succeeding generation (verse 13).
8. That he would suffer for the sins of his forefathers, and his mother in particular, and that their sins would be perpetually before the Lord (verses 14-15).

109:16-20 – *“Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually. Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul.”*

All of these severe judgments were pronounced upon Judas because he showed no mercy to Christ, the poor and afflicted

man, in the time of His greatest need. Judas was directly responsible for the crucifixion of the One whose heart had been broken by reproach (Psa. 69:20). Christ said to Pontius Pilate in John 19:11, *“He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.”*

In verses 17-18, we have an unfolding insight into the character of Judas.

1. He not only cursed and blasphemed, but delighted in doing so (cf. Rom. 1:32).
2. He rejoiced not in the anointing that he enjoyed as a member of the original apostolic band, performing miracles and casting out devils. Therefore, he forfeited it to another, and eternally would he be the object of cursing.

We read in John 12:6 about Judas, *“This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”* The Apostle John records that Judas was a thief.

Part 3

109:21-31 - *“But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name’s sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust. My knees are weak through fasting;*

and my flesh faileth of fatness. I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads. Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy: That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD, hast done it. Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.”

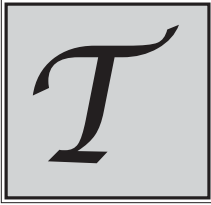
Now we see the plight of Christ Himself as He presents His sufferings before God His Father:

1. He is the poor and needy One, even as Isaiah 53 portrays Him.
2. His heart was wounded both physically and spiritually by the reproaches of His enemies.
3. His days passed quickly without pleasure and in constant turmoil.
4. His constant life of fasting had physically weakened Him.
5. All those who looked upon Him esteemed Him lightly (Isa. 53).

He then asks His Heavenly Father to turn the curses of His foes into blessings. He prays that those who have brought such sorrow to Him might be covered with shame and confusion and that He would know the joy of His Father.

Then Christ declares with assurance that He will praise His Father amongst the multitude of the seed that shall be given to Him (Isa. 53). While Judas will have Satan at his right hand, Christ will experience the joy of His Father standing at His right hand. In a small measure, this will be the portion of the righteous also.

PSALM 110



he great theme of this psalm is the King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. It clearly portrays Christ in this role as is evidenced by Hebrews 5:1-6. The psalm can be divided into three parts:

1. The exaltation of Christ after the cross (vs.1-3)
2. The King-Priest (v. 4)
3. The victorious Christ at His Second Coming (vs. 5-7)

A Psalm of David

Part 1

110:1-3 - *“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”*

Verse 1 was used by Christ to silence His adversaries in the Temple (Mt. 22:41-46). Here David the prophet records his vision of God the Father speaking to David’s Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father said to Jesus that after His resurrection He would be seated at the right hand of the Majesty on

high. Then in the fullness of time the Father would bring all of Christ's enemies into subjection. The word "footstool" is used in this passage because in olden days victorious kings required their vanquished foes to kneel in submission before them. The victors would place their feet upon their necks as a sign of their defeat.

From Zion, Christ will rule and reign at His Second Coming. When Christ returns, His people Israel will willingly accept Him (Zech. 12-14). With the freshness of youth in the beauty of holiness, He will come to defend His people besieged on Mount Zion.

However, I believe that even in the Church Age there is a manifestation of His power and authority through His Church. In times of revival, when His glory is manifested, even the most lukewarm church member willingly yields to the moving of the Holy Spirit.

Part 2

110:4 - *"The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."* To appreciate the central theme of this psalm, we need to understand one of the Lord's purposes for His people. In Exodus 19:6, the Lord said that He would make of the children of Israel a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The Lord's original intention was for every Israelite to be a king and a priest unto the Lord.

However, because of the Israelites' disobedience, only the tribe of Levi was chosen to be priests and only the tribe of Judah was selected for kingship. Nevertheless, God's plans are never thwarted by mankind, only delayed at times. Thus the Church inherits the promises forfeited by Israel in this dispensation (1 Pet. 2:9, Rev. 1:6).

Christ is the High Priest of our faith after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was a priest who was also the king of Jerusalem (Salem). He was a king-priest (Gen. 14:18; Heb.7:1). Even the great patriarch Abraham realized the greatness and significance of this and paid tithes to him.

Melchizedek is one of the most beautiful types of Christ in all of Scripture. As Hebrews 7:2 states, Melchizedek was the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace (*Salem* meaning "peace"). He was not king by virtue of heritage, but by election.

This corresponds perfectly to the needs of New Testament believers who are elected by grace and do not enter into the promises by right of family ties, but rather are individually required to make their calling and election sure.

We qualify for this eternal office through the terms of Romans 5:17 and Romans 12:1-2—receiving the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, as well as presenting our bodies by His mercies without spot before God.

God desires to make us kings and priests who rule and reign with Him and minister before Him as spiritual priests. (Please refer to our commentary on the book of Hebrews entitled, *Hebrews: Within The Veil*, for a more detailed exposition of the Melchizedek priesthood.)

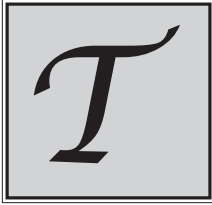
Part 3

110:5-7 - *“The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.”*

Here King David sees in a vision the triumphant Christ destroying His enemies at His Second Coming. The kings of the heathen, who are arrayed against Zion’s hill, shall be slain and become food for the Great Supper (Rev. 19:17-18). The slaughter of the heathen on that day shall be awesome, as Isaiah 63:1-6 recounts.

This is especially true of those who compose the armies of Moab and Edom, which today are part of the modern-day kingdom of Jordan. The strength of Christ lies in the fact that He drank of the river of the water of life. May we also drink from this river, that we may receive strength for all of life’s battles.

PSALM 111



his psalm begins a group of twin Psalms—Psalm 111 and 112. Psalm 111 celebrates the glory, might, and lovingkindness of the Lord in the congregation of the upright, while Psalm 112 celebrates the blessings of the upright.

These two psalms have striking similarities. In the Hebrew, both have twenty-two lines beginning with one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. They are acrostic psalms, and, therefore, divisions cannot be easily made. From early times, certainly from the days of Augustine, Psalm 111 has been associated with Easter, and it is sung at that time by many in the Church worldwide.

We have departed from the King James translation to present another translation, which depicts more clearly, though not necessarily more accurately, the Hebrew rendering of this passage. For the benefit of our readers, we have placed the Anglicized name of each Hebrew letter of the alphabet by the side of each of the twenty-two lines.

111:1-10 (KJV) - *“Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is*

honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant. He hath showed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.”

111:1 - *Aleph* - *I will give thanks unto Jehovah with my whole heart*

Beth - *In the council of the upright and the congregation*

We should make a life-style out of praising the Lord. We need to fix our whole heart upon the Lord and utter His praises in the assemblies of the righteous. This is a very important truth. We should worship the Lord in congregations that uphold God's righteous standards.

Remember, likes go to likes, and in many churches, the people are not wholehearted and they worship the Lord while living a sinful life. We should seek out the righteous and worship the Lord together with them.

111:2 - *Gimel - Great are the deeds of Jehovah.*

Daleth - Worthy of being sought after in all their purposes

It is a beneficial spiritual exercise to meditate upon the works of God in creation. Both David and Solomon did in their Psalms and Proverbs. Every part of God's creation, whether in the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom, may be seen by revelation of the Holy Spirit.

111:3 - *He - Glory and splendor is His work.*

Vav - And His righteousness endureth forever

All God's handiwork exudes the beauty of its Creator. We ourselves are fearfully and wonderfully made. Everything in creation is harmonized, founded, and fashioned in righteousness.

111:4 - *Zain - A memorial of His wonderful works hath He founded.*

Cheth - Gracious and compassionate is Jehovah.

The memory of His works will endure and be remembered as long as this earth remains. The second part of verse four tells us that He is a compassionate God. He is the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3).

111:5 - *Teth - Meat hath He given to those who fear Him*

Jod - He remembereth His covenant forever.

The Lord cares for all those who reverently fear Him, providing for their daily needs. He also remembers the covenant that He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which is manifested through the cross of Christ. God will not break His covenant. As Numbers 23:19 says, “*God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*” God will surely perform all of the good things He has promised to each one of us.

111:6 - *Caph* - He hath made known to His people the power of His works.

Lamed - Giving to them the heritage of the heathen.

The psalmist recalls the power that God manifested in delivering the children of Israel from Egypt, afterwards bringing down the strength of the heathen in the land of Canaan. In so doing, He fulfilled His promise to Abraham to give his seed the land of Canaan for an inheritance. God will also give us the things that He has personally promised us, beloved.

111:7 - *Mem* - The works of His hand and Truth and Righteousness

Nun - Faithful are all His statutes

Everything God does is true and right. We can have every confidence that as we walk in His commandments, we will enjoy the blessedness that He has promised to all those who obey them.

111:8 - *Samech - Firm forever and ever*

Ain - Established according to truth and upright

111:9 - *Pe - He hath sent redemption unto His people*

Tzad-di - He hath pledged His covenant forever.

Koph - Holy and reverend is His name.

111:10 - *Resh - The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Jehovah.*

Schin - A good understanding have all the dutiful ones.

Tav - He shall have eternal praise.

In these last eight lines, the emphasis is upon the holiness and awesomeness of God, who gives wisdom and understanding to all those who obey Him and keep His commandments. Wisdom is more to be desired than gold and silver (Psa. 19:10). Proverbs 4:7 says, *“Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”*

Nothing can compare in value with wisdom and understanding. They come from the Lord (Prov. 2:6), and as Job reiterates, *“Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding”* (Job 28:28).

PSALM 112



As stated in the introduction to Psalm 111, Psalms 111 and 112 are called twin psalms, both being acrostic in nature. Psalm 111 celebrated the glory, might, and loving-kindness of the Lord, while Psalm 112 celebrates the blessings of the upright. We commend the study of both Leviticus 26:3-13 and Deuteronomy 7:13; 28:1-14, in conjunction with this psalm. Psalm 112 describes many of the blessings that come upon those who fear the Lord and walk in His ways (see Esther 6:9).

112:1-10 (KJV) – *“Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man showeth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour. The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash*

with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.”

112:1 - *Aleph* - *Blessed is the man who feareth Jehovah.*

Beth - *Who delighteth greatly in His commandments.*

In this verse we have the conditions of those that would inherit the blessings enumerated in this psalm. We must walk circumspectly with reverential fear, seeking to please the Lord with our every thought, word, and deed. Secondly, we must delight in God’s commandments and His Word. We must diligently read, study, and meditate often in His Word. These requirements are similar to those laid out in Psalm 1:1-3, to which we commend your attention, dear reader.

112:2 - *Ginel* - *His seed shall become mighty upon earth.*

Daleth - *The generation of the upright is blessed.*

One of the facts that Holy Scripture enumerates frequently is that our inheritance resides with our seed, both natural and spiritual. Therefore, His blessing shall come upon generations of our seed as we walk in holiness all the days of our life and exercise ourselves in the study of His Word.

112:3 - *He* - *Wealth and riches are in His house.*

Vav - *And His righteousness standeth forever.*

Another blessing that comes upon the righteous, who fear the Lord and delight in His Word, is that they will receive great

riches, especially in eternity. God will abundantly provide for us if we walk in His ways. However, that does not mean that we will not go through times of leanness and financial struggles. These trials produce a holy dependence for God within our hearts.

The righteousness of the righteous will not be forgotten (Ezek. 3:20-21). When Mary broke the costly alabaster box and poured out the spikenard ointment upon Jesus, He said that what she had done would always be remembered.

This is brought out in Matthew 26:13: *“Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial for her.”*

112:4 - *Zain* - *There ariseth in darkness for the upright a light.*

Cheth - *Gracious and compassionate and righteous is he*

As Job 29:3 said, one of the blessings of the righteous is that, by the Lord’s light, he (Job) walked through darkness. True righteousness is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and this compassion is illustrated by Job’s conduct in Job 29:12-16.

112:5 - *Teth* - *Blessed is he who giveth and lendeth.*

Jod - *In judgment doth he maintain his cause.*

In 2 Corinthians 9:7, Paul states that the Lord loves a cheerful giver. The bountiful eye shall be blessed for he giveth his bread to the poor (Prov. 22:9). Therefore, God promises the liberal soul that He will defend him in times when adversaries rise up against him.

I have noticed in my life that those who are generous are promoted by God and receive the blessings of God. However, those who are selfish and complain about every little expense lose out in the end. Beloved, have an eye to see the needs of those around you and seek to meet those needs according to God's will, for you can never out give God.

112:6 - *Caph* - *He is not moved forever.*

Lamed - *The righteous is had in everlasting remembrance*

Although all men experience the chastening of the Lord, and are tossed up and down like wheat to remove the chaff, yet the end of the matter for the righteous is a sure resting place. They have a name that lives on and is remembered for all generations (Psa. 45:17).

112:7 - *Mem* - *By evil tidings he is not affrighted.*

Nun - *His heart is steadfast, confident in Jehovah.*

When times of adversity come and the enemies surround the righteous, they remain secure and at rest because of their trust in the Lord. As Paul said, "None of these things move me."

When we obey the Lord, our lives are founded upon the rock and in times of turbulence, we remain steadfast and sure in Christ our Rock!

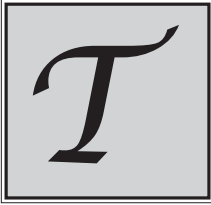
112:8 - *Samech* - *His heart is firm, it doth not fear.*

Ain - *Until he see his desire upon his adversaries*

Peace reigns in the hearts of the righteous because they practice the words of Philippians 4:6-7, which says, “*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” In due time, the righteous see the Lord remove and judge the enemies of their soul.

Thus this psalm gives confidence to the righteous that the end of the matter will always be good. Although the Lord does permit trials from the enemies of our souls, He will never forsake us. The Lord will ensure that we remain upright and steadfast, while our enemies will be swept away in His good time.

PSALM 113



his psalm begins what are called the Hallelujah or Praise Psalms—Psalms 113, 114, 115, 116, 117 and 118. The word *hallelujah*, meaning “Praise the Lord,” is used frequently in this group of Psalms. They were used in Jewish liturgy on the occasions of the three great feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

At the Passover, Psalms 113 and 114 were sung before the meal, and Psalm 115-118 after the meal. Incidentally, these psalms were sung by Jesus and His disciples in the Upper Room (Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26). Matthew 26:30 says that Jesus and the apostles sang a hymn. In reality, this group of psalms was sung as one great hymn of praise to the Lord.

Psalm 113 is divided beautifully into three perfectly balanced stanzas of three verses each.

1. The fourfold call to praise (vs. 1-3)
2. The exalted Lord (vs. 4-6)
3. God exalts the lowly (vs. 7-9)

Part 1

113:1-3 - *“Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Blessed be the name of*

the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised." A triple repetition of the command to praise, such as the one in verse one, was not uncommon in Jewish liturgy. The phrase, "the Lord's name is to be praised from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same," is repeated in Malachi 1:11, speaking of the fact that the Lord shall be great among the Gentiles and praise shall go up to Him from all nations in the Church Age.

Part 2

113:4-6 - *"The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!"* The Lord is enthroned on high above the heavens and earth, yet in His humility, He beholds the things upon earth to revive the spirit of the humble and the heart of the contrite ones (Isa. 57:15).

Part 3

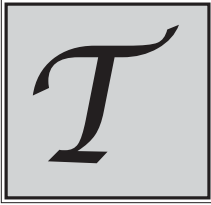
113:7-9 - *"He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD."* The opening words of this stanza are very similar to the song of Hannah, wherein she exalts the Lord for raising up the beggar from the dunghill. The dung-

hill is the habitation of the destitute in many countries. From their dunghills they plead for alms from those who pass by. At night, they sleep upon the ashes that have been warmed by the daytime sun.

I well remember the time when my wife and I were guests in an African village that was built with cow dung. The Lord had raised up powerful evangelists from among these very simple people. They were used to counsel the heads of state of their country.

Throughout Scripture there are the notable barren women who were visited by the Lord and brought forth mighty deliverers: Sarah brought forth Isaac, Rebecca brought forth Jacob, Rachel brought forth Joseph, Manoah's wife brought forth Samson, Hannah brought forth Samuel, and Elizabeth brought forth John the Baptist.

PSALM 114



his psalm briefly recounts the effects upon nature when the Lord brought His people out of Egypt. The psalm may be divided into two parts:

1. The exodus from Egypt and His dwelling place amongst His people (vs. 1-2)
2. The earth in awe of God's presence (vs. 3-8)

Part 1

114:1-2 - *“When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.”* One of the trials of life is to be placed among those who are not our own people. Their customs and language are very different from ours. Joseph experienced this, as we read in Psalm 81:5. The Lord understands the painfulness of this experience. I can personally testify of those difficulties in many lands. Because of the strangeness of the language, one is driven into an uncanny isolation in the midst of untold millions of people.

When Israel came into the land of their inheritance, Judah became the Lord's sanctuary upon the Mount Zion that He loved and Israel became His possession.

Part 2

114:3-8 - *“The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs? Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.”*

The psalmist now recounts that when God came forth in the midst of His people, all nature was affected in the path of His advance. The Red Sea was divided, the waters of Jordan were rolled back, and even the mountains shook as with an earthquake.

The whole land is commanded to tremble at the presence of the Lord, Creator of the universe. He also brought forth the waters from out of the Rock. This of course, will be re-enacted in an even more spectacular fashion at His Second Coming. Christ's feet will stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, the mountains will cleave asunder, and living waters will flow out from Jerusalem.

PSALM 115



salm 115 was composed for the worship in the second Temple. It is a liturgy of praise, contrasting the greatness of the God of Israel to the impotence of the gods of the heathen. It was given to encourage those who had returned from captivity to trust in the Lord. The psalm can be divided into five movements, which are sung by the congregation and either the priest or temple choir composed of alternating Levites. The probable arrangement is as follows:

1. The praise of God sung by the congregation (vs. 1-8)
2. The response by a member of the Temple choir (vs. 9-11)
3. The congregation (vs. 12-13)
4. The priests (vs. 14-15)
5. The congregation (vs. 16-18)

Part 1

115:1-8 - *“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses*

have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."

The heathen were mocking God's people, taunting them by saying, "Where is your God?" The congregation of God was pleading with the Lord to answer their taunts and glorify His name. But God is not moved into hasty solutions; He has His own appointed time for our deliverance. Idols have no power, however, those who worship them take upon themselves the characteristics of the demons behind the idols (cf. 1 Cor. 10:19-20).

For this reason, the Lord seeks those who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth, for they will become like Him as they worship Him. The Apostle John said in 1 John 3:2, "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*" As we worship the Lord with a pure heart and see Him even as He is, we shall be transformed from glory to glory into His very likeness.

Part 2

115:9-11 - "*O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.*" The soloist replies

to this plea of the congregation by singing that they should trust in the Lord, for He is a present help in time of trouble. It is vital for us to learn to place our trust wholly in the Lord in times of distress. This lesson sometimes takes a lifetime to learn, although it need not.

Part 3

115:12-13 - *“The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.”* The congregation responds on a more positive and cheerful note by saying that the Lord would bless them and not forget them. God’s blessings come, specifically, upon those who fear Him and walk circumspectly before Him.

Part 4

115:14-15 - *“The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children. Ye are blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.”* The priests then give the congregation the assurance that they will inherit the twin promises made to Abraham—that in blessing He would bless him, and in multiplying He would multiply him. The Lord would increase them more and more, and not only them but their children as well. We need to realize that what we do affects our children. If we will walk uprightly, God’s blessing will be upon us, our home, and our children. But if we turn away from the Lord, our actions can have adverse effects upon our children.

Part 5

115:16-18 - *“The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men. The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.”* The congregation terminates the liturgy by declaring that the heavens belong unto God, but the earth He has given to the children of men.

For this reason a certain amount of free will has been granted unto man, yet as the Lord’s prayer states, we are to pray that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Those who go down into the pit do not praise, but rather blaspheme that holy name. In contrast, the redeemed will praise Him as long as they have breath, even throughout all eternity in heaven.

PSALM 116



eliverance from death is the theme of Psalm 116. It can be divided into three main sections: 1. The sorrows of death (vs. 1-6); 2. The deliverance from death (vs. 7-14); 3. The sacrifice of thanksgiving (vs. 15-19).

Part 1

116:1-6 - *“I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.”*

This section starts with a declaration of love for the Lord because He has heard our supplications. It is so wonderful to know that one of the prime purposes of this creation is to demonstrate the love and wisdom of God to all His creatures.

Another primary purpose is for God’s people to love Him freely. As we carefully study the Word of God, the love of

God is developed in our hearts proportionate to the deliverance, forgiveness, or favor that we receive from the Lord.

This is illustrated in the Lord's conversation with Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7:40-43. After telling him the story of the two debtors who owed a certain creditor different amounts of money and were forgiven of their debt, the Lord asked him: "Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?" Simon responded, "I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most."

Therefore, in order to develop our love for God, we experience the sorrows of death and the pains of hell. These become very real as we are brought down to the gates of death. At times, we may even experience the pains, to some degree, of those who are eternally damned. If we cry out to the Lord in our deep trouble, He will graciously deliver us. Then we will find ourselves loving Him more, according to the degree of our sufferings.

Part 2

116:7-14 - *"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: I said in my haste, All men are liars. What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay*

my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.” Thus the psalmist rejoices in being bountifully delivered from death. This deliverance, in turn, produces within us a deeper commitment to draw closer to our blessed Lord. In the greatest of our affliction, having been brought so very low, we are prone to distrust people, but we must never lose our trust in God. That is why it is written, “God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should change His mind” (Num. 23:19).

How truly then shall we repay the Lord for His salvation, as stated in John 3:16, that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” With the heart man believes and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:10). Paul quotes Psalm 116:10 in 2 Corinthians 4:13, saying, “We having the same spirit of faith . . .” We will taste His cup of full salvation and we will pay all those vows that we have made while in our times of sorrow before the congregation of the righteous.

Part 3

116:15-19 - *“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people, In the courts of the Lord’s house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise*

ye the LORD.” When our time finally comes to leave this mortal house and put on immortality, we know that we will be accepted in the Beloved. The laying down of our lives will be a sweet savor unto the Lord.

Then with a heart filled with thanksgiving, the psalmist concludes by declaring that He will call upon the name of the Lord and pay all his vows in the presence of the great congregation.

PSALM 117



Even though it is the shortest psalm, in its brevity, Psalm 117 encompasses God's plan for the ages—that all nations will praise the Lord. It is quoted in Romans 15:11 as justification that the Gentiles will indeed be included in the salvation of God through Jesus Christ in the Church Age.

117:1-2 - *“O Praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.”*

This psalm flows with the great Hallelujah Psalms within this section of the Psalter. In particular, it is linked to Psalm 118, forming a fitting introduction for Psalm 118.

The psalmist declares that God's lovingkindness is great toward all mankind. All nations may partake of the Gospel message. This is a psalm that commends and encourages missionaries. No matter which nation they may be called to, they may be assured of everlasting fruit in the form of souls who will indeed praise the Lord in truth.

When Jesus comes again and establishes His millennial kingdom upon earth, all nations will come to Jerusalem and worship Him. He will finally sit upon His throne as the King of Kings over all the earth. What a glorious day that will be!

PSALM 118



artin Luther's favorite psalm was Psalm 118. He said that it was the source of strength that enabled him to escape all the troubles that neither emperor, king, or man could help. It is the closing psalm of the Hallelujah group that commenced with Psalm 113.

It is probably a psalm written by a king of David's line, if not David himself. It overflows with thoughts of God's mercy to the king. The psalm is divided into five main parts:

1. A call to the nation to praise the Lord (vs. 1-4)
2. The king's song of thanksgiving for deliverance and victory (vs. 5-21)
3. The people's response (vs. 22-27)
4. The king concludes by exalting the Lord (vs. 28)
5. The liturgical conclusion that is the counterpart of the introduction (vs. 29)

Part 1

118:1-4 - *“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy endureth for ever.”*

This psalm is introduced by a liturgical call to the nation to praise the Lord. This praise is to be grounded in the mercy of the Lord, which is the highest attribute of the Godhead. This is acknowledged throughout all nations when the head of state is invested with the power of mercy, which can overrule a judgment although duly decreed by justice.

We, as well as Israel, have merited eternal destruction and damnation, but in His mercy God sent Christ to die for our sins in our place. God showed mercy to Israel because He was looking forward to Christ's sacrifice upon the cross that would wipe away Israel's sins. Thus the psalmist encouraged Israel to praise God for His infinite love and mercy.

Part 2

118:5-7 - *“I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place. The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.”*

Now King David proceeds to give his own personal testimony of his gratitude for God's favor towards him. In particular, he emphasizes his distress, presumably during the time that he fled from Saul.

God later brought him to the throne after the death of Saul. No longer was he in a narrow place because God enlarged

him so that he reigned over the whole land, initially over Judah and later over Israel, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates.

Beloved, what God did for David He will do for us; we only need to trust in Him (cf. Psa. 66:12). We need to have the confidence that the Lord is really with us and believe that Romans 8:28 works all the time. All things really do work together for good for those who love the Lord! We need to have the assurance that we are in God's hands and no one can do anything to us unless the Lord allows them to, as we see in the life of Job. Satan could only do to Job what the Lord permitted him to do.

It is a very fruitful study to examine the times that the psalmist David mentions here. We see the progressive steps whereby David arrived at this glorious place of victory. David said in verse 6, *"The Lord is on my side: I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"*

In Psalm 23:4 and 27:1,3, there are similar declarations of faith made by David. However, David surely did have his times of fear as we read in Psalm 56:3: *"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."* It is a progressive development of our faith that enables us to come to that ultimate place of victory.

118:8-13 - *"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes. All nations compassed me about: but*

in the name of the LORD will I destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them. They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them. Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me.”

During David’s formative years, he was afraid of Achish, King of Gath (Psa. 34; 1 Sam. 21:10-14). However, later on in his life he said in Psalm 54:4, *“The Lord is with them that uphold my soul.”* Let us have the same confidence David had, that the Lord will defeat all those who hate us.

Our confidence should not be in men, *“for vain is the help of man”* (Psa. 60:11). Although all the warfaring nations were arrayed against David at one time or another, he vanquished them in the name of the Lord (2 Sam. 8:6). The Lord preserved David everywhere he went and in every battle he faced.

118:14-17 – *“The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.”*

Verse 14 is a quotation of the victory song of triumph found in Exodus 15. There was a sound of rejoicing in the whole camp because of David’s victories. As Israel of old, they ob-

tained the victory, not by their own strength, but by the Lord's right hand (Psa. 44:3).

118:18-21 - *“The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD: This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.”*

In verse 18, David speaks of the Lord's chastening, which at times brings us right down to the doors of death. However, God, who holds the keys of hell and death, did not give David over to death. When David sinned with Bathsheba, the Lord corrected and severely punished him for his sin, but the Lord forgave him because of his repentant and contrite heart. Then the Lord caused David to enter through the gates of righteousness and be a partaker of God's righteousness.

David praises God for His goodness, and because he has obtained the favor of the Most High to enter into the gate of the righteous and into God's blessings. God had become David's Savior and may He be ours also.

Part 3

118:22-23 - *“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.”* Now Psalm 118 becomes Messianic

in nature. Jesus quoted verses 22-23 in Matthew 21:42 and Mark 12:10-11 as referring to Himself. Christ used these verses to prove from Scripture that He is the stone that the builders of the Temple, the scribes and Pharisees, rejected. He has now become the Head Stone. Peter alluded to this verse in 1 Peter 2:7.

118:24 – *“This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”* This verse is typically used in a general sense, but it can also apply to the day on which the Church Age was inaugurated. It was a day of rejoicing for the saints of God. We should repeat the words of this verse every day of our lives, realizing that God is the maker of every day and we should rejoice and be glad in Him.

118:25 – *“Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.”* The prayer of the saints should be for the Lord to send prosperity. First of all, we need to understand that God’s desire is to prosper His people. He wants to entrust us with His riches so that we can further the work of the Lord among the nations. However, God has His divine timetable to send prosperity. We have to go through the wilderness and times of leanness before we can experience His blessings.

118:26-27 - *“Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. God is the LORD, which hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.”* Verse 26 is

also a Messianic verse. The multitudes quoted this verse in Matthew 21:9 when Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Verse 27 speaks about binding the sacrifice to the horns of the altar with chords. When we have made a sacrifice, it is very important for us to bind it with chords of love, grace, strength, and God's mercy, so that we do not recant or break our promise.

We read in Ecclesiastes 5:1-6: *“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?”*

Part 4

118:28 - *“Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.”* David's closing refrain is a decla-

ration that the God of Israel, the one and only true God, is his God. May it be so with us. We, too, should praise the Lord, honor Him, and give glory to His matchless name!

Part 5

118:29 - *“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* The closing refrain echoes the introduction by encouraging us all to praise Him for His goodness, His deliverance, and above all, His mercy to the children of men.

PSALM 119



od's Word is the major theme of Psalm 119, the longest psalm. This psalm was written by a pious priest who was devoted to God's Word. It is likely post-exilic, and the author may well have been Ezra himself. It is certainly a psalm of instruction in the ways of piety and godliness. It was written in acrostic alphabetic style. In the original Hebrew each of the eight verses of the twenty-two stanzas begins with the same letter of the alphabet.

This psalm is arranged in twenty-two stanzas, according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza is composed of eight verses, each verse consisting of two members only, and each beginning with the same letter of the alphabet.

Each of the first eight verses begins with the letter Aleph, and the next eight with the letter Beth. In the third chapter of Lamentations, a similar arrangement is adopted, but the stanzas or groups consist only of three verses, each beginning with the same letter. Other Acrostic Psalms are Psalms 25, 37, 111, 112, and 145. Lamentations 3 is acrostic in nature as well.

Many Hebrew students of the law memorized the whole of this monumental work. We commend the study and the

memorization of many pertinent verses of this psalm to every serious student of God's Word. We would do well to meditate often upon this psalm.

In every verse of this precious psalm, with the exception of verse 122, one of the following ten words is used to describe God's Word and ways:

1. Testimonies
2. Commandments
3. Precepts
4. Word
5. Law
6. Ways
7. Truth
8. Judgment
9. Righteousness
10. Statutes

In this commentary of Psalm 119, I have begun each of the twenty-two stanzas by stating the prevalent theme and then expounding on the supplemental points of each stanza.

1. The Eightfold Aleph (vs. 1-8)

The first stanza speaks of the blessedness of those who are holy and keep the Lord's commandments.

119:1-2 – *“ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who*

walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.” Verses 1-2 hold the key to the intent and content of Psalm 119. It is an exhortation to keep the Law of God.

Those who walk in God’s ways are blessed by Him. The psalmist sets before us an example to follow and emulate. How can we experience the blessing of God? Verses 1-2 tell us four things that we must do to be blessed of God:

1. Keep ourselves undefiled in the way
2. Walk in the law of the Lord
3. Keep the Lord’s testimonies
4. Seek the Lord with our whole heart

We read in Psalms 1:1-2: *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”*

We must not walk with the ungodly, because they will surely defile us. We must delight in God’s law, because if His Word is not a delight to us, we will not keep it. Another important truth is that our prayer life must be orientated to seeking the Lord for revelation upon His Word.

119:3 – *“They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.”* If we will do the things mentioned in verses 1-2, we will be

preserved from iniquity and falling into sin. We read in Zephaniah 3:13, *“The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”* Our desire should be that the Lord will purify us of all iniquity, lying, and deceit. The fruit of being purified is that we will be fed by the Lord and no one will make us afraid.

119:4 – *“Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.”* We must be very clear about the fact that the law of the Lord is not an option for God’s people. The word “diligently” means “fully.” We must seek to fully keep God’s commandments and precepts. Saul only did part of God’s will. He slew the Amalekites, but he kept the king, Agag, alive. This partial obedience was called disobedience by God. Let us seek to fully keep God’s precepts.

119:5 – *“O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!”* There is always a battle within the hearts of the godly between the old nature that longs to walk independently in the ways of man and the new nature of Christ that cannot sin. That is why we need to earnestly pray, as the psalmist does in verse 5, that God will direct our ways to keep His statutes.

The Lord said to Moses in Deuteronomy 5:29 concerning the children of Israel, *“O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children*

for ever!” We need to ask the Lord to put within us a heart that is determined to keep His commandments.

119:6 – *“Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.”* The emphasis here is on keeping all of God’s laws. So many people tend to keep some of God’s laws and ignore or excuse their noncompliance with His other commandments.

119:7 – *“I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.”* The Church has become very aware in recent years of the need to praise God both in church and in individual times of worship in the home.

However, the need to worship the Lord with an upright heart has not been stressed. Here the psalmist says that he will praise God with “uprightness of heart.” We must remember that God does not accept all worship (cf. Mt. 15:9). He only accepts the worship of those who worship Him with a pure and upright heart.

119:8 – *“I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.”* The psalmist concludes by saying that he has determined to keep God’s statutes and by praying that the Lord will not abandon Him.

2. The Eightfold Beth (vs. 9-16)

The second stanza begins with a very important question: How

can we cleanse our way? The answer is—by taking heed to God’s Word. The key is to hide God’s Word in our heart; in other words, we must allow God to write His laws upon the fleshly tables of our heart.

119:9 – *“BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”* Our hearts are purified by obedience to the Word of God. This is confirmed in 1 Peter 1:22, where Peter says, *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”* Obedience to God’s Word purifies our hearts and souls.

119:10 – *“With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.”* The psalmist prays that God will not allow Him to wander from His commandments. The truth of the matter is that we are “kept by the power of God” (1 Pet. 1:5). None of us can keep ourselves in God’s ways; it is only by the grace of God that we can remain faithful.

119:11 – *“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”* I well remember an aged board member of a church that I once pastored who often recited this verse. It was the key to his life of obedience to the Lord, and it is the key to our obedience as well. As we fill our hearts with the Holy Scriptures, our hearts will be strengthened and enabled to resist sin.

Let me briefly compare two of the sons of Jacob. Reuben was morally weak and committed adultery with his father's concubine, Bilhah (Gen. 35:22; 49:4). Joseph, on the other hand, when faced with the seductions of Potiphar's wife, fled from her.

119:12 – *“Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.”*

One of the aspects of this life is that we need teachers. Incidentally, teaching is the world's largest profession, with nearly thirty million teachers worldwide at this time. The supreme teacher is the Lord Himself. We need to sit at the Master's feet and be taught the ways of God.

119:13 – *“With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.”* It is to the degree that we faithfully testify of God's ways that we receive strength for life's battles.

119:14 – *“I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.”* The psalmist delights in God's Word like the worldly do in their temporal riches. It is obvious that the writer was a man of substance, for if he had been poor, he would not have been able to say this.

119:15 – *“I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.”* Meditating on the Word nourishes the inner man and walking in the ways of God cleanses our souls.

119:16 – *“I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.”* Rejoicing in the Word delights the heart of God,

as does a commitment to remember the Holy Scriptures at all times.

3. The Eightfold Gimel (vs. 17-24)

As Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:6, “*The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.*” Therefore, as the psalmist prayed in verse 18, let us pray, “*Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law.*” Feed us, dear Lord, with Your hidden manna—the hidden truths of Your precious Word (Rev. 2:17).

119:17 – “*GIMEL. Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.*” It is by grace and grace alone that the Lord gives us life and strength to obey His Word. Our lives are in His hand and He determines the length of our days upon earth.

The psalmist asks the Lord for an extension of days, even as Hezekiah of old did, for the sole purpose that he might walk in God’s ways. God’s Word was everything to the psalmist.

119:18 – “*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*” This verse illustrates a prime doctrinal truth: the Holy Scriptures are only understood by God’s grace. It is in His light that we shall see light (Psa. 36:9). As we walk in the truth that God has already revealed to us, we qualify to receive more truth. Christ said in Matthew 25:29, “*For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance...*”

Unless God illuminates our hearts, we cannot comprehend the truth. Proverbs 25:2 says, *“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.”* May we be those honorable priests who search out the hidden truths of God’s Word, revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

119:19 – *“I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.”* Even when surrounded by multitudes of people, one can be very alone, for we are not of this world although we are in the world. Friendship with the world is not possible for the true believer. That is why God’s Word is our source of solace.

119:20 – *“My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.”* It is a fact that as we feed upon God’s Word, it begins to consume our desires. Our longing for God’s Word becomes so intense that when we cannot read the Word, we feel like those who are mourning for a loved one who has passed away.

119:21 – *“Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.”* God severely judges those who turn from His ways, especially the proud who scorn His judgments.

119:22 – *“Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.”* Not only do the proud disdain His law, but they pour contempt upon those who adhere to His Word as the psalmist now laments.

119:23 – *“Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.”* It is apparent from this verse that the psalmist was a man of distinction. This would seem to indicate again that the author was Ezra. We can well imagine the court scene filled with all the frivolity and vanity that pervaded the Persian court. It is very easy to see how the Persian princes would indeed make Ezra the butt of all their barbs and jokes. Yet even in this hostile atmosphere he continued to faithfully meditate in God’s Word.

119:24 – *“Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.”* The Word of God is our greatest counselor and guide through life. The Word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light to our path, imparting to us the wisdom that can guide us through our pilgrim journey here on earth.

4. The Eightfold Daleth (vs. 25-32)

The psalmist prayed to the Lord to revive him when he was brought down to the dust by the oppression of liars.

119:25 – *“DALETH. My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.”* The oppression that the psalmist was subjected to was no doubt the opposition of those who trusted in lying wonders and vanities of heathen culture.

119:26 – *“I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.”* The psalmist was a teacher of righteousness and he exposed his way of life to his hearers. He

knew that God, who hears all things, had heard him.

119:27 – *“Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.”* A true teacher desires to impart correct doctrine to his pupils or congregation. The psalmist implores the Lord to give him revelation upon His Word.

119:28 – *“My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.”* The psalmist endured the heavy weight of the spiritual opposition of his enemies in this battle. This spiritual heaviness becomes very real when we seek to preach and teach the Word of God in an unfriendly environment, but strength comes from the law.

119:29 – *“Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.”* A teacher is also very conscious of the need to have pure doctrine. We need to be purged of all false ways and lying so that we can expound God’s Word. When we prepare for our lessons or sermons, we need the Lord to inspire us with the message of His will.

119:30 – *“I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.”* The psalmist *chose* the way of truth. God’s ways are a choice. We must make this same commitment to walk in God’s ways and only preach the truth. Unfortunately, false doctrine has infiltrated many churches around the world. As the psalmist, let us come to God’s Word with unbiased views so that we can rightly divide the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15).

119:31 – “*I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame.*” Here the psalmist speaks of bonding with the Word—a holy inseparability from God’s Word. He pleads with the Lord to show him favor because of this choice and not shame him before the people.

119:32 – “*I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*” This section, Daleth, finishes with a truth we do well to meditate upon. In effect, the psalmist says that according to the degree that his heart is enlarged, he will be freed of bondages and constraints so that he can fully follow God’s commandments.

Often we desire to do God’s will, but inner bondages inhibit us from doing so. However, a life that has been set free can run with joy along the path of full obedience to God’s glorious Word.

5. The Eightfold He (vs. 33-40)

The psalmist desires to be turned *away from* the way of vanity, worldliness, and covetousness and *turned toward* God’s righteous ways.

119:33 – “*HE. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.*” The psalmist pays homage to the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men. Unless God shows us favor by instructing us in His Word, we cannot understand His Word. We need the Lord to quicken His Word to

us; otherwise, it is dead and does not profit us.

119:34 – *“Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.”* The psalmist prays that God will give him understanding. How can we keep the Word of God if we do not understand it? It is only through coming to understand God’s Word, by the illumination of the blessed Holy Spirit, that we can observe it with our whole heart.

119:35 – *“Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.”* The psalmist prays that God will cause him to go in the way of His holy commandments. This is an important truth. The Lord said in Ezekiel 36:27, *“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.”* We cannot walk in God’s ways in our own strength or through good intentions. It must be the Lord who shows us favor by causing us to walk in His ways. We also need to delight to do God’s will, as David said in Psalm 40:8.

119:36 – *“Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.”* He now prays to be kept from covetousness. Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:10 that the love of money is the root of all evil. That is why the psalmist asks the Lord to steer his desires away from all covetousness in whatever form it may arise.

119:37 – *“Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and*

quicken thou me in thy way.” The desire of the eyes is very dangerous. Today, advertising is at a premium, being recognized as the prime method of creating desire within the hearts of the public to purchase a certain product or service. So we want the Lord to grant unto us dove’s eyes only for Him and His Word.

119:38 – “*Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.*” Now the psalmist prays that the word the Lord had spoken to him would be established and brought to a reality in his life. After all, it is wonderful to receive promises, but their fulfillment is the all-important thing.

Because of unfaithfulness, many people never see God’s promises realized in their lives. However, those who fear the Lord, as the psalmist did, will see them realized in God’s perfect time.

119:39 – “*Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.*” We have already seen in previous verses how much the psalmist had been reviled, even by the princes and the nobles of the land. Being derided by many of the ruling class, he pleads with God to turn his reproach away and lift him up in the sight of the people. He asks the Lord to bless him and reward him to the dismay and awe of his enemies.

119:40 – “*Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.*” To finish this stanza, the psalmist prays that God will remember how he has delighted in the

Word, and he pleads with the Lord to fill him with His righteousness (cf. Mt. 5:6).

6. The Eightfold Vau

Because of God's mercy in revealing His salvation to the psalmist, he can testify of God's statutes before kings. This also gives credence to the belief that Ezra wrote this psalm. Ezra testified before Artaxerxes, the Persian King (see Ezra 7:11-26).

119:41 – *“VAU. Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word.”* In the times of difficulty that the psalmist was experiencing, he prayed that the Lord's mercies and His salvation would be his portion.

119:42 – *“So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.”* Because of the Lord's deliverance, the psalmist would be able to respond to those who mocked him and reproached him. His trust was in God's Word.

119:43 – *“And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.”* This is a fact that must be stressed. We cannot live upon past experiences with the Lord. We need to commune with the Lord day by day. We must never presume that God will be with us even if we wander from His precepts because we have faithfully followed Him in the past. The psalmist prays that the word of life will

not be taken from his mouth, because his hope is constantly in the Lord.

119:44 – *“So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.”* The psalmist declares that he will keep the law consistently because of the Lord’s kindness. Oh, to have a holy consistency of walking with the Lord!

119:45 – *“And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.”* Because he kept the law, he would walk in the liberty of the sons of God. True liberty comes from walking in accordance with God’s Word. Many people have a false concept of New Testament liberty. They think that because we are now in the era of grace that we are free from keeping all the commandments of the Word of God and we may do as we please. This is totally false! Liberty comes from keeping God’s commandments.

119:46 – *“I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.”* As we mentioned in the preface to this stanza, it is clear that the psalmist had access into the presence of kings. This again points to Ezra, who served for a time in the royal Persian court.

Without a doubt, many monarchs came to the court of the Persian king to solicit the favour of the supreme ruler of that day. Ezra would have had the opportunity to speak unashamedly before these rulers. He was the Lord’s witness to the high and mighty of the earth of that day.

To the same degree that we are faithful in witnessing unashamedly to those around us, to that very same degree we will be brought before the great of this world, who need a Savior just as much as the poor, to testify of the Lord.

119:47 – *“And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.”* The whole key to the psalmist’s life was his delight in the law of the Lord. It is also the key to victorious living in Christ. When God’s Word gives us our greatest joy and contentment, we are living a victorious life in Christ!

119:48 – *“My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.”* As the psalmist did, we should lift up our hands to God’s commandments. God’s Word is exalted above everything else in life, even above God’s name (Psa. 138:2). We should ask God to give us a deep love for His Word so that we are constantly meditating upon the Holy Scriptures.

7. The Eightfold Zain

In every day and age, God’s elect have lamented the persecutions that they have suffered at the hands of the wicked and proud (see vs. 69-70). Whenever we are persecuted, beloved, let us find comfort in God’s Word, as did the psalmist.

119:49 – *“ZAIN. Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.”* One of the most beautiful experiences during our pilgrim life here on earth is to re-

ceive promises from the Word. These promises sustain us and give us hope during times of despair. Such was the case with the psalmist. He is asking the Lord to make good on those promises and give him some realization of those promises.

119:50 – *“This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.”* In times of trouble or persecution, it is the verses or passage of Scripture that God personally quickens to us that sustain and console us. It is so beautiful when the Lord speaks a certain passage of the Bible to us and makes it come alive to us, applying it directly to our lives and our circumstances.

119:51 – *“The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.”* The psalmist brings to the Lord’s attention the tremendous opposition and scorning that he is experiencing from the proud. In spite of this testing, he remained true to God’s law.

119:52 – *“I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.”* He took refuge in remembering God’s judgments in the past. He remembered times when God had punished the wicked and he saw that God does not forsake the righteous. God will always deal with our adversaries, but in *His* time, beloved. Wait for God to deal with your enemies; do not try to take matters into your own hands and avenge yourself.

119:53 – *“Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the*

wicked that forsake thy law.” Contemplating the wicked who forsake the law of the Lord, the psalmist is filled with horror when he realizes their end. A point that should not be overlooked is that these wicked people at one time walked with God. This is evident because he says that they “*forsook*” God’s law. In other words, at one time in their lives they were walking in God’s law and then they turned away from it. One of the most difficult times in the life of the godly is the opposition of those who once were upright and then leave the paths of righteousness.

119:54 – “*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*” One of the sources of strength in the Christian life is to sing God’s praises, either in public or in private. How wonderful it is to fill our houses with the anointed songs of Zion and enjoy times of praise and worship in the intimacy of our own homes.

119:55 – “*I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.*” Even in the night hours when sleep eludes or is taken from us, we can praise the Lord for all His goodness to us. We must keep the law of God in our minds and not permit thoughts or wicked schemes against our neighbors to germinate in our minds.

119:56 – “*This I had, because I kept thy precepts.*” All of these saintly exercises were the fruit of a man who steadfastly adhered to the precepts of the Lord throughout his waking hours.

8. The Eightfold Cheth

In some instances, the choice saints of God throughout the ages have experienced physical imprisonment. Even in prison, they sang praises (Acts 16:25), and rehearsed the promises of God's Word, as was the case also with Joseph (Psa. 105:19).

119:57 – *“CHETH. Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.”* This very beautiful opening phrase is actually a quotation from the promise that the Lord made to His servants, the Levites, namely that they would receive no inheritance in the Land of Palestine because the Lord would be their inheritance (Num. 18:20; Deut. 10:9). If we accept that Ezra was the author of this psalm, then he was declaring that his portion, as a Levitical priest, was the Lord Himself. He faithfully kept the law of the Lord.

119:58 – *“I entreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.”* The psalmist was wholehearted in serving and loving the Lord. He asks the Lord to show him mercy, which comes from keeping God's law.

119:59 – *“I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.”* Constantly meditating upon our own life is very beneficial. Writing to some of his converts, Paul states, *“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged”* (1 Cor. 11:31). As we examine our lives and hearts daily, we can more easily detect the slightest error in our ways and quickly turn back into the paths of righteousness.

119:60 – *“I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.”* Let us not delay, beloved, in the realm of obedience. Abraham rose up early in the morning to obey God’s summons to offer up Isaac (Gen. 22:1-3). The longer we wait to obey the Lord after He speaks to us to do something, the easier it becomes not to obey.

119:61 – *“The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.”* Here it would appear that the psalmist suffered injuries at the hands of robbers, but in all this he did not unjustly accuse God.

Sadly, I have known many missionaries who have been robbed on foreign fields. They quit serving God and return to their homelands because they are bitter at God for having been robbed.

119:62 – *“At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.”* As the old saying goes, “Early to bed, early to rise makes one healthy, wealthy, and wise.” That is especially true for the saints of the Lord. We need to rise from our beds of slumber to give thanks to the Lord for all His goodness.

119:63 – *“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.”* How often must we remember that our companions will determine our eternal dwelling places. Likes go to likes. We must seek to remember that those who walk with the wise shall be wise (Prov. 13:20).

119:64 – *“The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.”* Musingly, the psalmist surveys the whole earth and realizes that it is full of God’s mercy. God’s mercy toward His creatures can be seen on every hand.

9. The Eightfold Teth

The psalmist esteems the Word of God more than his natural food, silver, or gold, even as did Job (Job 23:12). It was only through God’s chastening that he came to delight so much in God’s Word.

119:65 – *“TETH. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.”* Musing again on the past, the psalmist acknowledges with heartfelt gratitude that the Lord has indeed been good to him. Those who follow the Lord with their whole heart will indeed find Him to be faithful and a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6).

119:66 – *“Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.”* One of the essential abilities and virtues of a leader is discernment, which comes from being taught good judgment and knowledge.

119:67 – *“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.”* We could all echo this confession that comes from the lips of the psalmist. As the Lord most graciously chastises all those whom He loves, we are transformed into His image. We do not go astray any more and we are not con-

demned with the world (Heb. 12:6; 1 Cor. 11:32), but learn to keep God's Word.

119:68 – *“Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.”* The Lord alone is good as Jesus said in Matthew 19:17, *“And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”* God is altogether good, meaning He is incapable of doing evil. He said to Moses that He is “abundant in goodness and truth” (Ex. 34:6).

119:69 – *“The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.”* Even as Herod and Pilate became friends over their mutual attack against Jesus, the proud always seem to forge lies and friendships centered around their hatred of the just. Notwithstanding, the psalmist adhered faithfully to the law of God.

119:70 – *“Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law.”* This phrase, “as fat as grease,” describes a heart that is satiated with life's pleasures and dainties and filled with the riches of this world. By contrast, the heart of the righteous is purged of all love and acceptance of this world, being lean and healthy to run with patience the race that is set before them (Heb. 12:1).

119:71 – *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.”* Again, the psalmist reflects on past divine chastisements that produced in him the acceptable fruits

of righteousness, causing him to learn God's Word.

119:72 – *“The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.”* The psalmist ends this beautiful stanza with a verse similar to Psalm 19:10, where David said of God's statutes, “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” How sweet is His Word to our mouths, the taste that no money on earth can replicate, let alone surpass.

10. The Eightfold Jod

The psalmist declares that he is being greatly afflicted by God so that he will learn His ways. When God brings him forth out of affliction, those who fear the Lord will greatly rejoice and turn to Him (see Psa. 126:2). However, his proud enemies will be greatly ashamed. When God turns our captivity and brings us out of our prison house like Joseph, the righteous rejoice and are joined to us.

119:73 – *“JOD. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.”* The psalmist commences this stanza with the acknowledgment that he was created by God, and formed and fashioned according to the wisdom of God. Therefore, he pleads with the Almighty to teach him His law. When we learn God's law and ways, He receives profit from His creation.

119:74 – *“They that fear thee will be glad when they see me;*

because I have hoped in thy word.” The psalmist declares that the righteous will rejoice when they behold the work that the Lord has done in his life. We should rejoice to behold the beauty of Jesus in one another, much like those in the world flock to behold the exterior beauty of some film stars. As spiritual men and women, we should rejoice in the fulfillment of God’s Word to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

119:75 – *“I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”* Here the psalmist uses words very akin to those of David in Psalm 51:4, *“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.”* The godly justify God at all times, even when He deems judgment necessary in our lives. It is an act of love and faithfulness when He purges us from our iniquities. Peter said, *“... For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin”* (1 Pet. 4:1).

119:76 – *“Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.”* The psalmist looks at sufferings and afflictions that come from the hand of God as being tokens of His mercy. (See Psalm 136 for a more complete treatise on this subject.)

119:77 – *“Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.”* The Lord will not always chastise us, as He states in Isaiah 57:16, *“For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit*

should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.” Thus with confidence the psalmist asks the Lord to show forth His blessings, so that he might regain strength and delight again in the study and meditation of the Word of God.

119:78 – *“Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts.”* He returns to the theme of the attacks of his enemies, whom he calls proud. They do not humble themselves to become dependant upon God. The psalmist claims that they have made false accusations against him, however, he takes comfort in the meditation of the Holy Scriptures.

119:79 – *“Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.”* The psalmist asks God to comfort him by turning the hearts of the righteous towards him, that he might receive strength from their godly conversations.

119:80 – *“Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.”* Perhaps echoing an earlier prayer by David, who asked the Lord to unite his heart to fear God (Psa. 86:11), the psalmist likewise asks for a heart that will be firmly established in the Scriptures.

11. The Eightfold Caph

The psalmist asks again how long his enemies will be permitted to triumph over him before God delivers him. We often

face similar circumstances as we see our life passing rapidly and seemingly without purpose, while our enemies prosper. However, there is a time for all things under the sun, and there is an appointed time for God to heal (Eccl. 3:3).

119:81 – *“CAPH. My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.”* In order to develop in us a greater hunger and thirst for His Word, the Lord will sometimes withhold His blessings from us. This is evident in the life of the psalmist, who sighs and thirsts for the salvation of the Lord in his present situation.

119:82 – *“Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?”* The psalmist looks longingly for a fulfillment of the Lord’s promises to him.

119:83 – *“For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.”* “A bottle in the smoke” is an ancient Jewish idiom that describes a bottle that has become colored with the smoke of fire. Nothing can be put into the bottle, since it would contaminate the contents and make them unpalatable. Therefore, it describes something that is useless and good for nothing. He has been reduced in his own eyes to something of no value whatsoever, similar to Psalm 22 where the psalmist cries out, *“I am a worm and no man”* (Psa. 22:6).

119:84 – *“How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?”* Realizing that life is passing by, he wonders how many more years

he has upon earth. He pleads with the Lord to judge his enemies. His desire was to be fruitful and profitable in the service of the Lord during his remaining years on earth. He did not want to be hindered by his persecutors.

119:85 – *“The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.”* Without a doubt, the psalmist was aware of the customs of his day. Pits were dug to capture wild animals and also men, who would be left there to die of thirst. He compares the efforts of the proud, who obey not the law of God, to bring him down with the snares or pits of his day.

Certainly, the proud Herodians tried to ensnare Jesus in Matthew 22:17-22: *“Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.”*

119:86 – *“All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.”* The psalmist constantly contrasts the wrongful acts of his enemies and the Word of God. He inclines always to the faithful promises of Scripture for the persecuted and God’s magnanimous promises of deliverance for those who put their trust in Him. God’s promises

give him hope in times of trouble. I am always comforted by the peaceful way that the Protestant martyrs went to their execution. The reading or reciting Scripture gave them great comfort.

119:87 – *“They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.”* There is always a tremendous struggle in our hearts when we are opposed by believers who are not walking uprightly and criticize our conduct. They drain us of strength, until we feel spiritually, physically, and even morally, exhausted—to the extent that we almost feel like giving up our beliefs and faith. However, we must never give up the good fight of faith.

We must remember that the Lord will not permit us to be tempted beyond measure (1 Cor. 10:13). In times like these, we must cleave to the Scriptures, for they will give us strength as we read of similar trials that godly men and women went through in times of yore.

119:88 – *“Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.”* We should ask the Lord to send His Holy Spirit into our hearts and revive us with His lovingkindness. Then, with fresh vigor, we will be able to walk in the light of His commandments.

12. The Eightfold Lamed

The creative Word of God has established the heavens and

the earth, and even unto this day, they continue according to God's plans and purposes. Likewise, God's laws are everlasting, and while all works have their limitations, God's works know no end. The wicked wait to destroy, but let us meditate in God's Word in such circumstances, as did the psalmist.

119:89 – *“LAMED. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.”* At the opening of this section, the psalmist reflects upon the fact that the Word of God is not earthly, but comes from the Father of lights, who dwells in His heavenly abode. Therefore, His Word has forever been established in heaven.

119:90 – *“Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.”* Now turning to the works of God's creation, the psalmist eulogizes the faithfulness of God. Not only has the Lord created the earth, but has also placed it in its orbit so that it will continue.

119:91 – *“They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.”* Thus, everything in heaven and earth, including inanimate objects, is called the servant of God. Everything and everyone in this universe must submit to the Lord and obey Him.

119:92 – *“Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.”* The psalmist now returns to his plight of being persecuted. He declares he would have been surely overcome by his adversaries if he had not loved God's Word.

119:93 – *“I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.”* The Word of God must ever be before us. Our minds need to be washed every day with His life-giving testimonies (see Eph. 5:26). Our spirits come alive when we meditate upon God’s Word. In the natural, it is true that we are what we eat. This is true in the spiritual realm as well. If we feed upon the Word of God, it will strengthen us and form within us the nature of Christ.

119:94 – *“I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.”* He can make such a strong affirmation of faith because he is seeking to please the Lord by walking in His statutes.

119:95 – *“The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies.”* It is a fact of life that the nearer we are to God, as in the case of our dear psalmist, the greater the persecutions we experience from the ungodly, who are the tools of the devil. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12, *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”* In spite of being persecuted for righteousness’ sake, the psalmist takes refuge in the promises of God’s Word.

119:96 – *“I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.”* This is a difficult verse to interpret, but we offer one that we feel benefits the mood of our psalmist. He has observed the end of man’s plans and works, and even as Solomon did, he has realized that it is all vanity. However, the Word of God is all-encompassing and

meets our every need. It satisfies us in such a complete way that no earthly ambition is able to.

13. The Eightfold Mem

This stanza is one that has given me great comfort throughout the years. God has quickened these promises to me personally on a number of occasions. I had very godly Bible teachers in the schools and colleges that I attended. However, it seemed as though God had not opened up His Word at that time in the way that He has today.

Now, through more than fifty years of studying God's Word under the direction and revelation of the blessed Holy Spirit, He has enabled me to build upon the knowledge that those holy men of God imparted to me.

When we are privileged to meet again in heaven, I am sure that they will rejoice with me. The goal of every teacher is that his pupils advance beyond his own personal attainment. In the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge, it is so important to be preserved from evil.

119:97 – *“MEM. O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”* The Scriptures have the power to make us wise. As we constantly study them and meditate upon them, we shall grow in stature before God and men. Also, an ever-increasing love for God's law to be written upon our hearts will be developed within us. Thus it will become a way of life to us.

119:98 – *“Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.”* Wisdom is the principal thing and is more important than all the riches that this world has to offer (Prov. 4:7). Proverbs 8:11 says, *“For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.”*

Wisdom will deliver us from the evil man (Prov. 2:10-12). This is the quality that David possessed in the house of Saul. We read in 1 Samuel 18:14, *“And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him.”* Wisdom will enable us to triumph over all our enemies, who always surround us in this world.

119:99 – *“I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.”* Through the assiduous study of God’s Word, we are enabled to advance beyond the learning of our teachers. As we have already mentioned, that is the desire and goal of every good teacher. They want their pupils to exceed them in wisdom and knowledge, because in that way their students will build upon their teachings. Every good teacher seeks to lay a good foundation in the lives of their students.

119:100 – *“I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.”* Each generation should build upon what previous generations have learned. Daniel 12:4 tells us that knowledge will increase in the last days. We can certainly see this in the world today. We have gone from the days of quill,

parchment, and ink, through the printing and typewriter age, to the computer age. Computers quickly perform many of our daily chores in a manner that would have seemed ludicrous to our forefathers.

Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:46, *“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.”* Therefore, just as secular knowledge has been released in quantum proportions to mankind in these last few decades, it stands to reason that the Lord will also reveal, in similar fashion, the knowledge of His ways. Wisdom and knowledge will increase in these last days so that the Church can come to maturity and be prepared to be the Bride of Christ. Ephesians 4:13 says, *“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ...”*

119:101 – *“I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.”* One of the most important truths that we can learn is that our works affect our understanding. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:21, *“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.”* Wicked works can alienate our minds from the Lord. Therefore, it is so important to do what is right in order for our minds to be sound.

119:102 – *“I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.”* We do not want to leave the pathway of

righteousness, for if we do, God will cease to instruct us. It is in His light that we shall see light (Psa. 36:9).

119:103 – *“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”* This verse was not born out of poetic license. It is an actual experience of those who study God’s Word often. It is a beautiful feeling that permeates our palate with an indescribable pleasantness. It is more pleasing than any dessert that a master chef can concoct, for it is a sampling of the divine pleasures that we will experience in heaven throughout all eternity.

119:104 – *“Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.”* One of the Lord’s promises to Israel was that His statutes would make them wise. When the Word of God apprehends our mind, heart, and whole being, we begin to love righteousness and hate wickedness in every conceivable form (Psa. 45:7).

14. The Eightfold Nun

When I was in West Africa, I used to pray and study in a tree house erected by a missionary who was a former student of ours. Around nightfall, which comes very rapidly, my dear wife, Audrey, would come tell me that dinner was ready. The tree house was some distance from the mission house, and the narrow path was overgrown with vegetation. There was a monkey habitat there, as well as snakes, which crossed the path quite frequently and hung from the tree branches along

the path. My wife was quite terrified of snakes, and to comfort her, the Lord quickened Psalm 119:105 to her: *“Thy word is a lamp unto me feet, and a light unto my path.”* When she would walk down this path, she would point the flashlight at her feet so that she would know where she was going and avoid all the snakes along the path. This experience made me aware of the fact that we desperately need to abide in God’s Word, because it is a light unto our path and preserves us from all the dangers and traps of the enemy.

119:105 – *“NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”* The Word of God clearly shows us where to place our feet in any given situation. In other words, it shows us the right decision we should make in every immediate circumstance, and the right path for our lives, both short-term and long-term.

119:106 – *“I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.”* We should remind ourselves of the oaths and promises we have made to the Lord, so that they are ever before us. This will help us reaffirm our determination to serve God and cause us to be more steadfast in our faith. This was very necessary for the psalmist, since he was undergoing constant attacks from his enemies.

119:107 – *“I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.”* In his mournful situation, he cries out to God to quicken him so that his soul is not overwhelmed within him.

119:108 – *“Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.”* In times of persecution, we often make promises to the Lord, as did the psalmist. We might promise to give a monetary offering to the Lord, or we might promise to consecrate ourselves or a son or daughter to His service.

When we make promises like this, we should ask God to accept our oath, with the thought that He will now move on our behalf in our difficulty. The psalmist, in particular, is asking the Lord to teach him deeper truths from the Word of God. This is an excellent request that each one of us would do well to make.

119:109 – *“My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.”* One of the early church fathers, Jerome, states that this phrase is a Hebraic expression that signifies a state of extreme peril. At a later date, the Greeks used this phrase as a proverb. He poetically speaks of his soul being in God’s hand. He thought he was close to death and was giving his soul to the Lord. Even in this time of utmost despair, he did not forget the law of God.

119:110 – *“The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.”* Many believers are constantly plagued and attacked by wicked people. The best counsel I can give someone who is going through such a circumstance is to glorify the Lord in the fires (the fiery trials). At times, the words that the wicked speak against us feel like a hot flame, but rest

assured, beloved, that these fires will only purify you; they will not consume you. The best thing you can do is to adhere to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures like never before.

119:111 – *“Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.”* Our inheritance will depend, to no small degree, upon the grace and fruit of the Holy Spirit that the Word of God has effectuated in our hearts and lives. We are the garden of the Lord (1 Cor. 3:9), and as such, the Lord wants to come into the garden of our hearts (Song. 5:1).

What is growing in the garden of our hearts, beloved? Weeds, which symbolize the works of the flesh such as anger, hatred, and jealousy, or the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance? (Gal. 5:22-23). A heart filled with the fruit of the Spirit is a rejoicing heart, and a merry heart doeth good like a medicine.

119:112 – *“I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.”* By the grace of God, we need to ensure that our hearts are always tender before the Lord and turned into the ways of God all the days of our lives. It is surprising how many turn away, even at the end, like Demas.

15. The Eightfold Samech

As did the psalmist, let us “gird up” the loins of our mind (1

Pet. 1:13), so that we may meditate in God's law, which will give us strength to endure the pressures of the wicked. In due time, God will destroy the wicked; they will not continue forever. Let us also serve the Lord with reverential fear.

119:113 – *“SAMECH. I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.”* Our thoughts determine our character (Prov. 23:7). Vain thoughts only impoverish us. As Peter said, let us “gird up the loins of our mind.” In other words, we must discipline our minds and not allow our thoughts to wander from the task at hand. Those who have disciplined minds are the most productive and fruitful in the kingdom of God. Beloved, meditate often upon God's Word, for if you do, you will not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:8).

119:114 – *“Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.”* The psalmist found in Christ a refuge from the scourge of evil tongues. As we run to Jesus, we will also experience the peace of mind and heart that He alone can give. In His Word we will find the strength that hope brings of better times to come.

119:115 – *“Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.”* Addressing those who persecuted him, the psalmist tells them to depart from him. It is apparent from the next phrase that they were intent on causing him to forsake God's ways. How often are we enjoined by many who water down God's commandments. We are told by those who

love their sin that we are too harsh and legalistic, whereas all we seek to do is honor God's commandments.

119:116 – *“Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.”* The promises that the Lord has given us by quickening specific Scriptures to us are the strength of our lives. As the he saw his strength ebbing, the psalmist pleads with the Lord to keep him from sinking, so that his hopes would be realized. He asks this not only for himself, but also for his friends, who would have been disappointed if his promise had not been fulfilled.

119:117 – *“Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.”* When a boxer has been repeatedly hit and is in danger of falling to the ground, he is probably wishing that his trainer could hold him up. Spiritual battles can be just as intense, and even more intense than a physical battle or boxing match. At times, we feel like we are about to collapse because of the blows of the enemy and we cry out to the Lord to hold us up. This is what the psalmist is praying here and then he promises to walk continually in God's statutes.

119:118 – *“Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.”* Reflecting now on his life, the psalmist notes that he has seen, in past times, that those who have left God's paths fail because of God's anger towards them. They become deceitful and cease to walk in the truth. The result is that they are given over to falsehood.

Having personally witnessed this recently, I am amazed at how those who once embraced the full truth of the Gospel can follow doctrines of demons and lies from the very pit of hell. It is a very terrible thing to be given up by God to error and false doctrine. Remember, it is God who gives people over to false doctrine (see Ezekiel 20:24-25).

119:119 – *“Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.”* Evil workers are swept aside by the Lord and come to naught, being tossed away as the base metals (dross) that rise to the top in the refining process of gold. They are good for nothing, except that they illustrate God’s righteous judgments upon the wicked.

119:120 – *“My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.”* The psalmist is in awe while meditating upon the righteous judgments of the Lord. He shakes in reverential fear of a just and holy God. 2 Corinthians 5:11 says, *“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”* Therefore, let us also preach of God’s righteous ways and serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).

16. The Eightfold Ain (vs. 121-128)

The psalmist calls himself the servant of the Lord (verse 125), and prays for understanding of God’s Word. This certainly is

a prayer that each of us who are responsible for teaching or preaching the Word of God should pray. We should also be diligent to study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15).

There is a set time for God to move, often at the lowest ebb of spiritual and social conditions, in a country, an individual life, a church, or a fellowship. Until God moves on our behalf, let us esteem His Word above all else, as did the psalmist, and hate every false and evil way.

119:121 – *“AIN. I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.”* Two qualities that are so precious in the sight of the Lord are the twin virtues of judgment and justice. Solomon said in Proverbs 21:3, *“To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”* The psalmist comes before the Lord with confidence because he has walked in justice and judgment. He pleads with the Lord not to leave him in the hands of his enemies.

119:122 – *“Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.”* People often need a cosigner who will give a guarantee that they will pay the balance of the promissory note. That is the meaning of “surety” in this verse. The psalmist is asking the Lord Himself to be his “surety,” and not allow the proud workers of iniquity to overpower him.

119:123 – *“Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word*

of thy righteousness.” Here we see a truth that is misunderstood at times. At times, the Lord will keep us waiting for a very long period of time before delivering us from the hands of our oppressors. The reason for this is so that His purposes may be fulfilled in our lives and those around us. It is the grace of God that enables us to patiently endure the trial. As we wait patiently upon the Lord, He will deliver us and fulfill His promises to us.

119:124 – *“Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.”* The psalmist asks the Lord to deal with him in His infinite mercy. If the Lord were to deal with us according to our merits, we would be finished, because all of our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Then he asks the Lord again to teach him His holy statutes. In every situation, there is something for the righteous to learn about the ways and nature of God.

119:125 – *“I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.”* In the perplexing trials of life, we need to ask the Lord for understanding, so that we are not like a ship without a rudder, thrown to and fro with every wind that comes our way. Rather, we should keep a firm course through each of life’s storms. It is through these experiences that we come to know and appreciate God’s Word, which is not learned just by revelation or study, but through personal experience.

119:126 – *“It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have*

made void thy law.” Often God moves at the lowest ebb of life. Past revivals have usually come when a nation, province, or city was at its worst, wracked with moral and spiritual depravity. This is also true in the lives of God’s people, as in the case of the prodigal son. It was when he was reduced to nothing that he came to his senses and returned to his father’s house. In the same way, when our enemies are at their worst, God comes on the scene and moves on our behalf.

119:127 – *“Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.”* It is as we embrace God’s Word in deep trials that we find that our love for the Scriptures far surpasses any desire for this world’s riches.

119:128 – *“Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.”* Through this ever-increasing love for the Scriptures in times of trial, we come to learn that the Scriptures are right in every situation. Trials produce within us an appreciation for God’s Word. The Scriptures are always right! In order to truly love righteousness, we have to hate the false counsel of the wicked (cf. *Psa. 45:7*).

17. The Eightfold Pe (vs. 129-136)

As the psalmist says in verse 130, the entrance (or unfolding) of God’s Word gives light. Our Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:22, *“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”* As we whole-

heartedly focus upon God's Word and embrace it, our whole being will be filled with light and truth. We should pray that our steps would always be in accordance with God's precepts. May God grant that we are not bound by sin, but that we experience the liberty that Christ has purchased for us by His precious blood.

119:129 – *“PE. Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.”* Through countless experiences of walking where the saints of yesteryears walked, we become enthralled with wonder at the richness of God's Word to our souls, guarding it as we would a precious treasure.

119:130 – *“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”* When God said, “Let there be light,” there was light. This manifestation of the power of God's Word to create light is only one example of the light-giving properties of His Word. When His Word enters into our souls, it causes the light of God to shine within the very inner recesses of our beings. The Word of light gives understanding.

119:131 – *“I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.”* There is always a longing for the things that we love, and the psalmist loved the Scriptures. He yearned to feed upon the Word of God.

119:132 – *“Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.”* Realizing

that it is by grace and grace alone that we can continue on life's journey, the psalmist implores the Lord to look upon him and show him favor.

119:133 – *“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”* We must be conscious, as was the psalmist, of the fact that it is only by grace, and grace alone, that we can walk with God and keep His commandments. Ezekiel 36:27 says, *“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.”*

Furthermore, we should pray that God removes from us any sin that would dominate us and cause us to walk contrary to His ways. This is a reality that everyone can experience. It is wonderful and blessed freedom!

119:134 – *“Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.”* The psalmist prays to be delivered from those who were oppressing him and seeking to stop him from keeping God's commandments. The wicked often try to stop the godly from paying tithes or going to church. In response, we should cry out to the Lord to deliver us from such people or change their hearts.

119:135 – *“Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.”* He is asking for God's favor to be taught God's statutes. We should never assume that we can understand and rightly divide the truth of Holy Scripture by our

own understanding or efforts. King Solomon stated in Proverbs 25:2, *“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.”* All Scripture was given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16). Therefore, it is only God who can give us the right interpretation, which He does to those who find favor in His sight.

119:136 – *“Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.”* Now the psalmist cries because of those who do not walk according to the Word of God. In like manner, we experience sorrow when we see people, especially relatives or friends, disobey God’s commandments.

18. The Eightfold Tzaddi (vs. 137-144)

One aspect of holiness is righteousness. Let us ask God to give us an ever-increasing hunger for His righteousness, for it is those who hunger and thirst after His righteousness that will be filled (Mt. 5:6). We should pray that God will give us a clear understanding of His righteousness revealed in His Word, proving that which is the good and acceptable will of God (Rom. 12:2).

119:137 – *“TZADDI. Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.”* Here the psalmist is eulogizing the righteousness of God and His judgments, which David was careful to observe after he had sinned with Bathsheba. David acknowledged his sins so that God would be viewed as just when He judged David. There are reasons for everything in

this life, but until we reach heaven, we will not understand everything. That is why we must trust our righteous Heavenly Father and accept everything that He does in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones.

119:138 – *“Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.”* All of God’s righteous laws are for our good. Even the Ten Commandments are acknowledged to be meritorious by virtually everyone, even the unsaved. Therefore, beloved, whatever God commands us to do is for our ultimate good. Trust in the Lord!

119:139 – *“My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.”* Because our enemies have left the paths of righteousness, a burning zeal to declare God’s Word is kindled within our hearts. It consumes us day and night. In some cases, it is a holy zeal that purifies our hearts and spirits. However, we must guard our hearts and watch our motives so that we do not preach out of carnal contention.

119:140 – *“Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.”* The Word of God is clean and right; there is absolutely no alloy or impurity in it, unlike the novels and so-called “best sellers” of our days. As we meditate in the Bible, we receive the cleansing stream of truth that purifies every part of our being (Eph. 5:26).

119:141 – *“I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts.”* Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:26-27, *“For ye see*

your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ...” The Lord looks for those who will faithfully adhere to His Word, like the psalmist.

119:142 – *“Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.”* Then the psalmist comforts himself by remembering that the Lord will judge righteously and defend him. All that God causes us to hope for in His Word will come to pass. Those who despise us will be ashamed in that day when all is revealed.

119:143 – *“Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights.”* It is a surprise to many that the righteous experience suffering, for the theology of many is comparable to the friends of Job. They reasoned that people only suffered if they were walking in sin. To them, suffering was a sign of God’s punishment for sin. However, a careful examination of Scripture shows that it is the godly who suffer in order to become more like Jesus.

We read of Paul’s sufferings in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9: *“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.”* Paul took courage in the Word of God, saying in 2 Corinthians 4:16-17, *“For which cause we faint*

not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

119:144 – *“The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.”* The psalmist acknowledges once again that God’s Word is right. We do well to pause here. When a person backslides, he often turns to other literature or philosophies for help instead of turning to the everlasting Word of God.

As we have already mentioned, we need the revelation of the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible. If our eyes are blinded to the glorious Gospel of hope, the Bible is just history to us. Through the Scriptures we find Christ and everlasting life!

19. The Eightfold Koph (vs. 145-152)

The psalmist asks God to save him so that he might keep God’s commandments. If this psalm teaches us one thing, above everything else, it is that we should be devoted to God’s holy Word and have an absolute trust in the eternal Scriptures.

119:145 – *“KOPH. I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes.”* It is the wholehearted prayer that is heard by God. We need to pray fervently and intensely, as though our whole body is being consumed with the holy desire to please the Lord and keep His Word.

119:146 – *“I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.”* In this verse, as with others in this psalm, the psalmist is throwing himself completely upon the goodness of God for His salvation because of his enemies mentioned in verse 150. This is followed by a promise to keep God’s Word.

119:147 – *“I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.”* Again the devotedness of the psalmist is evidenced by the fact that long before the dawning of the day, he was seeking God and His Word with tears.

119:148 – *“Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.”* Our psalmist kept his eyes from closing, even during the night watches, which were divided into evening, midnight, and morning. It appears that during each of these time periods, our faithful saint could be found reading the Scriptures.

119:149 – *“Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment.”* The more we meditate upon the Word, the more we realize that it is God alone who determines our destiny according to His good pleasure. Therefore, we need the assurance, as the psalmist prays, that our prayers are heard and that He will intervene on our behalf for good and not for evil. Then the psalmist prays for a fresh touch and quickening to walk in God’s ways.

119:150 – *“They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.”* The psalmist was concerned by the

approach of his enemies to harm him. We experience this at times as well, but as we study Holy Scripture, we find that our loving Heavenly Father permits it for our good. In actuality, our enemies force us to pray and press in to God. As one dear brother wrote, we should call our enemies, “our beloved enemies,” for they cause us to seek the Lord. God uses the wicked to form His character within our hearts.

119:151 – *“Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth.”* God is always present to protect and guide us through times of despair when the battle for our soul becomes fierce. He will never deny His promises to us.

119:152 – *“Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.”* Those precious promises that the Lord has placed in His Word for us were in the mind of God long before the world was created. Jesus said in Matthew 5:18, *“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”* God’s Word will abide forever and ever.

20. The Eightfold Resh (vs. 153-160)

Those who live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). Jesus said to His disciples, *“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake”* (Mt. 10:22). This was the plight of the psalmist, who prayed, *“Plead my cause,”* as did David (Psa. 43:1). The persecutors of the godly are

many, but in His lovingkindness, God quickens and strengthens the righteous.

119:153 – *“RESH. Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.”* The psalmist asks God to deliver him from affliction because he does not forget the law of God. Afflictions come in many sizes and packages. They are custom made by the Lord for each of His dear saints so that we may be perfected for our eternal home and ministry. Afflictions have their appointed time and course to run. God hears all of our prayers, but He does not deliver us from a trial or affliction until it has completed its purpose in our lives.

119:154 – *“Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.”* As the heat of his trial becomes white hot, the psalmist asks God to deliver him from his enemies. The trials and enemies we face on earth are very real. Our enemies are determined to destroy us. In order to survive, we must constantly cry out to the righteous Lord to protect us and deliver us from our enemies.

119:155 – *“Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.”* The wicked will never know God’s salvation unless they repent. The jaws of the pit of hell will be waiting to receive them at the end of their days, for the simple reason that they do not seek to live by the laws of God.

119:156 – *“Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments.”* The psalmist turns to the

tender nature of God, asking the Lord to revive him and judge his enemies (verse 157).

119:157 – *“Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.”* Those who fully follow the Lord will find that along life’s paths there are those who walk with them for a time, but then they turn against them. Ahithophel faithfully followed David for many years, but then he rebelled with Absalom against David. As this verse suggests, those who will turn against us are not few in number. During times of persecution, we must cleave to the Lord and His Word, for in so doing, we will be able to weather the storms of criticism and betrayal.

119:158 – *“I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.”* The psalmist was grieved by his enemies because they had abandoned the ways of God. He knew that if they did not repent, they would perish in hell. We should grieve for our enemies as well.

119:159 – *“Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.”* The psalmist appeals to the Lord now to quicken and revive him in these adversities, because he loved His precepts.

In order to fully appreciate and understand this psalm, we have to experience betrayal and persecution by those who are dear to us. Only in this way can we know how the psalmist felt when he cleaved to the Lord for comfort and strength.

119:160 – *“Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.”* From Genesis to Revelation, the promises of God are “yea and amen” (2 Cor. 1:20). Therefore, the psalmist waits confidently for God’s judgments to be manifested on his behalf by a righteous God.

21. The Eightfold Schin (vs. 161-168)

The key to victory in times of persecution is to guard our hearts with all diligence (Prov. 4:23), so that we do not become bitter, angry, or hateful like our adversaries. We must not take up the offenses of others. The way to this victory in Christ is seen in verse 165, “Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them.” May God grant that this peace, which passes all understanding, will keep and guard our minds and hearts in times when even leaders of congregations rise up against us.

119:161 – *“SCHIN. Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”* The psalmist was persecuted by vain courtiers and wicked scorners who held positions of power in the land because he was close to the nobility of his time. Nevertheless, he took comfort from the Word of God, which declares the end of the wicked.

119:162 – *“I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.”* As one who finds some hidden treasure of great value, the psalmist delights in the hidden truths of God’s Word that

are only revealed to those who find favor in His sight.

119:163 – *“I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.”* Truth is the criteria for those who fully follow the Lord. Those who turn aside to lying vanities will soon lose their way in the slough of despondency, but to those who love the law, the path of the just is ever as a shining light that shines brighter and brighter to the perfect day (Prov. 4:18).

119:164 – *“Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.”* It is very rewarding to contemplate the life of the godly author of this psalm. He constantly praised the Lord throughout the day, even seven times during the day. This could mean that he praised the Lord upon rising, at mid-morning, at mid-day, at mid-afternoon, at evening, at bed-time, and also at midnight (see Psa. 55:17; 119:62). We would do well to follow his example and have our days bathed in praise. The psalmist praised the Lord because of His righteous judgments.

119:165 – *“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”* As we mentioned in the preface to this stanza, the way to peace is clearly enunciated. In your distress, turn to the Word of God and hear the Lord speaking to you. The peace of God will overshadow your troubled mind like a canopy and will keep your heart and mind from being overcome with fears and sorrows. A beautiful serenity of spirit will clothe you and your countenance will exude the strength that the peace of God alone can give.

119:166 – “*LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.*” Because he has performed the commandments of God, the psalmist hopes for the salvation of God to be manifest in his predicament and trial.

119:167 – “*My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.*” He keeps God’s commandments because he has a deep love for them, not for any other reason. We, too, should seek to love God’s Word for itself, not for any benefit that it might accrue to us.

119:168 – “*I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.*” The psalmist closes this stanza with confidence in his appeal to God to see whether or not he had kept His commandments.

22. The Eightfold Tau (vs. 169-176)

In concluding this extraordinary psalm of the adulation of God’s Word, the psalmist cries out to the Lord for understanding. Like so many of us at one time or another in our lifetime, he had gone astray like a sheep and desired to never forget God’s commandments again.

119:169 – “*TAU. Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.*” Again we see this saintly psalmist attesting to his holy dependence upon the Lord for understanding of the Scriptures. This theme is repeated over and over again, not only in this psalm, but also

throughout the whole Bible. You might think that many of the themes in this psalm are needlessly repeated over and over again becoming redundant after a while. However, there is a distinct purpose for the repetition. We learn through inspiration, repetition, and association (I.R.A.), and the emphasis is often on repetition.

119:170 – *“Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.”* Speaking again of his enemies, the psalmist confesses that deliverance is of the Lord and does not come from our pitiful efforts.

119:171 – *“My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.”* Reverting to his role as a teacher, the psalmist asks the Teacher, the Holy Spirit, to instruct him in God’s holy statutes.

119:172 – *“My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.”* The psalmist can well be described by the words of Psalm 45:1, *“My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”* His spirit was a well of bubbling water, pouring forth praise unto the Lord for His righteous ways.

119:173 – *“Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.”* Here we have a picture of the Lord as One who gives a helping hand by lifting us up in our distress and weakness. The Good Shepherd lifts up His little ones, and mature ones alike, out of situations that are too great for them to overcome without His help.

119:174 – *“I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.”* This is a continuation of the pleas evoked in this psalm. The psalmist wanted to be assured of the Lord’s so great salvation. The godly will face many situations in life in which they cannot overcome and must depend on God’s salvation and deliverance.

119:175 – *“Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.”* The first part of this verse can be better translated as, *“Revive me so that I might praise thee.”* God’s righteous judgments will help us in our times of distress, as they did the psalmist.

119:176 – *“I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.”* This last verse seems out of context with the rest of the psalm. If we take it to mean that the psalmist had left God’s paths and fallen into sin, it does not agree with all of his other declarations in this psalm. The spirit behind what the psalmist is saying, however, is that we all are in need of the Good Shepherd’s care.

At times we might be temporarily led astray from God’s path, but by God’s grace we can repent and come back to the Lord. The closing phrase justifies our conclusion since he assures the Lord that he is ever faithful to His commandments.

PSALM 120 - 134

The Song of Degrees

The group of psalms that begins with Psalm 120 and ends with Psalm 134 is called the Songs of Degrees. It is composed of 15 psalms. These psalms depict the voyage of a soul from times of great distress to its ultimate goal and resting place upon Mount Zion. The fact that there are fifteen psalms in the Songs of Degrees is very interesting because the number fifteen in the Word of God is the number that represents “separation.”

We know this from the Law of First Mention, which is one of the primary laws of Bible interpretation. The meaning of a number or event can often be found in the first instance where it is mentioned in the Word of God.

The first time the number “fifteen” is found in the Word of God (not being part of another number) is in Genesis 7:19-20, where we read about the flood that covered the whole earth: “***Fifteen*** cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.”

There were *fifteen* cubits of water between Noah’s ark and the ground. Thus we see that the number *fifteen* speaks of separation, since the ark was separated from the ground by fifteen cubits of water. We also read that the waters *prevailed* until fifteen cubits. Therefore, we have the thought that the num-

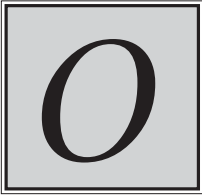
ber “*fifteen*” also means “prevailing over obstacles.”

As we study these fifteen psalms, the thought of separation and being brought to our final resting place will be emphasized time and time again. Another truth seen in these psalms is that we need to *prevail* over every obstacle in order to achieve our desired goal. Therefore, these fifteen psalms are very important keys in our life’s journey. We would do well to study them and meditate on them often.

It is also accepted by tradition that these psalms were sung as the Jewish pilgrims left their homelands and journeyed to Jerusalem to keep the three feasts of the Lord: the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 16:16). The Jews were commanded to come up to Jerusalem on each of these three feasts. As they came up, they would sing these psalms.

The title that accompanies each of these psalms, “A Song of degrees,” can also mean, “A Song of ascent.” Thus we can look at these fifteen psalms as being fifteen ascending steps out of spiritual distress, and into spiritual rest and happiness. As we will see in Psalms 132-134, the ultimate purpose of God is to bring us to spiritual Mount Zion so that we can experience His abundant blessings!

PSALM 120



ur first step toward the final goal is found in Psalm 120. *“In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me”* (Psa. 120:1). What was the distress of the psalmist? He was surrounded by deceitful tongues and lying lips.

In verse 5 he also says that he sojourned in Mesech and dwelt in the tents of Kedar.

That might not mean much to us, but the inhabitants of Kedar basically came from Ishmael’s seed. Ishmael, who mocked Isaac (Gen. 21:9), represents those who mock at spiritual things and persecute those who are spiritual (Gal. 4:29).

A Song of degrees

120:1-7 – *“In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me. Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper. Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.”*

The author of this psalm lived in the land of distress and he was surrounded by deceitful lips and false tongues who at-

tacked him with their words. He says, “I am for peace; but when I speak they are for war” (Psa. 120:7). Are you in that situation at times? Are you surrounded by people who have deceitful lips and are for war, while you seek peace?

It may well be that your problems are with your own family members, as was the case with Hannah, the mother of Samuel the prophet. Peninah, the other wife of Hannah’s husband, Elkanah, tormented her. We read in 1 Samuel 1:6, “*And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.*”

We must look to the Lord, even as did Hannah, and remember also the warning of Micah 7:5-7, which says: “*Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own house. Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.*”

Beloved, in your distress cry out to the Lord and He will hear your prayers and deliver you.

PSALM 121



elp is the theme of this psalm. The word “help” occurs several times in this psalm. A pastor friend of mine spoke of the “Helps” in the Word of God. Somehow, crying out “Help!” opens heaven and God comes forth on our behalf.

A Song of degrees

121:1-4 - *“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”*

There are many notable occasions in Scripture when Israel called upon the Lord for help. One of these is found in 2 Chronicles 20 when the children of Moab and Ammon came against Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to battle. 2 Chronicles 20:4 says, *“And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.”*

The Lord answered their plea for help and sent them a prophet. 2 Chronicles 20:15 says, *“And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat,*

Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.” Let us always realize that the battle is not ours, but the Lord's. When we cry out to the Lord for help and know of a certainty that He has heard us, we should then trust Him to fight for us.

The first thing the psalmist did when he was in distress was to lift up his eyes and say, *“My help cometh from the Lord ... He will not suffer thy foot to be moved”* (Psa. 121:2-3). He goes on to say that the Lord will preserve us. If we cry out to the Lord for help in our times of distress, He will hear us and send us help. The Lord is always awake to hear our cries for help. It matters not at what time we cry unto the Lord, for He is always awake, listening to our prayers and ready to meet our need.

121:5-6 – *“The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.”* The Lord is our keeper. He protects us during the day and also during the night. David said in Psalm 54:4 that God was his helper. How wonderful it is to know the Lord as your helper, beloved.

121:7-8 – *“The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.”* God is the One who preserves us wherever we go. This is the blessing that King David experienced. God said to

him in 2 Samuel 7:9: “*And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest.*” However, we should note that this refers to the times when David went out to battle. God was with David in every battle he faced because he consulted the Lord on every occasion, and consequently the Lord could direct him and give him the victory.

Regretfully, in David’s private life, this was not the case. There were tragic consequences from his relationship with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. David sought the Lord regarding his military affairs and was protected by the Lord, but he fell into sin in his personal life because he stopped seeking the Lord.

We should learn from David’s mistakes the peril of not seeking the Lord in every little area and detail of our life. We will prosper and be protected at all times when we seek the Lord in every area of our lives.

PSALM 122



Step number three in our spiritual journey from distress to blessing is found in verse 1, where David said, *“I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.”*

A Song of degrees of David

122:1-2 - *“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.”* Often in our lives we have times of distress, but the key is to come into the house of the Lord and everything will change.

A dear pastor from the Midwest recounted to me an experience he had at a time of great stress in his life. He felt such a great opposition coming against him that he could hardly breathe. He even fell down twice due to his weakness. Then he got in his car and drove the wrong way down a one-way street and barely escaped an accident.

Then God spoke to him, “You are under an attack!” The Lord reminded him that the ministers in that town met at noon to pray on that particular day, and said to him, “Go there quick!” He went into the house of the Lord and that terrible oppression lifted after he had a time of prayer. He came out of the

house of God free from distress. As David says in verse 1, we need to spend time in God's house and in His presence. We receive understanding of our situations in the house of God (Psa. 73:17; 77:13). There is deliverance in the house of the Lord for those who are distressed.

122:3 – *“Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.”* Jerusalem, which represents the Church of Jesus Christ, is likened to a strong city that is compacted together. The Church should be fitly joined together, as we read in Ephesians 4:16: *“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*

The strength of the Church is at its greatest peak when all the saints flow together in unity. I am writing this section from a country where this is literally happening. The church in which I am ministering has just bought a building under the direction of the Lord. Other churches are giving special offerings to help them pay their mortgage. What a blessed example of brotherly love and Christian unity!

122:4-5 – *“Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.”* There is an interesting truth to learn with respect to the ascent of the tribes of Israel.

In New Jerusalem, there are twelve gates upon which are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The Church is called the spiritual Israel (Gal. 6:16). Therefore, in a spiritual sense, we belong to one of the twelve tribes of Israel. We must ask God which tribe we belong to, because our spiritual tribe reveals the ministry and inheritance that God has for us.

Jesus mentions the twelve thrones of Israel in Matthew 19:28: *"...Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."* Therefore, in heaven there are groupings.

Also, there is the sense of God executing His judgments through His Church. The Lord said to Joshua, the High Priest of the Restoration Era, in Zechariah 3:7, *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by."* If we walk in righteousness, the Lord will commit His judgment to us.

The ministry of judging God's people is given to the Lord's obedient servants. Let us also remember the words of Peter in 1 Peter 4:17, *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"* Psalm 50:4 says, *"He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the*

earth, that he may judge his people.”

David prayed in Psalm 7:8, “*The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*” Let us ask the Lord to judge us now and see if there be any wicked way in us, rather than be humiliated before others, or worse still, wait until we stand before the judgment throne of God, where there will be no recourse to amend our ways.

122:6-9 - *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.”*

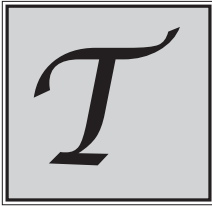
We should ask the Lord to give peace to the city of Jerusalem. However, there is also a spiritual application here, since we have already shown that Jerusalem represents the Church. Therefore, we should also pray for the Church to enjoy peace and unity.

Peace and prosperity are intimately linked and intertwined. The peace offering of Leviticus 3 is also known as “the offering of prosperity.” Peace means having oneness with God, as well as with our neighbors.

Let us walk in obedience to God’s Word and pray that God will send peace and prosperity, not only to natural Jerusalem,

but also to the Church of Jesus Christ. The Apostle John wrote in 3 John 1:2, "*Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*" Beloved, do not come short of any of the blessings that the Lord has for you. His blessings come through obedience and one of His greatest blessings is peace!

PSALM 123



he fourth step in the believer's journey is to ask the Lord to show us mercy. That is the theme of Psalm 123. The word "mercy" occurs three times in this short psalm. The psalmist prays in verse 3, *"Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt."*

When the psalmist prays for God to show him mercy, he is not only asking the Lord to show him undeserved favor and grace, but he is asking the Lord to enable him to overcome his enemies.

A Song of degrees

123:1-4 - *"Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud."*

The psalmist adopts the attitude of a servant or maidservant

whose eyes are continually upon the hands of the master. In olden days, as in modern times, monarchs used to motion to their servants with their hands. Their servants had to constantly watch them for the slightest wave of their hands. The psalmist likens this to the intentness of the prayer of those who desire God's mercy. We should keep praying without ceasing until God answers our prayers.

The psalmist's cry for mercy is intensified because of the scorning of the proud. The Lord Himself was derided upon earth. We read in Psalm 22:7, which is prophetic of Christ, "*All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.*" The Lord responded by crying out to His Heavenly Father in Psalm 22:11, "*Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*"

Jesus, therefore, knows all our woes. Hebrews 2:18 says, "*For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*" Therefore, we read in Hebrews 4:16, "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*"

PSALM 124



od's deliverance from those who rise up against us is the theme of Psalm 124. The phrase, "*If it had not been the LORD who was on our side ...*" is repeated in verses 1 and 2. David realized that if it had not been for the Lord's protection and deliverance, his enemies would have swallowed him up and consumed him. Our enemies are usually more powerful than we are and the only way we can overcome them is through the Lord's help.

A Song of degrees of David

124:1-8 - *"If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth."*

David uses very descriptive language to describe the attacks of the wicked. They try to swallow us up and overwhelm us like a sea tempest. However, the Lord does not give us over

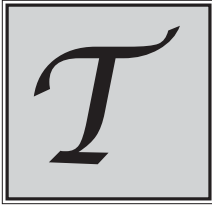
into the hands of our enemies. He breaks the snares that the wicked have laid for us and frees us from their evil plots against us.

When the Lord is on our side, we can be assured of His deliverance. I can personally testify of God's deliverance in a particular situation. Once I was driving in my car to visit my wife, who was in the hospital. The road was covered with ice and a car spun out of control in front of me.

I turned the wheels of my car and crossed the median, and right before me was a huge truck. I did not know what to do, but before I could do anything, I saw the hand of my angel take control of the steering wheel of my car.

Before I knew what had happened, I was on the right side of the median and past the spinning car. I would have been killed if it had not been for divine intervention. Truly, I can thank God for His deliverance from the enemy who sought to kill me, and I can joyfully say with the psalmist in verse 7, "My soul is escaped."

PSALM 125



he theme of Psalm 125 is trusting in the Lord. Trust is the sixth step in the pilgrim's ascending journey. So much is spoken about trust in the Word of God. What is trust? Basically, *trust* means, "to lean upon" or "to put one's confidence in something or someone." Trusting the Lord means we hand over our life to the Lord. It is the attitude of heart that says, "Lord, I trust you to take care of this."

A Song of degrees

125:1-5 - *"They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity. Do good, O LORD, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel."*

Verse 1 says, "They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." Those who trust in the Lord are compared to Mount Zion, which can

never be removed. Mount Zion will abide forever because it has been founded by God. Even in the last days, the city of Jerusalem will be sieged before the Second Coming of the Lord. Part of the city shall be overrun, but the one place that the enemy will not be able to touch is Mount Zion, for it cannot be moved.

“As the mountains are round about Jerusalem.” The mountains around Jerusalem rear up their heads as though they are protecting her. There are numerous mountains around Jerusalem, but the two principal hills are: Mount Zion, which cannot be removed; and the Mount of Olives, which the Lord shall descend upon when He returns. Many of the prophets who prophesied of the Second Coming are buried on the Mount of Olives.

The interesting thing about these two hills is that the Mount of Olives will part in two when the Lord comes again (Zech. 14:4-5), but Mount Zion will remain steadfast. In the same way, those who trust in the Lord will remain steadfast. They will never be removed from their place by the wicked, or even Satan himself, as long as they keep their trust totally in God.

In verses 3-5, the psalmist contrasts the wicked and the righteous. The rod of the wicked will not rest upon the lot of the righteous. Then the psalmist prays that the Lord will do good to those who are good. This illustrates another very important truth. God deals with us according to the attitude and disposition of our heart.

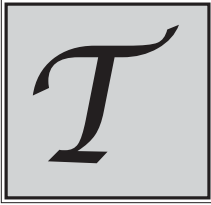
We read in Psalm 18:25-26: *“With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.”* God shows mercy to the merciful and He is upright with the upright. He is pure to those who are pure, but with the forward, He is forward.

We read in Ezekiel 7:27, *“The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.”*

God deals with people according to their ways and heart. Here in Psalm 125 we see that the Lord will be good to those who are good. Of course, even the ability to be good requires the grace of God, so we never have anything of which to boast.

The psalm ends with a warning to those who turn aside from the path of righteousness to be deceitful and crooked. We should ever keep this warning present in our minds so that we walk in humility and the fear of the Lord.

PSALM 126



he theme of Psalm 126 is the turning of our captivity, which is the seventh step in the Songs of Degrees. After we seek to trust the Lord, in His perfect time, He will release us from our captivity.

A Song of degrees

126:1 - *“When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.”* When the Lord finally released the children of Israel from Babylonian captivity, they were so filled with joy that the whole thing felt like a dream. Praise the Lord! Just as He released Israel from captivity in the exact time of which Jeremiah had prophesied (after 70 years), so the Lord will release us from our captivity-like circumstances in His perfect time. The tide begins to turn and we begin to chase our enemies, rather than being persecuted and held in bondage by them. God brings us to the day when our captivity is completely turned and we are like those who dream.

Remember this precious verse when you are in the midst of a terrible trial or captivity-like experience, beloved, for God will surely turn your captivity. In Hosea 2:15, the Lord promises to give Israel *“the valley of Achor for a door of hope.”* Achor means “trouble.” God is saying that in our valleys of trouble,

He will give us a door of hope. God never leaves us alone; He is always there with us in the midst of our trials and there is always a door of hope.

126:2-3 – *“Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.”* When the Lord turns our captivity, we will be filled with joy, laughter, and singing.

Even the unsaved will acknowledge that God’s blessing is upon us and that He has done *great* things for us. We read in Isaiah 61:9, *“And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.”* Even the unsaved will acknowledge that God has blessed us.

126:4 – *“Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.”* Below the heights of the Judean hills, and in the proximity of the Dead Sea, lie dry riverbeds. I have personally seen them become rushing mighty torrents when the rains fall upon the hillsides and mountains above them.

When one hears the noise of the waters cascading over the stones in those hills above, one must get out of the riverbeds and take shelter quickly. Within minutes, these dry riverbeds become mighty streams that sweep away anything in their path.

It is with these scenes in his mind that the psalmist asks the Lord to turn the captivity of the nation with the same suddenness.

Throughout history, God has released His people from captivity very quickly. Joseph's prison garments were changed into imperial robes in a matter of hours. David lost everything at Ziklag, but was proclaimed king of Judah in three days.

As the prophet Elisha had prophesied, the famine in the city of Samaria ended in one day and there was an overabundance of food and wealth. Beloved, the Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8), and what He did for the Old Testament saints, He will also do for you!

126:5-6 – *“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”* Israel was basically an agricultural nation. They well understood the principles of sowing and reaping. Sowing in the natural is very hard work. The farmer must plough the land and break up the clods, often in very inclement weather. Storms and high winds can chill a farmer to the bone.

Spiritually, sowing the seed of God's Word is also very difficult. Jesus gave the great parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. From this parable we learn that there are four types of soil in which we can sow seed, which represent four types of heart conditions:

1. The wayside
2. Stony ground
3. Thorny ground
4. Good ground

The seed of God's Word does not penetrate the ground by the wayside because Satan comes and takes away the seed of truth from the hearer. God's Word does not grow in stony ground because of the rocks, which speak of hardness of heart and rebellion. As a result, the seed's roots never grow deep, and the hearer only endures in the path of righteousness for a short time before he becomes offended and turns his back on the Lord.

The thorny ground represents a heart that is full of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19). As a result, they never bring fruit to perfection. The weeds and thorns eventually eat away the seed of God's Word. The fourth type of ground is good ground. We see that good ground can bring forth three levels of fruitfulness: thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and a hundred-fold.

We need to remember this parable and the four types of hearts when we witness and preach the Word of God. Some people will be indifferent to the Gospel message, while others will mock and scorn us for preaching God's Word. Others will embrace the message, but they will only endure for a time, either because God's Word does not take root in their lives, or because the works of the flesh in their lives will eat away at the Word that was sown in their hearts.

We read in Psalm 126:5 that *“they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”* Being a minister or preacher is very discouraging at times. It is very difficult to see people who we have ministered to for years turn their backs on us and on the Lord in the end. We must keep your eyes on Jesus in order not to give up because of discouragement and disappointment. If we sow in tears and do not give up, in due time we will reap in joy.

There is a tremendous price to pay in order to sow God’s Word. We read in Proverbs 23:23, *“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”* In order to share with others the truths that God has given to us, we will have to pay an enormous price. Jesus said in John 12:24, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”* We will bring forth much fruit if we allow the Lord to work death-to-self in us through many sorrows and tears.

The psalm closes with a blessed reaffirmation that those who sow in tears shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. All of our labors will be rewarded in God’s perfect time.

I would like to close with a little note of wisdom. When God sends revival and pours out His Holy Spirit like rain upon the nations, even like rain in the natural, it will only produce a harvest where seed has been sown. This is a very important

truth that we need to understand. In the natural, when the rains come down, they bring the seed to life that has been sown in the ground.

However, it does not produce seed where there is no seed. It is the same in the spiritual. That is why we are exhorted in Scripture to “sow beside all waters” (Isa. 32:20), and to “cast thy bread upon the waters” (Eccl. 11:1). In due time, beloved, if we sow in tears, we will certainly reap a mighty harvest with great joy and rejoicing!

PSALM 127



Step number eight in this spiritual journey, which we have seen develop over these seven psalms, is that the Lord builds us up. What comes after the turning of our captivity? There comes an establishment or building up in our lives.

A Song of degrees for Solomon

127:1-3 - *“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep. Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.”*

This “building up” experience is similar to Moses’ prayer in Psalm 90:16-17: *“Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. 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.”* God wants to establish the works of our hands.

God wants to build us “a sure house,” as He did for David (1 Kgs. 11:38). David experienced a time of long captivity, being chased and hunted by Saul, and losing everything at Ziklag.

However, God then turned his captivity and made him king, first over Judah, and then over all Israel. God established David (2 Sam. 5:12), and built him a sure house.

Not only does God want to build us a sure house and place of ministry, but He wants to give us an abundance of children, especially spiritual children. What is the purpose of a huge house unless you have children? This is true in the natural, but I am referring more so to the spiritual realm. In order to fulfill our vision and life's goal, we need spiritual children. We cannot do it on our own. God desires to give us those who will propagate the vision that God has given to us.

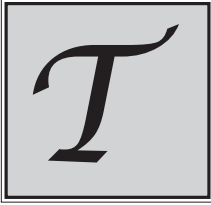
127:4-5 – *“As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.”*

The psalmist likens children to arrows. The prophet Isaiah likened Christ to an arrow, a polished shaft, in Isaiah 49:1-2: *“Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me.”* The purpose of an arrow is to hit the designated mark. When they are ready, God the Father places His people, as He did Christ, in the bow and shoots them forth toward the predetermined mark for their lives.

The psalmist says in verse 5, “*Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.*” In other words, the more quality spiritual children we have, the more fruitful we will be. The more spiritual children we have, the more arrows we will have to fulfill God’s will and defeat the enemy, for our children will speak with the enemies in the gate (see Gen. 22:17).

Producing a mature and godly son or daughter requires much hard work and dedication on our part. We should take time to raise our natural and spiritual children in the ways of the Lord. Children can frustrate us at times, but we need to be patient and continue to teach them God’s Word, especially by example. Our spiritual children will become a strength and support to us, and they will help us defeat our enemies.

PSALM 128



he ninth step in the Songs of Degrees is found in Psalm 128. After the Lord builds our spiritual house and gives us quality spiritual children, then He causes us to begin to enter into some of His blessings, the principal one illustrated in this psalm being *peace* (verse 6). When God has established us and our spiritual children are flowing together with us in our vision, we enter into peace.

A Song of degrees

128:1-6 - *“Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD. The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children’s children, and peace upon Israel.”*

In this psalm, we see several of the blessings that come upon those who fear the Lord:

1. They enjoy the fruit of their labors (verse 2)
2. Their spouse and children are fruitful and are a blessing

to them (verse 3)

3. They will be blessed by the Lord from Zion (verse 5)
4. They will see the good of Jerusalem (verse 5)
5. They enter into peace (verse 6)

What a blessing it is when God allows us to enjoy the fruit of our labors. Solomon tried everything under the sun, but God would not allow him to enjoy any of it. Solomon testified in Ecclesiastes 2:11, *“Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.”*

In verse 3, we see the blessings that come upon our family when we fear the Lord. If we will walk in the fear of the Lord, God will cause our spouse to be like a fruitful vine and our children like olive plants, which typify peace and prosperity. The home life is very important to the Lord. God wants the truth of His Word to be a reality in our homes.

Many ministers preach one thing, but their home is totally out of order. Their spouse and children do not respect them because they do not practice what they preach and often devote more time to the ministry than to their families.

We see in Malachi 4 that when the prophet Elijah returns to earth in the last days with Moses, one of his principal messages will be the home life (Mal. 4:5-6). He will seek to bring love and unity to families. Today we see so many broken fami-

lies and the terrible effects that it has upon the children. Therefore, the blessing that is pronounced in Psalm 128:3 upon the family of those who fear the Lord should be very dear to us.

In verse 5, the Lord says that He will bless us “out of Zion.” As we progress in the Songs of Degrees, we will see in Psalms 133 and 134 that spiritual Mount Zion is the place of God’s ultimate blessing. Zion is the Lord’s dwelling place (Psa. 76:2), and it is from Zion that He pours out His blessings upon us. From His holy mountain, rivers of blessing and provision will flow to us to meet the every need of our body, soul, and spirit.

In verse 5, we also see that another blessing of those who fear the Lord is that they will see “the good of Jerusalem.” Obviously, to the Jew it meant very much to see their capital, Jerusalem, being blessed and prospered. I would have to say the same about London, England, the capital of my home country.

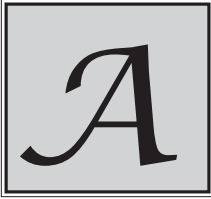
However, there is also a spiritual application to this verse. Jerusalem represents the Church of Jesus Christ, both local and worldwide. Therefore, we see here that those who fear the Lord will see their local church prosper and be blessed by the Lord.

The last blessing of those who fear the Lord that we see in this psalm is found in verse 6—peace. Peace is one of the greatest of God’s blessings. When I was in Bible school, the Lord promised me that He would give me His peace. At the

time, this did not mean a lot to me, but now in my latter years, I see what a blessing it has been to have God's peace in my life. I can honestly say that I would have given up years ago if I did not have the peace of God.

Trials and opposition can really wear you out if you do not have the peace of God, but when you have God's peace, the world can fall apart around you, but you keep your calmness and peace in the Lord!

PSALM 129



After reaching peace and other blessings of the Lord in Psalm 128, the tenth step in our spiritual journey, found in Psalm 129, takes a rather unexpected turn. Rather than entering into a deeper level of blessing, we now enter into the vicarious sufferings of Christ for others that will release a blessing for them.

A Song of degrees

129:1-3 - *“Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say: Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me. The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.”*

Psalm 129 begins by speaking of the many afflictions of the Israelites’, even from their youth. We read in Psalm 34:19, *“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”* We will experience many afflictions and sufferings in this life, but if we embrace them with the right attitude, they will only serve to draw us closer to the Lord.

Psalm 129 is a prophetic psalm speaking of the sufferings of Christ, whose back was scourged for the sins of mankind (verse 3). It is by the stripes on His back that we are healed (Isa.

53:5; 1 Pet. 2:24; Mt. 27:26). Christ did not suffer for Himself or for His own sins, but for us. Christ suffered vicariously for us so that we could experience healing, abundant life, and blessing. In the same way, after we have begun to enter into the blessings of Psalm 128, the Lord wants us to enter into the vicarious sufferings of Christ for others in the Church.

Paul spoke of this in Colossians 1:24, *“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.”* Paul entered into the afflictions of Christ for the Body of Christ, the Church.

He said to the Corinthian believers, *“So then death worketh in us, but life in you”* (2 Cor. 4:12). Paul experienced terrible sufferings, which worked death in him, but released life in the Corinthian church. God wants to bring us to the point where we no longer suffer because of our sins or mistakes (1 Pet. 4:1), but we suffer vicariously for others.

129:4-8 - *The LORD is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked. Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion. Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up: Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom. Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD be upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD.”* All of those who hate Zion will be confounded by the Lord. They will be cut down like the grass that grew on the house-

tops of the Israelites. This grass withered and never reached maturity because the soil on top of the houses was very meager.

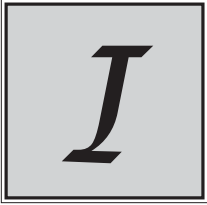
This not only speaks of the unsaved, but also of believers who despise the message of holiness that those who abide in spiritual Mount Zion preach and uphold. If they refuse to conform to the righteousness of Christ, eventually they will be removed from the household of faith.

Again we see how much the Lord loves Zion and will always defend it (see Psa. 87:2). Zion is the spiritual dwelling place of God. As such, it is the place that Satan and all his hordes, whether demonic or human, seek to destroy. Their attack is also against Christians who have a progressive vision for spiritual Zion and the truths that it represents.

This psalm concludes by saying that the wicked do not bless those whom they meet with the traditional Jewish and Christian greeting, "We bless you in the name of the Lord." It was the common greeting of the godly man, Boaz, when he met his servants: "*And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee*" (Ruth 2:4).

Let us seek to always pronounce a blessing upon our brethren in the Lord when we see them. Practice saying this blessing, beloved, and you will find that the same blessing you pronounce upon others will come upon you and your family.

PSALM 130



In Psalm 130, we see the eleventh step in our journey. This is another valley experience, deeper than ever before, and also a fresh cleansing in our lives. Before we can reach the summit of spiritual Mount Zion and obtain the full blessings of God, we must go through another valley experience and be cleansed even further in our lives. God wants to bring a fresh conviction of sin and a greater sensitivity to displeasing Him into our lives. It is in valley experiences that He is able to do just that.

The psalmist cried out to the Lord in Psalm 130:1, “*Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.*” In other words, he was going through a valley experience. In verse 8 he speaks of the Lord doing a further work of cleansing in the Israelites to redeem them from all their sins.

When I was the Director of a Christian training center and hotel in Switzerland many years ago, I noticed that there were deep valleys at the base of many of the high mountains. After each mountain peak you reached, there was another deeper valley before you could reach the top of the next mountain, which was even higher than the previous mountain.

This is the same in our spiritual lives. The higher we want to go in God, the deeper the valley will be before we reach the

top of the mountain. God's desire is always to take us higher and higher in our spiritual life.

In the Tabernacle of Moses, there was a veil that separated the Holy Place and Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant rested. The veil represents our human nature (or flesh).

In order to reach God's best and enter into His literal presence, our human nature (represented by the veil) must be crucified with Christ and put to death (see Heb. 10:20; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20). God's desire is to keep us from falling and present us faultless before His throne with great rejoicing (Jude 1:24). In order to do that, He must cleanse us even deeper from our sin and develop in our hearts a great conviction of sin.

A Song of degrees

130:1-4 - *“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”*

The cry of the psalmist in verses 1-4 resembles the prayer of Jonah in the belly of the whale in Jonah 2:6-9, *“I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee,*

into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.”

In verse 3, the psalmist declares that if God would keep record of our iniquities, none of us would be able to stand before Him or make it into heaven. Mercifully, the Lord is gracious and forgives our sins when we have a truly repentant and contrite heart (verse 4). Thus in order to prepare us to stand before Him, the Lord cleanses us of our deep-seated iniquities and sinful habits.

The psalmist says in verse 4, *“But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”* God is to be feared because He alone can forgive us. He holds the scales of judgment and He is the One who will determine our eternal judgment. God has the power to send us to hell and not pardon our sins, or to forgive all our iniquities and allow us into heaven.

Therefore, since the Lord alone has this power, we should fear Him and plead with Him to be merciful to us. Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”* We should not fear man, who can only harm our physical bodies, but we should fear the Lord, who can send us to hell for all eternity.

130:5-6 – *“I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his*

word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.” The psalmist waits in hope for the Lord, reminding himself that the Lord’s promises would be fulfilled in God’s perfect time. Beloved, in times of difficulty, we should rehearse the things that the Lord has spoken to us. When we meditate upon the Lord’s promises to us, hope will blossom in the garden of our heart and we will be strengthened.

The psalmist compares waiting on the Lord to the sentries who watch for the morning light. Anyone who has ever done sentry duty experiences an intense longing for the night to be over and the morning to dawn. There are many dangers associated with nighttime, including enemy attacks by predawn marauders. We should wait upon the Lord for the dark, nighttime experience to pass, for with the morning comes hope and joy. Psalm 30:5 says, “... *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*”

130:7-8 – “*Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*” The psalmist encourages the nation of Israel to put their hope in the Lord because of His infinite mercies. The psalmist assures us that the Lord will deliver us from all those besetting sins that seem to easily overcome us at times. But praise the Lord, for He will redeem us from our sins and from all those who seek to afflict us. Amen and amen!

PSALM 131



Humility is the twelfth step, as seen in Psalm 131, in our spiritual journey. Proverbs 15:33 and Proverbs 18:12 tell us that humility must come before honor. Before God can take us to the heights of spiritual Zion and entrust us with all of His abundant blessings, He must first develop humility within our hearts.

If God promotes us before humility has been developed in our hearts, we will fall into the pit of pride. We read in Proverbs 16:18, *“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”* In the previous psalm, Psalm 130, we spoke of a deeper cleansing. There is the need to be purified of pride in our lives.

A Song of degrees of David

131:1-3 - *“LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.”*

King David says in verse 1, *“LORD, my heart is not haughty,*

nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.” David’s heart was purified of pride and the Lord worked out humility in his heart. David speaks of having the humility of heart not to exercise ourselves in matters too great for us.

King David, a man who had great revelation from the Lord, said that there were some things that were too high for him that God did not want to explain to him. I believe it is very important that we do not try to force God to explain something He does not want to explain.

Deuteronomy 29:29 says, *“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”* There are some things that God in His infinite wisdom chooses not reveal to us.

In the Upper Room, Jesus said to His disciples, *“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now”* (Jn. 16:12). Even the Lord’s disciples were not ready at that point of their lives to hear many of the things He wanted to say to them.

Parents know that there are certain things that they cannot share with their children because they are not strong enough to handle such knowledge. Certain things might devastate children, and that is why parents must be so careful what they share with their children.

In much the same way, there are certain things that Father God does not share with His children. In 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, the Apostle Paul spoke of an experience he had of being taken in the Spirit to the third heaven and hearing things that were not lawful to be uttered on earth.

It takes great humility to say, “Lord, only show me the things that You know I can handle. Do not show me anything that is too great for me or that is not for me to know.”

This is very important because I have seen many people ruin their lives by trying to find out things that God does not want to reveal. When people do this, they end up teaching false doctrines of devils (1 Tim. 4:1). Humility will preserve us from doctrinal error.

PSALM 132



salm 132 develops the thirteenth step in our progressively ascending spiritual journey—we are brought to Mount Zion and the literal presence of God, symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant. Spiritual Mount Zion is the goal for every believer. The sixth step in the journey, as seen in Psalm 125, is to trust in the Lord, for if we do, the Lord will cause us to be like Mount Zion, which cannot be removed or shaken. However, now in Psalm 132 we actually come to Zion.

The goal of the journey of the children of Israel when they left Egypt was not only to inherit the Promised Land, but to ascend Mount Zion. This is made very clear in Exodus 15:17, which says, *“Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.”* The purpose of the Exodus from Egypt was for the children of Zion to reach Mount Zion, the dwelling place of God. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 that the historical journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land was a type of the spiritual journey of every believer. The ultimate goal for every believer is spiritual Mount Zion.

This is also confirmed by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 12:22-

23: *“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, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”* We are called to Zion, beloved! Do not settle for anything less than God’s absolute best!

Although Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and Joshua led them into the Promised Land, it was not until about 400 years later that King David took the stronghold of Mount Zion and the city of Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5). Then upon Mount Zion David erected a tent for the Ark of the Covenant. In the Tabernacle of David, there was no veil as there was in the Tabernacle of Moses separating man from the Ark of the Covenant and God’s manifest presence.

Natural Mount Zion is a symbol of Heavenly Mount Zion, which is where the throne of God is situated and the Lord dwells (Rev. 14:1). The spiritual message of Mount Zion for the Church of Jesus Christ is perfection, maturity, and holiness, for Zion is the mountain of the Lord’s holiness (Psa. 48:1). In Psalms 15 and 24, David lists fifteen qualifications in order to abide in spiritual Mount Zion. Coming to Zion also speaks of coming to know the Lord and His presence in a very intimate way, as did David.

Beloved, coming to spiritual Mount Zion is the goal of your spiritual journey. If you settle for anything less, you are not

obtaining God's best for your life. (For a more thorough study on the journey to Zion, please see my book entitled, *The Journey of Israel*.)

A Song of degrees

132:1-6 – *“LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions: How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.”*

Verses 1-6 rehearse David's intense desire to restore the Ark of the Covenant to Israel and to build a home for the presence of God. The Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines in the days of Eli the priest. After the Lord brought terrible plagues upon them because it for seven months (1 Sam. 6:1), they returned it to Israel and it rested in the house of Abinadab for over twenty years (see 1 Sam. 4:11 – 7:2). David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), and he desired to bring back the Ark of the Covenant.

We read in 1 Chronicles 13:1-6: *“And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all*

the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul. And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjathjearim. And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it.”

In 1 Chronicles 13:7-14, we see that they did not bring up the Ark of the Covenant according God’s prescribed manner, which was upon the shoulders of the priests. As a result, the Lord smote Uzza for touching the Ark. Then the Ark of the Covenant rested in the house of Obededom for three months. Then in 1 Chronicles 15 we read how David and the priests consecrated themselves to bring up the Ark of the Covenant and place it in the tent that David had prepared for it on Mount Zion.

Then David said to Nathan the prophet in 2 Samuel 7:2, “*See now, I dwell in an house of cedar; but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.*” David wanted to build a house for the Ark of the Covenant, rather than having it remain in a tent. However, the Lord spoke to David that it was not His will for him to build a house for the Ark, but that his son Solomon would

build a Temple for the Lord. God blessed David because of his intense desire for the Ark to have a proper home.

132:7 – *“We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.”* Mount Zion, as we have said, is the dwelling place of God. His throne is in Zion and it is there that we worship at His footstool. One of the reasons that I emphasize spiritual Zion so much is that in spiritual Zion we can enter right into God’s presence and worship at His footstool, in the Holy of Holies as it were.

This is the exultant cry of the deprived worshipper who can now have his spiritual needs met by entering into the presence of God. Have you ever been in a similar situation, beloved, when you were not able to find a church where you could worship the Lord in a manner agreeable to Him? If you keep seeking the Lord, He will most graciously lead you to a church where you can worship Him, and He will inhabit your praises.

132:8 – *“Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.”* The psalmist prays that the Lord and the Ark of the Covenant will enter into rest upon Mount Zion in the tent that David had prepared for the Ark of the Covenant. Mount Zion was the Lord’s desired place of rest upon earth (verse 13).

Mount Zion is the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. That makes Mount Zion equivalent to the Holy of Holies, for

the Ark of the Covenant rested in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon. In the Old Testament, only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement.

God's desire is for us to come within the veil that separated man from the Ark and the presence of God. This becomes a reality when we come to spiritual Mount Zion. Do you want to experience God's full presence and shekinah glory? If so, you must press on to Zion, for the Lord dwells in Zion.

132:9 – *“Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.”* Here we have a beautiful cameo of an Old Testament worship service, with the priests clothed with righteousness. Praise is comely to the upright in heart (Psa. 33:1). We, too, should be clothed with the righteousness of God and rejoice greatly in the Lord.

The priests wore linen garments in the Old Testament. Linen in the Word of God represents righteousness (Rev. 19:8). God's desire is that His people, and especially His ministers, walk in righteousness so that it becomes even like a garment that always covers their every thought, motive, and deed. Job said, *“I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem”* (Job 29:14).

132:10 – *“For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.”* The psalmist now makes an appeal to the Lord based upon David's life and ministry. David was

well pleasing to the Lord. He was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).

132:11 – *“The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.”* The Lord made many precious promises to David, one of them being that He would establish his throne and that his seed would sit upon his throne (2 Sam. 7:11-12; 1 Kgs. 8:25). In one sense, this was fulfilled by David's son, Solomon, but in its fullest sense, it will be fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes again to sit upon the throne of David for a thousand years upon earth.

132:12 – *“If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.”* All promises come with a condition that we must obey the Lord. God promised David's descendants that they would sit upon his throne if they kept the commandments of God (2 Sam. 7:11-14; 1 Kgs. 8:25). Zechariah, the twentieth and last king of Judah, was judged by God. He saw Jerusalem fall to the Babylonians because of his disobedience. Remember, God's promises to an individual, a nation or a church will only be fulfilled if we walk in obedience to Him.

This promise to David concerning his children can also be ours. We read in Isaiah 55:3, *“Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of*

David.” God desires to make the covenant of David with us and give us the “sure mercies of David.” The Lord promised David that He would never take His mercy away from him as He had from Saul (2 Sam. 7:15). If we seek the Lord to make us men and women after God’s heart, we can leave a lasting legacy to our children, both natural and spiritual, as did David.

132:13 – *“For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.”* The psalmist declares that the Lord has chosen Zion for His habitation. We also read in Psalm 87:2, *“The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.”* God loves all of the redeemed, but His heart is toward those who obey Him and dwell in spiritual Mount Zion. God loves to dwell among those who have made holiness and His presence their spiritual goal.

132:14 – *“This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.”* God’s goal has always been to be at rest among His elect. We have the same desire. We love to be with those who are similar to us. Likes go to likes. In the same way, God dwells with those who are like Him in character. He dwells in Zion with those who are humble and contrite (Isa. 66:1-2). Now follows a series of promises for those in spiritual Zion.

132:15 – *“I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.”* For those who dwell in spiritual Zion, the Lord will abundantly supply for all their needs. There is

abundant provision in Zion to enable us to accomplish God's will. Throughout my life, I have always seen God provide for things that are His will. Also, God will enable us to feed and clothe the poor. What a privilege it is to be a conduit of God's blessings to others!

132:16 – *“I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.”* God will clothe us with His salvation (Isa. 61:10). God is able to save us to the uttermost, as we read in Hebrews 7:25: *“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”* God desires to make us spiritual priests after the order of Melchizedek (see Psalm 110; Hebrews 7).

132:17 – *“There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.”* The Lord promises to make the horn of David bud (cf. Lk. 1:69). Obviously, this has a natural application for the natural descendants of David, but it also has an application for us as believers. Those who are of the spiritual seed of David and have a heart after God's own heart will bring forth new life. Our light will shine forth under a fresh anointing.

132:18 – *“His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.”* This psalm concludes with a triumphant note of victory declaring that David's enemies will be covered with shame, while his crown will flourish. God will also destroy our enemies and cause us to flourish.

PSALM 133



After we have come to spiritual Mount Zion in our journey, we then enter into the fourteenth step, which is the precious unity of the brethren. Unity is a very rare thing, even in the Church. Believers can never seem to see “eye to eye” on so many issues, but everyone who dwells in Zion is in unity with each other.

This is clearly seen in Isaiah 52:8: *“Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.”*

True unity of the brethren will only be experienced as the Church comes to spiritual Mount Zion in the last days. Many years ago the Lord gave me a vision in which He clearly showed me that the Church would divide in the last days. The one part of the Church would ascend up to spiritual Mount Zion and the other part would completely backslide.

God spoke to me that one of the issues that would divide the Church would be divorce and remarriage. Regretfully, I must say, this has already happened, with the majority of the Church embracing something that is clearly forbidden in Scripture. Make no mistake about it—the whole Church will never come to unity of the faith as long as there are those in the Church who do not accept all of God’s Word.

Everyone desires to have unity, but at what cost? There is a large ecumenical movement sweeping the world today. Many churches and denominations have agreed to disagree over God's Word. I have just come back from visiting several churches in two European nations, and I have seen the same thing taking place in both nations. The Pentecostal churches have made alliances with evangelical churches, agreeing to lower their standards on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.

This, I must say, is an abomination to God! It is not time for Pentecostal churches compromise their beliefs in order to be accepted by the evangelical churches. No, it is time for Pentecostal churches to stand up for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and show the world what God can do through a church that is anointed and full of the power of the Holy Spirit.

A Song of degrees of David

133:1-3 - *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.”* Perhaps as no other portion of Scripture, this psalm expresses the unity of the brethren. It shows us the way to true unity.

The road to unity is not an easy one, beloved. As we have seen from previous psalms, before we can reach unity, we must experience distress and contention (Psalm 120), and the

deep valleys of despair and heart searching (Psalm 129). Finally, in Psalm 132 we have arrived at the summit of Mount Zion, where we experience the unity of the brethren (Psalm 133).

Christians who stop along the journey and camp around an experience lower down the mountain never experience the true unity of the brethren, because it exists in its full strength and power only upon spiritual Mount Zion. It is reserved for those who are just and whose spirits have been made perfect (Heb. 12:23).

The unity of the brethren is likened to the precious ointment that was poured upon the head and garments of Aaron, the high priest (Ex. 30:30). The constituents of this ointment show us the qualities that must be evident in our lives in order for us to enter into the unity of the brethren.

The ingredients of the ointment are found in Exodus 30:23-25: *“Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.”*

The five main components of the ointment were:

1. Myrrh
2. Cinnamon
3. Calamus
4. Cassia
5. Olive oil

The spiritual interpretation of the first three ingredients of the ointment can be obtained by comparing Song of Solomon 4:12-14, which lists the nine plants and spices in the garden (heart) of the Bride of Christ, and Galatians 5:22-23, which enumerates the nine fruits of the Spirit that God desires to cultivate in the garden of our hearts. Thus myrrh represents meekness, cinnamon typifies goodness, and calamus represents gentleness.

Meekness is the strength of character to accept everything that comes our way as coming from the Lord. It is the virtue that enables us not to retaliate when people attack us. It is best portrayed by the Lamb of God, of whom we read in Isaiah 53:7, *“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”*

Goodness is the quality of being good and incapable of doing evil to anyone. On one occasion, the Lord appeared to me and said, “Touch me; I am altogether good.” He is the Good Shepherd and is full of goodness (Ex. 34:6). We want to be filled with goodness as well.

Gentleness is a precious virtue. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, “*But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.*” Paul uses a nurse to illustrate the virtue of gentleness. David said in Psalm 18:35, “*Thy gentleness hath made me great.*” Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:24 that the servant of the Lord should be “gentle unto all men.”

The fourth ingredient, cassia, represents *humility* in Scripture. Humility can be illustrated by the attitude of a slave toward his master. He is nothing and has nothing, and his whole life depends upon the will of his master. This is the attitude that we should have toward the Lord, depending upon Him for everything.

Humility is necessary in order to have unity with others, because unless we have the humility of heart to prefer others before ourselves, we will strive with each other. Paul said in Philippians 2:3, “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*”

Olive oil was the fifth ingredient in the ointment. Olive oil has been a symbol of peace in Scripture since the time when the dove brought back an olive branch to Noah (Gen. 8:11). The olive branch today is a universal sign of peace. There are two aspects of divine peace: having peace with God (meaning our sins are forgiven), and having the peace of God (which covers us like a canopy). However, peace also speaks of being at one with those around us, not hav-

ing any hard feelings or offences toward others.

In summary, the spiritual interpretation of the five ingredients of the ointment shows us the way to unity of the brethren:

1. **Myrrh** speaks of *meekness*
2. **Cinnamon** speaks of *goodness*
3. **Calamus** speaks of *gentleness*
4. **Cassia** speaks of *humility*
5. **Olive oil** speaks of *peace*

In order to experience true unity of the brethren, to its fullest extent, these five virtues must be worked out in our lives. Therefore, let us seek to cultivate these five virtues in our hearts: meekness, goodness, gentleness, humility, and peace.

In verse 2, unity of the brethren is compared to the precious ointment that was poured on Aaron's head and flowed down his whole body to the bottom of his garments. In other words, he was completely immersed in the ointment, which represents the anointing (Jas. 5:4). The Lord Jesus Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure (Jn. 3:34). We should cry out to the Lord to completely immerse in the anointing of His Holy Spirit.

There is another spiritual analogy that we can draw from this verse. Aaron the High Priest can represent Christ, who is the High Priest of our faith (Heb. 3:1). Jesus is also the Head of the Church, which is His Body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23).

The precious ointment was poured upon Aaron's head and flowed down to the bottom of his garments, covering his whole body.

This speaks of the fact that Jesus, the Head, was anointed, and that the Lord wants the whole Body of Christ to be anointed with that same anointing. The ointment flowed even to the bottom of Aaron's garments, which represents the end of the Church Age and the Last Day Church. The Church of Christ is finally going to come to true unity in these last days and experience the greatest worldwide revival and harvest of all time.

133:3 – *“As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”* Unity of the brethren is compared to the dew that descended upon Mount Hermon and Mount Zion. The Lord pours out His Spirit in abundance when we dwell in unity with our brethren. God's blessing comes upon those who are dwelling in unity upon spiritual Mount Zion.

Christ Jesus prayed that the Church would come to unity in John 17:21-23: *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know*

that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” The Lord’s desire is that His people will dwell in unity, for it is as we are one in the Lord that we can reach perfection and be “perfect in one.”

PSALM 134



We have finally come to the fifteenth and final Song of Degrees. It is the final step in the spiritual journey that began in Psalm 120. Notice that the Songs of Degrees begin in Psalm 120 with the believer in distress and they end in Psalm 134 with the believer dwelling in spiritual Mount Zion, having unity with the brethren and experiencing the Lord's abundant blessings.

This is God's desire for your life, dear reader. He wants to take you through the trials, sufferings, and valleys of this life and bring you to spiritual Mount Zion, where He can pour out all of His blessings upon you.

You will also notice that along this journey, there will little showers of blessings, as it were, along the way, but they were temporary or incomplete. But here upon Mount Zion in Psalm 134, the believer enters into all of God's blessings.

A Song of degrees

134:1-3 – *“Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD. The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.”* Spiritual Mount Zion is the place of continual blessing. The

blessings of God “overtake” us, as we are told in Deuteronomy 28:2.

Psalm 24:5 makes it very clear that we will be blessed by the Lord as we ascend spiritual Zion: *“He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”* There is a promise given in Proverbs 10:22 that is very precious: *“The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.”* There is a time when God pours out His blessings upon us and there is no sorrow added with them.

It is upon spiritual Mount Zion, the Lord’s dwelling place, that the Lord has commanded His blessings, even life for evermore, to come upon us (Psa. 133:3). The Lord blesses us “out of Zion” (Psa. 134:3). It is upon Mount Zion, when we are dwelling in unity with our brethren, that we enter into all the blessings that are pronounced in Deuteronomy 28:1-4 upon all those who diligently obey the voice of the Lord. We quote these blessings now for you:

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou

be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I com-

mand thee this day, to observe and to do them: And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to enumerate again the fifteen steps in our spiritual journey that are portrayed in the Songs of Degrees from Psalm 120 to Psalm 134.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Step 1 | Distress |
| Step 2 | Help |
| Step 3 | The House of the Lord |
| Step 4 | Mercy |
| Step 5 | God's deliverance |
| Step 6 | Trust |
| Step 7 | The turning of our captivity |
| Step 8 | The Lord builds us up |
| Step 9 | Peace |
| Step 10 | The vicarious sufferings of Christ |
| Step 11 | A valley experience and fresh cleansing |
| Step 12 | Humility |
| Step 13 | We are brought to Mount Zion |
| Step 14 | Unity of the brethren |
| Step 15 | Continual blessing upon Mount Zion |

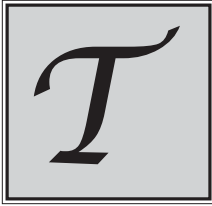
The beautiful thing about our walk with the Lord and spiritual journey is that the Lord has a special plan for each of our

lives. Each of us will experience different things, but God is working out the same truths in all of our lives. Where are you on this journey, beloved? Are you experiencing distress, or are you going through a valley experience? Do not give up, because the Lord wants to take you on to blessing. Trials do not last forever; they have a predetermined time to end. The Lord said in Jeremiah 29:11, *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”*

The important thing to understand is that you need to catch the vision for spiritual Mount Zion. We read of the importance of an ongoing vision in Proverbs 29:18: *“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (KJV)*. A more accurate translation of this verse from the original Hebrew is: *“Where there is no progressive vision, the people dwell carelessly and cast off all restraint.”*

If we do not have a vision for where we are going, we can become easily discouraged along life’s journey and even give up. But when we know that all of the things God brings into our lives are for the purpose of taking us on to Zion, we do not give up so easily. When you face hardship, beloved, remember that it is only a stepping-stone to take you higher in God and lead you to continual blessing!

PSALM 135



his psalm has no superscription, but it is generally believed that it was written for Temple services. This would place its composition at the time of the Restoration Era. It has been described as Mosaic, since it is a composite of thoughts and truths expressed by other psalms, as well as material gathered from the Law, the Prophets and the Historical books.

The Holy Spirit uses repetition in various portions of Scripture to emphasize certain truths. Psalm 135 is one of the Hallelujah Psalms, although it is not placed in the same series as the others.

There are no particular divisions in this psalm, so we will study it as a whole, looking at it as one spontaneous prophetic exhortation to praise the Lord.

135:1-3 – *“Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD. Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God, Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.”* In these opening verses, we see a similarity to the preceding psalm, but with structural differences. It is a general exhortation to the servants of the Lord to praise Him in song, for His goodness and loveliness.

It is so wonderful to have a personal revelation of the goodness and loveliness of our blessed Lord Jesus. When we praise for His goodness and loveliness, those virtues will be imparted to us. The purpose of life is to become more and more like Jesus, and we become more like Him as we praise and worship Him.

135:4 – *“For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.”* Here the psalmist encourages the faithful by reminding them that the Lord’s hand is upon them and that they are God’s nation.

Therefore, they can approach Him with confidence, knowing that they are His treasure and that He watches over them continually, even as a man carefully watches over his valuables.

135:5 – *“For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.”* In the generation in which this psalm was composed, the children of Israel had just returned from Babylonian captivity, where God cleansed the Israelites of idolatry. The Lord is greater than every god and idol.

135:6 – *“Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.”* We are told in Psalm 104:24 that the Lord formed the world and the heavens above through wisdom: “O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.” The Lord does everything according to His good pleasure (see Eph. 1:5,9; Phil. 2:13; Rev. 4:11).

135:7 – “*He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.*” This passage is very similar to the eulogies of the greatness of God in creation in Job 36:26-29: “Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out. For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof: Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly. Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?”

When we contemplate God’s creation, we are breathless in wonder and adoration of the marvels of His power, wisdom, and knowledge. In so doing, we can gain confidence and trust in the Lord that He will do all things for us as we humbly beseech Him. He makes all things beautiful in His time (Eccl. 3:11).

135:8-9 – “*Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast. Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.*” Now the psalmist is recounting the wonders of God’s judgments upon the Egyptians. He manifested His power through the ten plagues at the time of the Exodus. These judgments caused the heathen that inhabited the land of Canaan to tremble when the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River under the direction of Joshua.

Rahab declared in Joshua 2:9-11: “*I know that the LORD hath*

given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.”

In the following verses, the psalmist recalls the nations that God destroyed, thus enabling the Israelites to possess the Promised Land.

135:10-11 - *“Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings; Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan.”* These first two kings ruled over nations on the east side of the Jordan River (see Num. 21:21-35; Deut. 1:4). The tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh settled in this region (Num. 32:33). Israel’s conquest of the kingdoms of the Canaanites is described in the books of Joshua and Judges.

135:12 - *“And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.”* Although the Lord had given the Promised Land to the Israelites as an inheritance, it was no easy task to conquer it and dispossess the nations dwelling therein. When Joshua died, there was still much land to be conquered

(Josh. 13:1). It was not until the time of David that the whole land the Lord had promised to Abraham was subdued.

135:13 - *“Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations”* This is a quotation from Exodus 3:15, where God said to Moses, “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” The Lord’s name is Jehovah, meaning, *I AM THAT I AM*, and it is a memorial for all generations of God’s faithfulness. God will bring to pass everything He has promised Israel and us, beloved.

135:14 – *“For the LORD will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.”* This is a reference to the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:36, where we read, *“For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.”* The Lord in this passage is saying that He would scatter the Israelites if they sinned. However, after He scattered them, He would deliver them from the hand of their heathen enemies, who have trusted in other gods.

However, the ultimate fulfillment of this passage is the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This can be verified from Deuteronomy 32:39-43: *“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound,*

and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.”

135:15 – *“The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands.”* The Lord denounces idolatry, for idols are the works of men’s hands (Isa. 37:19). This verse also has a prophetic connotation of the Second Coming, as seen from Deuteronomy 32:37, *“And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted.”* This will be the Lord’s challenge to the heathen nations when He descends in the clouds to deliver Jerusalem.

135:16-18 – *“They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.”* This passage is similar to Psalm 115:4-8.

In Isaiah 44:9-12, we see the utter folly and stupidity of worshipping idols. *“They that make a graven image are all of*

them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together; let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.”

Isaiah describes how people takes a piece of wood and uses part of it for firewood and part of it to bake food. Then he makes an idol out of the remaining wood and worships it. *“The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh*

a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god” (Isa. 44:13-17).

In Isaiah 44:18-20, we see why people worship idols: *“They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?”* People worship idols and false gods because their hearts are deceived and they do not love the truth.

We must always remember that in the last days the unholy trinity (composed of Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet) will promote idolatry. Those who do not know the Lord will become idolaters. Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians 2:10 that all those who do not love the truth will be deceived and will follow the Antichrist. This is the reason for the repeated challenge to those who practice paganism and idolatry.

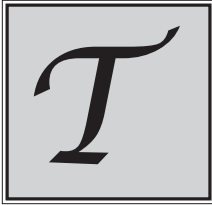
135:19-21 – *“Bless the LORD, O house of Israel: bless the LORD, O house of Aaron: Bless the LORD, O house of Levi:*

ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD. Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.”

In conclusion, the psalmist exhorts his readers to bless the only true God who made heaven and earth. May our mouths and hearts be continually filled with blessing and praise to our most marvellous Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our Heavenly Father, and the blessed Holy Spirit. We should make blessing the Lord a habit and way of life. Let us conclude this meditation by verbalizing these last three verses, for in so doing, we will glorify the Holy Trinity.

Let us also remember that our spiritual goal is Mount Zion, the place of God’s habitation, the mountain of His holiness, and His tabernacle. Praise the Lord for ever and ever!

PSALM 136



his psalm is called *The Great Hallel*, distinct from Psalms 113-118, which are called *The Hallel*. The composition of this psalm is distinct. It could easily be arranged so that the two lines of the verses are each in separate columns. The refrain runs throughout the whole of the psalm and is always the same.

It is indeed possible that the first line of each verse was sung by an individual and the second line was sung by the congregation.

The King James Version scholars translated the refrain as “*for His mercy endureth forever.*” The Hebrew word, translated “*mercy*” in the KJV, is “*cheded.*” Translators have agreed that “*cheded*” is very difficult to translate into English or any other language with one single word.

It is a word that implies the loving nature of God. Others suggest fidelity, loyalty, and even covenant faithfulness, which some scholars feel comes closer to catching the real flavor of the Hebrew.

I have chosen the word “loving-kindness,” because I believe it is easier to understand in the colloquial language of our times. For my commentary on this psalm, I have used a vari-

ety of the words used to translate the Hebrew word “*cheched*.” I have done this to bring out more clearly the sense of the refrain with respect to the first line to which it is joined.

The name of the composer of this psalm is not given, but we know that it was sung in the Temple of Solomon (2 Chron. 7:3,6), and also at the time when Jehoshaphat went into battle (2 Chron. 20:21). We can easily divide this hymn of praise into five sections:

1. A threefold summons to give thanks to the triune God (vs. 1-3)
2. Praise to God in creation (vs. 4-9)
3. The Lord’s care for Israel as a nation in its formative years (vs. 10-15)
4. Through the wilderness into the Promised Land (vs. 16-24)
5. God the Provider (vs. 25-26)

***1. A threefold summons to give thanks
to the triune God (vs. 1-3)***

136:1 - “*O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” In this opening verse, the Lord is called “*Jehovah*,” meaning the eternal and everlasting God (Ex. 6:3; Psa. 83:18).

136:2 - “*O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” Here the Hebrew word is “*Elohiym*,”

which is the plural form of “*El*.” It refers to the Godhead.

136:3 - “*O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” Here the Hebrew word for “Lord” is “*Adonai*,” meaning “Lord, Master, Sovereign or the One who is in complete control.” In other words, He is the One unto whom we all must submit.

2. Praise to God in creation (vs. 4-9)

136:4 - “*To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” As we contemplate the wonders of creation from a scientific viewpoint, we cannot help but be overwhelmed at the greatness of God, as was Solomon, who said in Ecclesiastes 11:5, “*As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.*” How can mortal man understand the vastness and the intricacies of God’s creation?

136:5 - “*To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” Having had a personal vision and revelation of our Lord Jesus as the personification of wisdom, I stand in awe at His knowledge and wisdom, whereby He has created all things. We read in Proverbs 8:27, “*When he prepared the heavens, I was there...*” Jeremiah the prophet said, “*He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion*” (Jer. 10:12).

Paul states concerning Christ our Lord in Colossians 1:15-17: *“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”*

Everything that God has made keeps to its molecular structure by the power of Christ. The stars keep to their courses. As we shall see in the following verses, all of creation has its appointed boundaries.

136:6 - *“To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* This refers to the third day of creation. We read in Genesis 1:9-10: *“And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.”*

The Lord said in Job 38:11, *“Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”* Also, we read in Job 26:10, *“He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.”*

136:7 - *“Made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* We read in Genesis 1:2-4: *“And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And*

the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.” The earth became full of darkness because of the rebellion of the previous creation. Then God said, “Let there be light.”

136:8 - *“The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* We read in Genesis 1:14-19: *“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”* God created the sun, moon, and stars to divide the day from the night.

The sun is a symbol of Christ, who is called the Sun of Righteousness in Malachi 4:2. We also read in Psalm 19:4-6: *“Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it:*

and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” The sun is compared to a man who is a husband and the provider of all things for his family, bringing light and strength into their lives.

136:9 - *“The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* The moon, which is governed by a monthly cycle, typifies a woman who reflects the glory of her husband, as the moon reflects the light of the sun.

The moon also depicts the Church, the Bride of Christ, whose purpose is to glorify her Heavenly Bridegroom, and reflect His virtues and attributes, for she has no light of her own.

The stars are likened to the righteous in Daniel 12:3: *“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”*

The whole account of creation, both in Genesis and in this psalm, utterly refutes the theory of evolution, which has no scientific basis whatsoever. In fact, the Huxley family, which propagated Darwinism with such alacrity during the nineteenth century in England, admitted that they did so to ease their conscience over their immoral life-style.

Incidentally, there are no evolutionist dogmas in hell. Everyone in hell knows that they are enduring the pangs of eternal torture as a just recompense for their sins.

**3. The Lord's care for Israel as a nation in
its formative years (vs. 10-15)**

136:10 - *“To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* Here the word “*cheched*” could be translated perhaps best as “the covenant faithfulness of God,” because the Lord remembered the covenant He had made with Abraham and delivered the children of Israel from Egypt.

It was because of His covenant that He heard the cry of the children of Israel while they were under Egyptian bondage and slew the firstborn of the Egyptians (Ex. 12:29; Num. 3:13; 8:17; Psa. 78:51; 135:8).

136:11 - *“And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* God manifested His great power in signs and wonders because of His love for Israel and brought them out of Egypt. In essence, this is what the Lord has done for us. He has taken us out of the kingdom of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13).

136:12 - *“With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* That display of God's awesome power and goodness was not just directed against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but also against the gods of the Egyptians. We read in Exodus 12:12, *“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.”*

136:13 - *“To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* The crossing of the Red Sea was a miracle of God’s power and mercy (see Psa. 78:13). It is also a symbol of water baptism (1 Cor. 10:2). After leaving Egypt, which is a type of the world, we must then in obedience to God follow the Lord Jesus Christ into the waters of baptism (Mt. 3:13-15).

Passing through the Red Sea separated the children of Israel from Egypt, which was the domain of Satan. It brought them into a life led and directed by God. Paul describes it thusly in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4: *“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”*

136:14 - *“And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* In passing through the Red Sea on dry land, we have another spiritual truth that is developed in Isaiah 43:16: *“Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters.”*

The Lord indeed makes a way where there is no way. Therefore, we should be encouraged, beloved, when we see impossible barriers before us, for the same Lord who opened up the Red Sea is able to do the same for us. Never give up hope!

136:15 - *“But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* With this miracle, there followed the destruction of the enemy. God is also able to release us from the oppression of our enemies. Praise His matchless name!

**4. *Through the wilderness into the
Promised Land (vs. 16-24)***

136:16 - *“To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* After the Red Sea, which represents water baptism, the Lord led the children of Israel to Mount Sinai and then into the wilderness. The children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai in the third month, which is the month of the Feast of Pentecost. We know that it was on Pentecost that the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. That is why the baptism of the Holy Spirit is known as “the Pentecostal experience.”

Thus we can see that God wants to bring us into these same experiences in our spiritual journey. After salvation from the world (Egypt), water baptism (the crossing of the Red Sea), and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Mount Sinai), the Lord will lead us into the wilderness. It was the same in the life of the Lord Jesus.

In Matthew 3:13-17, Jesus was baptized in water by John and then was anointed by the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Him in the form of a dove. After this, Jesus went into the

wilderness to be tested by the devil for forty days. We read in Matthew 4:1-2: *“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.”* It was the Holy Spirit who led the Lord Jesus into the wilderness and was with Him for forty days. These forty days are analogous to the forty years that the Israelites spent in the wilderness.

The purpose of the wilderness is seen in Deuteronomy 8:2: *“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.”*

The purpose of the wilderness is to humble us, prove us, and see whether or not we will obey the Lord. It is a test of obedience. Therefore, God will also take you through a wilderness in your life to test you, beloved. The goal of the wilderness is to cause us to come out leaning upon the Lord (Song. 8:5).

136:17 - *“To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever.”* In order to give them the inheritance that He had promised to Abraham, the Lord, first of all, had to remove the kings that were in the path of His people en route to the land of Canaan.

136:18 - *“And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for*

ever.” It was the Lord’s “*checed*”—covenant faithfulness—to the patriarchs that caused Him to slay these famous kings.

136:19 - “*Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” The Amorites, history tells us, were centered in Babylon. Their most famous king was Hamurabbi, known for his code of government and justice. They later migrated to the land of Canaan, as we see in Genesis 14, which tells us that Abraham was a friend of Mamre the Amorite.

Sihon, the king of the Amorites, had captured Ar of Moab and the lands of the Moabites. He refused passage to the children of Israel when they were en route to the Promised Land (Num. 21:21-35). God hardened Sihon’s heart so that he did not let Israel pass through. Then God destroyed him (Deut. 2:30).

136:20 - “*And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” Bashan was located in northern Palestine, east of the Jordan River. It was an extremely fertile land. After the defeat of Og, Bashan was given to Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh for their inheritance, along with the land of the Amorites (Num. 32:33).

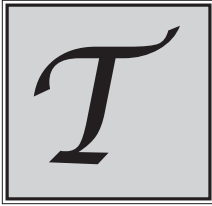
136:21-24 - “*And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever. Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever. Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever. And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” Thus

this section ends with the thought of God faithfully fulfilling His promises to His chosen people. He went before them and caused them to enter into their inheritance, defeating all their enemies.

5. *God the Provider (vs. 25-26)*

136:25-26 – *“Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy [or love] endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy [or love] endureth for ever.”* The Lord is the Creator of heaven and earth and He provides and cares for every creature, humans and animals alike. We should pray to Him, “Father, give us this day our daily bread.” May we meditate often on this psalm and continually give thanks to the Lord for His great mercy and loving-kindness toward us!

PSALM 137



his psalm was written while the Jews were in Babylonian Captivity (605-536/535 B.C.). Babylon fell to the Medo-Persian army, under the direction of Cyrus, in 539 B.C. Darius the Mede reigned for about three years, and then when Cyrus became king, he released the Jews to return to Jerusalem. While the Israelites were in captivity, they would often contemplate their Holy City with a great longing in their hearts to be back in their homeland.

This plaintive ode burns with the fires of righteous indignation against the cruel Chaldean captors. Remembering that this is divinely inspired, we must also see the Lord's anger toward Babylon, who showed no mercy to young and old alike when they completely destroyed Jerusalem.

Psalm 137 can be divided naturally into four sections:

1. The Weeping Captives (vs.1-4)
2. Commitment of faithfulness to Jerusalem (vs. 5-6)
3. The prayer against Edom (v. 7)
4. The destruction of Babylon contemplated (vs. 8-9)

Part 1

137:1 - *“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we*

wept, when we remembered Zion.” Ancient Babylon was divided in two by the Euphrates River. The eastern section, with the “Summer Palace” to the north, was enclosed by a triangular defensive system of walls running over eight miles from the Euphrates. There were also many man-made irrigation canals. By these irrigation canals, little groups of Jews would gather for prayer and to reminisce over years past when they were in their beloved city of Jerusalem.

They obviously spent much time weeping for their homeland, which they had been scattered from because of their sins. Devout Christians today weep over the sorry state of the Church, which is very far from the pinnacle of God’s power and glory.

137:2 – *“We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.”* The willow tree, with its drooping branches, has long been a symbol of weeping. Willow trees are even called “weeping willows.” This little verse poetically depicts the sorrow of the Jews. They hung up their harps, which were used for joyful expressions of worship, because they no longer had joy.

137:3 – *“For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”* I suppose the Babylonians could be compared to impious drunkards in taverns today. The Babylonians obviously did not care about the feelings of the Jews. All they wanted was for the Jews to sing and play songs that would make them happy. The Babylonians

did not understand the spiritual purpose of the songs of Zion, which was to praise and glorify the Lord.

137:4 – *“How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”* This too has a spiritual lesson for our own days. If we are in some form of spiritual or natural bondage, we must await our day of deliverance.

Part 2

137:5-6 – *“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning [or skill]. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”*” The Jews were surrounded by all the splendors of the pagan city of Babylon, which had all the comforts that a person could have desired in those days.

The Greek historian Herodotus said that Babylon surpassed all of the ancient cities in splendor and greatness. However, the hearts of the pious Jews did not desire any of these vanities, for their thoughts and meditations were on their capital city, Jerusalem. The devout Jews had a deep respect and love for Jerusalem that nothing could diminish, not even captivity.

In Hebrews 11:24-27, we read of Moses’ desire to be with his people, the Israelites, rather than enjoy all the pleasures of Egypt: *“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter;*

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”

As we have said in previous psalms, Jerusalem represents the Church. Therefore, let us set our heart upon the Church and not on the pleasures of this world. The Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus, should be our chief joy.

Part 3

137:7 – *“Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof.”* The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob (Gen. 25:30; 36:8). Therefore, they were relatives of the Israelites. They should have had a loving concern for the welfare of Jerusalem, but instead they desired to see it destroyed.

We read in Obadiah 1:10-14 concerning the Edomites hateful attitude toward the Israelites: *“For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldst*

not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldst not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; Neither shouldst thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldst thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.”

Thus the Jews are asking God to remember the attitude of their vengeful relatives, the Edomites, and punish them. We read of the judgment that will come upon Edom in Isaiah 63:1-6: *“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make*

them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.”

The Lord will punish the Edomites with great wrath when He returns at His Second Coming, as we see also in Isaiah 34:5-6: *“For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea”* (see also Jer. 49:7-22).

Part 4

137:8 – *“O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.”* While in captivity, the Jews prayed that the Lord would destroy Babylon, even as Isaiah had prophesied (Isa. 13) and Jeremiah had spoken of (Jer. 50). Babylon was indeed destroyed in October of 539 B.C. by the Medes and Persians. However, this verse also speaks of a future judgment upon Babylon.

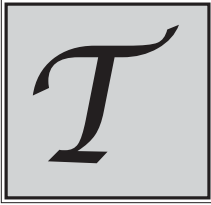
In order to understand the future of Babylon, we must understand its history. Babylon was built by Nimrod after the Flood, as we read in Genesis 10:8-10: *“And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the*

mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.” Nimrod was a rebel, and his city soon became the center of witchcraft and Satanic mysteries, from which virtually all pagan religions have their source.

We clearly see in the book of Revelation that Babylon will rise again in the last days. It will be the capital city of the Antichrist and the center of wickedness in the last days. Then it will be judged by the Lord and receive its final judgment, which is eternal damnation. All heaven will rejoice when God judges Babylon, as we read in Revelation 19:1-2: *“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.”*

137:9 – *“Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.”* The psalmist says that the Lord will rejoice when He destroys the children of the Babylonians. This might sound cruel to some, but the death of the children of the wicked would reduce the population of Babylon and thus reduce the number of people who would commit evil. God is just and all heaven will rightfully rejoice at the final fall of Babylon, recorded in Revelation 18. Let us give thanks to the Lord for His righteous judgments upon those who have performed so much evil upon the earth.

PSALM 138



his precious little psalm of praise is attributed to David. Nonetheless, some scholars have challenged its authorship because the author speaks of the holy Temple. The Temple of Solomon was not built until after David's death. However, there is no need to assume that the author is speaking of the Temple of Solomon.

It is quite likely David was speaking of the Holy Temple in heaven. This view is valid in view of the fact that David says in verse 1, "*Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.*"

This is referring to the angels, not heathen gods because no saint would have set foot in a heathen temple to worship the Lord.

This psalm can be divided into four parts:

1. Praising the Lord for His lovingkindness and truth (vs. 1-3)
2. The kings of the earth shall praise the Lord (vs. 4-5)
3. The humility of the Lord (vs. 6)
4. Help in the midst of trouble (vs. 7-8)

*1. Praising the Lord for His lovingkindness
and truth (vs. 1-3)*

138:1 – *“I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.”* In this opening phrase, there is a very important spiritual truth. Praising the Lord is not merely a vocal exercise, but rather one of adulation that comes from the very heart of the believer. In order to truly glorify the Lord, praise should come from a heart set free from sin and other attachments of this world.

Praising the Lord “before the gods” in this verse applies to praising the Lord before the *angels*. The angels of God often join us in worshipping the Lord, both in personal and corporate times of worship. Many of you have probably had visions of angels worshipping the Lord while you were in church.

The use of the word “gods” here can also refer to the saints of God, as we read in John 10:34: *“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?”* Our high and holy calling is to become like our God, the Lord Jesus. In that sense, and only in that sense, are we called gods. May we walk worthy of our calling (2 Thess. 1:11).

138:2 - *“I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.”* The thought of worshipping toward the holy temple is associated with the presence of God. This is expressed in many of the psalms. It

was the delight of the pious Jews to look toward Jerusalem, and in particular, to the Temple in later years after its construction by King Solomon.

The reason for praise is stated here, namely that our Lord is a God of “*cheched*,” which is here translated as “lovingkindness,” and in Psalm 136 as “mercy.” As we have already noted in our comments on Psalm 136, the Hebrew word “*cheched*” is very difficult to translate into another language with one word. Let me simply say here that we should praise the Lord because of His sincere love and solicitous thoughts toward us.

Also, David praises the Lord for His truth. When we are surrounded at times those who are deceitful, how refreshing it is to fellowship with the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Jn. 14:6). Praise the Lord! Paul said, “*Let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Rom. 3:4).

The next phrase is of prime importance. The Lord has magnified His Word above His name. That means that His Word is above everything else. Jesus is the Word made flesh (Jn. 1:14). Therefore, above all, let us seek to love and cherish God’s Word and faithfully preach the whole Word of God to others (Acts 20:27).

138:3 – “*In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.*” Another beautiful truth is that the Lord heard David’s prayers and strengthened him. Paul found his source of strength in the Lord as

well, saying in Philippians 4:13: *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”* Let us wait on the Lord, for those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength as the eagles’ (Isa. 40:31).

2. The kings of the earth shall praise the Lord (138:4-5)

138:4 – *“All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.”* In a sense, this phrase is Messianic since it will be fulfilled when the Lord returns again. However, it also applies to the time of Solomon when all the kings of the earth came to hear the wisdom of the Lord from his lips (1 Kgs. 4:34).

138:5 – *“Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.”* This means that the kings of the earth will worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth. They will praise Him in an acceptable manner.

This beautiful little phrase, *“They shall sing in the ways of the Lord,”* speaks of singing to the Lord with a knowledge of His ways. We read in Psalm 103:7, *“He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.”*

In this verse we see that the prophet Moses knew the ways of God, while of the children of Israel merely saw His acts, but did not have an understanding of His ways. It is a blessed privilege to know the ways of God so that we know how to please Him.

3. *The humility of the Lord (138:6)*

138:6 – *“Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.”* One of the amazing attributes of the Lord is His humility. This is expressed so poignantly in Isaiah 57:15, *“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”* May we likewise seek to be clothed with the Lord’s humility and have respect even to the lowliest of all.

4. *Help in the midst of trouble (138:7-8)*

138:7 – *“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.”* Job said, *“Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward”* (Job 5:7). We cannot escape this life without experiencing trouble in one form or another. The sooner we accept this fact, the easier it will be to endure trials.

However, in the midst of trouble, we must turn to the Lord for help, knowing that He is there to deliver us from all our trials. Trials have many purposes, but there is one salient blessing that is true for them all. Trials cause us to draw closer to our blessed Lord, causing to know Him in a more intimate and loving way. Trials also purify us and make us more like Jesus,

which is the purpose of life. When God has delivered us from our trial, we can look back and say that it was well worth it because of the blessings that ensued.

138:8 – *“The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.”* David concludes this psalm by confidently stating that the Lord will perfect (or complete) the work he had started in him. This verse is reminiscent of Philippians 1:6, where Paul declares, *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*

The last phrase of David’s prayer, *“Forsake not the works of thine own hands,”* evokes the memory of Moses’ plea in Psalm 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.”* May God do so for each and every one of us, beloved!

PSALM 139



Although contested, the authorship of this psalm should be attributed to King David. The depth of understanding of God's works could come from none other than the pen of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel.

This psalm can be divided into four parts:

1. The Omniscient and Omnipresent God (vs. 1-12)
2. The origin of man (vs. 13-18)
3. David's hatred of the wicked (vs. 19-22)
4. A closing prayer for a clean heart (vs. 23-24)

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David

1. The Omniscient and Omnipresent God (vs. 1-12)

139:1 - "*O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.*"

This opening phrase is the major theme of the psalm. We should expose our hearts to the Lord and ask Him to see if there be any wicked way in us.

We need to spend time in God's presence, waiting for Him to show us anything in our lives that is displeasing to Him, both great and small. At times, while we are reading the Word of God, the Holy Spirit can quicken a passage to us that convicts us of something in our lives.

139:2 - *“Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.”* David reveals how all-knowing (omniscient) our Heavenly Father is concerning even the minutest aspects of our lives. Even our thoughts are known and recorded in heaven.

Seeking to impress upon us that the Father knows all of our needs, Jesus said in Matthew 6:31-32, *“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”*

139:3 - *“Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.”* The Lord knows when we get up, when we go out, and when we go to bed. Our angels are also watching over us at all times.

139:4 - *“For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.”* The Lord hears every word we speak. That is why the Lord said in Matthew 12:36, *“That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”*

139:5 - *“Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.”* The sense here is that the Lord envelops us so that there is nothing that we do that He is not aware of. The complete knowledge that God has of mortal man is phenomenal. Nothing is hidden from Him. David also said that the

Lord had laid His hand upon him. The Lord puts His hand upon our lives to steer us in the path of righteousness and to cause us to walk in His ways.

139:6 - *“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.”* We cannot comprehend why the Lord is so mindful and particular of us. David said in Psalm 8:4, *“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”*

Incidentally, this quotation is inscribed on one of the entrances to the colleges at Harvard University for all who pass through those august portals to contemplate.

139:7 - *“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?”* David soliloquizes over the fact that God is everywhere and that we cannot go anywhere where He will not be present. Paul said on Mars Hill, *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring”* (Acts 17:28).

139:8-10 - *“If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I 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.”* Heaven is God’s home and the place of His throne. In heaven, everyone does the will of the Father, as Jesus said in Matthew 6:10: *“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”*

David then goes on to speak about hell, where the damned dwell forever. God is also there, for He has determined the punishment of all the inmates who are banished there. There is literally no place in heaven, earth, or hell where God cannot be found.

I was told of a little four-year-old girl who says when she wakes up every morning: “Good morning, Jesus. Good morning, Daddy. Good morning, Mommy.” In other words, she is aware of the Lord’s ever-abiding presence from the moment she wakes up. We should cultivate the Lord’s wonderful presence every minute of the day as well.

139:11-12 - *“If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”* Even the darkest and foggiest night is no match for an airplane radar, which can see through anything. It is the same with the Lord—He can see everything. The darkness is no obstacle for Him.

Many years ago, I saw an angel standing above a traffic intersection in a certain city monitoring the traffic. As I looked at the angel in admiration, I began to see as the angel could see. I saw right through the nearby office buildings out to the other side of the buildings. I realized how naked and open everything is before the Lord and His angels. He sees everything; nothing is hidden from Him. Let us, therefore, walk in the fear of the Lord and never try to hide anything from the Lord.

3. *The Origin of Man (vs. 13-18)*

139:13 - *“For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb.”* One of the greatest challenges for medical science is to explain how a baby is formed in its mother’s womb.

This question was posed by the great and wise King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 11:5: *“As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.”* A challenge for veterinarians is recorded in Job 39:1: *“Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?”*

All of nature declares the greatness of the Lord, and we as humans understand so little. Therefore, we should adopt this attitude of humility, which is expressed by King David who was lost in rapturous admiration for our beloved Creator.

139:14-15 - *“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.”* The Lord watches over the formation of our body in our mother’s womb. As I contemplate the human body, I am enthralled by the finesse of its intricate structure, frail at times but resilient at other times. Only a brilliant and all-knowing Creator could have created mankind.

139:16 - *“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”* Before the foundation of the world, the Heavenly Father recorded in His books the physical measurements of each person. Christ formed us in our mother’s womb according to those measurements written in the books that are stored in heaven. We see, therefore, how intimately God is concerned with every detail of our life.

The Lord also said in Matthew 10:29-31: *“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”*

139:17-18 - *“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.”* This means that the Lord, like any natural father, and even more so, is constantly thinking about the welfare of His children. Night and day, the Lord watches over His own sons and daughters.

4. Prayer for the Overthrow of the Wicked (vs. 19-22)

139:19 - *“Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.”* As did David, the righteous have to contend with the wicked throughout their lives.

This is clearly brought out in 2 Timothy 3:12, where Paul said, “*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*” However, there is an appointed time for God to remove the wicked from the earth and from our lives, even by violent deaths at times.

139:20 - “*For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.*” The battle of the wicked against the righteous is ultimately a battle against God Himself, even as David now appeals to God. The wicked use the name of the Lord in vain by seeking to justify their evil works through quoting Scripture and obviously twisting its true meaning.

139:21-22 - “*Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*” There is a complete identification with the Lord in this situation. David says that he hates those who hate the Lord.

King Jehoshaphat was rebuked for his alliance with the ungodly King Ahab in 2 Chronicles 19:2: “*And Jehu the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.*” Therefore, we must abhor the wicked and not make alliances with them. We read in Psalm 45:7: “*Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy*

fellows.” We must love righteousness and hate wickedness and those who perform wickedness.

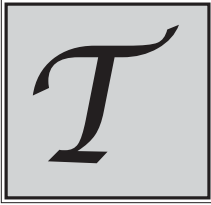
5. A Closing Prayer for a Clean Heart (vs. 23-24)

139:23 - *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts.”* David now returns to his opening theme of God’s all-searching eye that reveals everything that is within us. He beseeches the Lord to search his heart and mind, as He has in the past. Beloved, we cannot be complacent in the realm of personal purity, for it is an ongoing experience of being washed deeper and deeper.

139:24 - *“And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”* The goal of purification is given by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:26-27: *“That he [Christ] might sanctify and cleanse it [the Church] with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”*

In closing, let me just say that as you meditate often in this psalm, it will produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness in your life. Praise the Lord!

PSALM 140



he background to this psalm appears to be the time when David was fleeing from Saul. At that particular period in his life, David was not only preoccupied with Saul, who could be seen as “the violent man” in verse 1, but also with others who were seeking to take his life. We can narrow down the time frame of this psalm to the time when Doeg the Edomite tried to betray David to Saul.

The Chaldee version of Psalm 140 names both Doeg and Ahithophel, but there was a great difference in time between the two. Thus it seems likely that Psalm 140 was written around the same time as Psalm 52. Psalm 140 deals principally with the power of the tongue of the wicked and the Lord’s deliverance from their tongues.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David

140:1-2 - *“Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man; Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war.”* David prays for deliverance from the evil man, who could well be Doeg, and from the violent man, Saul. These men continually sought to make war against David.

140:3 - *“They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent;*

adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.” This is a very picturesque description of the tongues of the wicked. David likens their tongues to serpents' tongues. The serpent has the swiftest tongue of all creatures, according to naturalists. It rapidly appears and disappears, giving the impression of being sharpened. Adder's poison, which is fatal in about half of all cases, is attributed to the wicked, who use their tongues against the righteous to bring them down.

When I read the commentaries of many scholars on this passage, I was amazed how the fire concerning the tongues of the wicked flowed through their writings. It appears that the more devout a person is, the more he is persecuted by the wicked. We need to cry out as the psalmist did in Psalm 31:20, *“Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.”* The tongue of the wicked seeks to destroy the reputation of the righteous, crushing his work and then finally taking his life.

140:4 - *“Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.”* It is worthy of note that the wickedness of the wicked starts in the imaginations of their evil hearts. Then out of the abundance of their hearts, their tongues do spew out poison. The violent man also uses his hands to try to overthrow the righteous.

140:5 - *“The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they*

have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah.” The proud in heart have hid snares for the righteous. So often in their cruelty, the wicked seek to ensnare the righteous in some seemingly harmless activity that has an ulterior and unseen motive. The wicked seek to catch the righteous with their words, which they twist to their own advantage. They then accuse the righteous of saying falsehoods.

140:6-8 - *“I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD. O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle. Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah.”*

David prayed that the Lord would not grant the desires of the wicked, for fear that the wicked would exalt themselves. The danger to the righteous is always that the wicked will be placed in a position of authority. Proverbs 28:12 says, *“When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.”* We also read in Proverbs 29:2, *“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”*

140:9-10 - *“As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.”* David prays for the most awesome judgments to fall upon the wicked. He prays that they

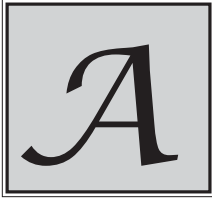
will be cast into the deep burning pits of hell and that they will not be able to rise again and harm the righteous.

140:11 - *“Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.”* David prays that evil speakers will not be established in the earth because he knows that if they are established, they will turn many to evil. We should pray as David did that the Lord will remove the wicked from the earth so that they are not able to turn the innocent away from the path of righteousness. In the Lord’s good time, the wicked will be destroyed by the very thing that they tried to use to destroy others.

140:12-13 - *“I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.”*

David foresees that the end of the matter is always good for the righteous. The Lord will hear the cause of the poor and the upright shall dwell in His presence. Oh, praise the Lord—the end is always good for the upright!

PSALM 141



As the psalm title states, Psalm 141 was written by David. In all probability, it was penned at the time when he was fleeing from Absalom. This seems to be substantiated by verse 2, where David prays that his prayers and the lifting up of his hands will be accepted by the Lord in place of the actual tabernacle sacrifices. He was unable to offer the sacrifices because he was far away from the sanctuary of God. This was a time of deep trouble in David's life when many were seeking to take his life. However, David looked to the Lord with confident hope and expectancy for His deliverance.

A Psalm of David

141:1 - "*LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.*" David prays that the Lord will hear his prayers and make haste to answer them. We must understand that many people pray, but God does not hear their prayers because they are not walking in obedience to Him (cf. Prov. 1:28-29).

It is amazing that David had such confidence that the Lord would hear his prayers, seeing that he had broken the sixth and seventh commandments, having killed Uriah and committed adultery with his wife, Bathsheba

The reason for David's confidence is recorded in Psalm 32:5: *"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."* David was forgiven when he repented of his sin and acknowledged it before the Lord. He describes the blessing of being forgiven in Psalm 32:1-2: *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."*

The Lord refused to speak to Saul and hear his prayers because Saul would not make a clear-cut acknowledgment of his sin. *"And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets"* (1 Sam. 28:6). We should remember the admonition of the king in Psalm 66:18: *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."*

Psalm 40:1-3 illustrate the fact that David repented and the Lord heard his prayers: *"I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD."*

141:2 - *"Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."* In-

cense is a symbol of prayer in Scripture (Rev. 8:3-4). David is making reference here to the incense that was offered upon the Altar of Incense that was directly in front of the veil in the Tabernacle of Moses. The composition of the incense is given in Exodus 30:34-35: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confectation after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy.”*

The four ingredients of the incense have a spiritual significance. Stacte, which is another form of myrrh (the embalming fluid of the East), speaks of meekness.

Onycha, the second constituent of the incense, is a spice derived from the closing flaps of the shell of a mollusk (like a clam). If the onycha is broken, the mollusk will lose its life because it has no power to shut its shell. Spiritually, this speaks of the attitude in prayer that Esther had as she was preparing to go in before the king, risking her life to save her people. She said, “If I perish, I perish!” (Esther 4:16).

The third ingredient, galbanum, is a very strong-smelling gum resin extracted from an Asiatic plant which is a relative of parsley. Galbanum actually resembles tears, and speaks of tears in another sense because the leaves have to be broken in order for the juice to flow forth. It speaks of strong crying in prayer (Heb. 5:7).

Frankincense, derived from certain trees in the balsam family, speaks of faith (compare Song of Solomon 4:12-14 with Galatians 5:22-23). Hebrews 11:6 gives us a key to effective prayer: *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* We must have faith when we pray. Thus our prayer should be filled with the four spiritual elements typified by the four constituents of the incense. (For a more detailed study of the incense, please see my book entitled, *The Tabernacle of Moses.*)

The lifting up of our hands is an act of devotion, very similar to that of a child who lifts his hands toward his father to be carried or loved by him. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:8, *“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”*

The sacrifice here referred to is the lamb that was offered every morning and evening together with the fine flour, the oil, and the frankincense. Flour represents the Word of God, the oil speaks of the Holy Spirit, and frankincense symbolizes faith.

141:3 - *“Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.”* Here the prophet David prays that the Lord will preserve him from indulging in rash and foolish words, and from speaking unwisely in the presence of the wicked. The following references actually amplify and clarify this prayer, which we would all do well to pray. *“I will take heed*

to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me” (Psa. 39:1).

Also, two verses from the book of Proverbs help us understand why it is so important to control our mouths. *“He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction” (Prov. 13:3). “Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles” (Prov. 21:23).*

141:4 - *“Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.”* The scripture and the event that has been so meaningful to me with respect to this prayer of David’s is found in Exodus 23:1-2: *“Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:”*

These verses were quickened to me when I was a young student in a non-Pentecostal Bible School in England. The staff and student body were opposed to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Through these verses the Lord warned me not to walk in their ways by denying, as they did, the precious truth of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The thought of eating of the dainties of the wicked is the

temptation to live an easy, luxurious, and sensuous life, as described in Psalm 73:7, 9, 12: *“Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish ... They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth ... Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.”*

141:5 - *“Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.”* David embraced the righteous admonitions and reproofs of the godly, for they had only his welfare at heart. Also, we know that when God intertwines our lives with the upright, there are times when we are recipients of their goodness and other times when we help them.

141:6 - *“When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.”* This verse has created some problems for the translators. I would humbly suggest that the meaning could be rendered, “When the rulers of the wicked are cast down over the precipice, those who have been misled by them will welcome the gracious words of pardon and reconciliation pronounced by their sovereign against whom they have rebelled.”

141:7 - *“Our bones are scattered at the grave’s mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.”* Those who rebelled against King David, in this case, the followers of Absalom, looked aghast at the bones of their comrades who

were slain in the forest by David's men. *"So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim; Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men. For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured"* (2 Sam. 18:6-8).

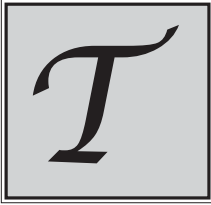
141:8-9 - *"But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute. Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity."* With the battle raging against him, David looked to the Lord and put his trust completely in Him. He prays that the Lord will not leave him destitute. At the time when David penned this ode, the battle was fierce and the outcome was still undecided.

141:10 - *"Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while that I withal escape."* Throughout the annals of Scripture, wicked people like Haman have received a just recompense for their wickedness. The evil that they have planned for the godly eventually comes upon their own heads.

Haman, who had reared gallows for the godly Mordecai, was strung upon the same gallows by orders of the King Ahasuerus. Absalom was caught in the trees and slain by Joab, while David escaped. David went on to live a very fruitful life of about two decades after his restoration.

Let us take courage, gentle reader, from these truths and find solace in this psalm when we are being attacked by the wicked. Hold your ground, beloved, for the wicked will fall into their traps in God's perfect time and you will be preserved from any harm. Praise the Lord!

PSALM 142



his is the last of the eight psalms that, according to their superscriptions, were written when David was suffering persecution at the hands of Saul. It was written at the time when David was in the cave of Engedi. (Please see 1 Samuel 24:1-8).

Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave

142:1 - *“I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.”* The context of this psalm, as has been already stated in the introduction, was the time when David was fleeing from Saul, who had with him an army of three thousand trained soldiers of the elite of Israel (1 Sam. 24:2; 26:2). David entered the cave of Engedi and there lifted up his voice to the Lord in woeful crying.

142:2 - *“I poured out my complaint before him; I showed before him my trouble.”* It is so helpful at times, even though the Lord knows everything before the foundation of the world and nothing is hidden from Him, to rehearse all our problems in detail before Him, as did David.

We should remember that David was only in his late twenties when he composed this psalm, but oh, the depth of spiritual perception that it reveals in one so young.

142:3 - *“When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.”* David is very conscious of the fact that the Lord is watching over him, even when he is so faint within himself, and that the Lord is guiding him in the path that He has chosen for him. We, too, need this holy confidence and consciousness of the Lord’s presence to know that He is leading us at all times, even when do not understand what He is doing.

142:4 - *“I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.”* David was all alone and had no one to watch over his soul. Seemingly, the godly in Israel were oblivious of him. His loneliness was great. We should ponder for a moment on this subject of loneliness.

In actuality, David was with several hundred armed warriors who had rallied around him. Yet in a crowd or in a church service among the Lord’s people, we can still feel very much alone. There was no true fellowship for David among those who gathered around him, for in reality, they were discontented, in debt, and in distress. They certainly were not of the spiritual caliber needed to commune with David and succor him spiritually.

Then like all the true saints of God, David turns to the Lord for fellowship. The Apostle John speaks said in 1 John 1:3: *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you,*

that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

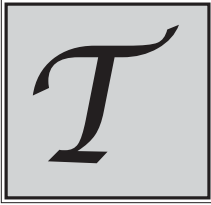
142:5 - *"I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living."* We should hearken to this, beloved, for the Lord Jesus is a friend who sticks closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24).

142:6 - *"Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I."* Certainly, there was no question that David's enemies far exceeded his own resources, which at this moment in the cave could have been only a motley handful. When we are persecuted by our enemies, it is also rare for us to be in the majority.

142:7 - *"Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me."* This thought of prison should be interpreted in the sense of being bound and fettered by oppressive forces of the enemy.

The joy of the soul set free from spiritual oppression is so wonderful. It is as though one starts to live again or take on a new lease on life. One can stand upright and greet the new day with such happy expectancy and exuberance. May we ask the Lord to set us free from our bondages so that we can freely praise His wonderful name.

PSALM 143



This is the last of the seven so-called “Penitential Psalms,” the others being Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, and 130. These were written at periods after David’s sin with Bathsheba. Psalm 143 was penned at a time when Absalom had caused David to flee from Jerusalem and seek refuge in the hills on the other side of the Jordan River.

A Psalm of David

143:1 - *“Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.”* David commences with the heart assurance of a man in trouble and justly so, but having a confidence in the righteousness of God. We read in 1 John 1:9: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

143:2 - *“And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”* We can never ask the Lord to visit us according to our works because all our works are as filthy rags (Isa 64:6). The only thing that we can do is throw ourselves upon the Lord’s mercy, which is what David is doing here. He was in trouble, as he was during a number of years because of his sin, and he cried out to the Lord.

143:3 - *“For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.”* The effects of an enemy attack are not just physical or economic, but also spiritual. They become a conduit by which evil spirits oppress us. It was so for David. So great was the pressure that it covered him with spiritual darkness and made him devoid of almost every drop of spiritual life. The attacks of the enemy at times can be so real that we feel communion with the Lord is no longer possible.

143:4-5 - *“Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.”* In situations like this particular one, we no longer feel like we have any spiritual life, whether it be the presence of God within our heart or that joyful bubbling up within our spirit.

Like David, we reflect back on days of yore, even as did Job: *“Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness”* (Job 29:2-3). Remembering past days of glory creates a deeper longing and hunger in our hearts for the Lord.

143:6-7 - *“I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah. Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.”* One of the terrible aspects of

hell is that one is deprived eternally of the presence of God and of a onward vision. This creates an aching void in the souls of all the inhabitants of the nether parts of the earth. There is a longing in their hearts that can never be assuaged.

143:8 - *“Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.”* Now David recounts one of the blessings of the Christian life, namely, hearing from the Lord morning by morning, which gives us courage for our daily walk. Another blessing of the Christian life is that we are enabled to walk in a plain path. *“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day”* (Prov. 4:18). There is hope that we are never going to battle alone.

143:9 - *“Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.”* David trusted in the Lord to deliver him from his enemies. He hid in the Lord. We read in Proverbs 18:10: *“The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”*

143:10 - *“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.”* All of these promises are not without conditions. David mentions two of the conditions in verse 10: a desire and willingness to be taught God’s ways and an obedient heart to walk in them.

David truly desired to know God’s will and His laws. King

David, who knew the Lord from a very young age, was restored after his sin with Bathsheba when he was about fifty years old. Here he is asking the Lord to teach him the lessons that he should have assimilated in his youth. What hope this gives to each one of us if we have strayed from God's ways as did David. We are never too old to find grace and mercy from our blessed Lord Jesus.

143:11 - *“Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name’s sake: for thy righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble.”* In other words, David was praying that the Spirit of the Lord would make him alive again so that he could feel the Spirit of life flowing through him once again.

143:12 - *“And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.”* Now David returns to the theme of his enemies and the oppressive spirits that they had placed upon him. David pleads with the Lord to destroy his enemies because he is the Lord's servant and in need of help.

After being restored from his backslidden state, David again declares that he is the servant of the Lord. He invokes the blessing upon the servants of the Lord that is described in Isaiah 54:17: *“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.”*

What a blessed promise is given here for the servants of God—no weapon formed against them will prosper and they will condemn everyone who speaks against them. Let us serve the Lord all the days of our lives so that we partake of these blessings as well, beloved!

PSALM 144



Written probably near the end of David's reign, Psalm 144 gives us a glimpse of the prosperity of the nation of Israel. However, at the same time, we also see a consciousness on David's part of the consequences of his sin that he was still experiencing, even to the end of his life.

After David sinned with Bathsheba, God told him that the sword would never depart from his house (2 Sam. 12:10). In other words, he would feel the consequences of his sin until the day he died. In verse 11, David prays for God to deliver him from "strange children," which could refer to those of his own household who rose up against him, like Adonijah, who tried to make himself king instead of Solomon.

A Psalm of David

144:1 - "*Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.*" Psalm 144 opens with an expression of thankfulness from the warrior king unto the Lord. It is worthy of note that the Lord is credited here for giving David the ability to become a warrior of prowess (2 Sam. 22:35).

The Lord is also the One who gives the farmer wisdom to

produce crops. (Please see Isaiah 28:23-39). It is the Lord who gives us the ability to fulfill our natural occupations, as well as our spiritual ministries.

144:2 - *“My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.”* David attributes to the Lord all the aspects for which a commander seeks—a castle for protection; turrets by which one may observe the enemies approach; a strong man who would bring relief to the beleaguered forces; various accouterments of armor that would protect him in hand-to-hand combat; a friend in whom he could trust in times of need; and one who could ensure that his own subjects would obey David.

David found all of these things in the Lord. As believers, we are in the Lord’s army and we must so learn to rely upon our God for these same qualities to enable us to be victorious over our spiritual foes.

144:3 - *“LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!”*

This was the question that also perplexed the patriarch Job, *who said “What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?”* (Job 7:17-18). The answer to this question is that the Lord desires to mold us into His image.

We are precious in the Lord's sight because we have been bought with nothing less than the blood of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus. He has invested a lot in us and He wants to see that we fulfill everything He has purposed for us.

144:4 - *“Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.”* Life is very short. This was also expressed by Job, who said, *“My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good”* (Job 7:6-7).

We read in Isaiah 40:6-8: *“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof 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.”* Life is like a blade of grass that quickly passes away. May we heed the words of the prophet Moses in Psalm 90:12, *“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”*

144:5-7 - *“Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them. Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children.”* David now turns his attention once again to the battles at hand and pleads for the Lord to come forth and fight against his enemies.

David's specific concern in these verses was "strange children," a term which represents those who have rebelled against the Lord and produce evil children. We read in Hosea 5:7: *"They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions."*

These strange children could have been either rebellious Israelites, even perhaps from his own household, or people of the heathen nations surrounding Israel.

144:8 - *"Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood."* In reality, these *strange children* were like their father, the devil, who was a liar from the beginning. Jesus said in John 8:44: *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."* We also read concerning the wicked in Psalm 58:3: *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."*

144:9 - *"I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee."* David now breaks forth into a song of triumph. David, the singing warrior, proclaims his confidence in the Lord. The song of triumph will open the way for the Lord to give us the victory in our circumstances as well, beloved.

144:10 - *“It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.”* It is the Lord who gives salvation to kings, and it is He who delivered David, time and time again, from the blow of the enemy’s sword. Just as He delivered David, the Lord will deliver us from our enemies if we will put our trust in Him.

144:11-12 - *“Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood: That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.”*

David now returns to the theme of strange children. If you have ever known people who have walked with you, whom you thought were godly, only to find out that they were deceitful and seeking to destroy you, you can understand why David is so concerned by these *strange children*.

David prays for God to remove the strange children from his midst so that the true sons and daughters of the Lord could continue to grow and mature in the Lord. If you are responsible for a church, or for a group of people, or even for your own family, it is essential for you to pray for God to remove the strange children (the wicked) from your midst, because if they are not removed, they will corrupt everyone else. They prevent the righteous from developing in the Lord.

Verse 12 is a very beautiful scripture. We should constantly

pray that our spiritual and natural children will grow in grace and wisdom well beyond their years. God's desire is to cause His people to mature quickly so that they can accomplish everything that He has called them to do. If the young will allow the Lord to purify them and change them, they can become examples to others at an early age.

144:13 - *“That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets.”* David prayed that the storehouses (garners) would be full, meaning there would be an abundance of natural provision. However, there is also a spiritual application to this verse. The storehouses can represent local churches. The Lord wants our churches to be full of wheat, which represents the Word of God.

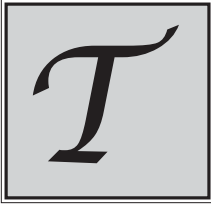
David also prays that the herds of sheep would be very fruitful and multiply abundantly. In the Word of God, sheep represent Christians. Therefore, in one sense, we should pray that our sheep (those whom we have led to the Lord) will be very fruitful.

144:14-15 - *“That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets. Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.”*

David prays that his people will be content and not complain. This should be our prayer as well. Stanley Frodsham, a famed

Pentecostal editor and author, whom I had the privilege of traveling and ministering with many years ago, used to reprimand his little daughter by saying, “No complaining in our house, darling.” May our churches overflow with happy and contented saints!

PSALM 145



his psalm of David is the last of the eight acrostic psalms. It has been termed the “crowning jewel” of all his psalms of praise. Undoubtedly, to aid the memory of the devout worshipper, the Holy Spirit designed this psalm in such a way that each verse, in the original Hebrew, starts with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

The most important thing to learn from this psalm is that the Holy Spirit wants to birth within our hearts spontaneous songs of praise to our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

David's Psalm of praise

145:1 - *“I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.”* David extols the Lord, his King. This same exaltation of the Lord could be seen in the life of King George VI of England. Although king of a vast empire, he looked upon the Lord as his Saviour and King.

145:2-3 - *“Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.”* Praising God was a way of life for David. He blessed the Lord every day. God’s greatness is unsearchable. We read of the ministry of

the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 2:10: *“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”*

God’s is so great that it will take all eternity for us to comprehend the wonders of His grace, as we read in Ephesians 2:7: *“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”*

145:4 - *“One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.”* The longer we walk with the Lord, the more we become aware of the fact that the Lord has a special work for each generation. I firmly believe that my generation as a whole has not entered into all that the Lord has purposed for us. In part, this is due to the fact that my generation has not been faithful to the Lord.

I have been meditating on Ezekiel 44:15-16 for many years: *“But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD: They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.”* The sons of Zadok were faithful to the Lord when everyone else, including the other ministers (the Levites), went astray. Being faithful in a faithless generation should be the goal of my generation and of every generation.

145:5-7 - “*I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.*” David is musing upon the Lord’s past wonders toward Israel. How wonderful it is to have an intimate relationship with the Lord, such that we can describe the majesty of His being and creative acts throughout all generations.

145:8-9 - “*The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*” In these two verses, David contemplates and extols the character of the Lord. David is paraphrasing Exodus 34:6 where the Lord introduces Himself to Moses upon Mount Sinai by stressing these qualities of His character.

First, David said that the Lord is *gracious*. Graciousness can be illustrated by a monarch or person of renown who deigns to give recognition to a person of inferior rank and stature. The Lord is also full of compassion, meaning He is full of pity and understanding for us. He is sensitive and understands us completely. God is also *slow to anger*. He does not lose His temper or make rash decisions out of anger.

The Lord is also great in mercy, which is the highest quality of the Godhead. Mercy is the prerogative given to heads of states, who have the power to pardon criminals. The Lord

truly loves to show us mercy and forgive our sins. Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew 9:13, *“But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”*

145:10 - *“All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.”* There is a sense in this verse that David is also speaking of the millennial reign of Christ, when all the people of the earth will bless the Lord. God’s works, which are an extension of Him, will also praise Him.

145:11-13 - *“They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.”*

In the millennial reign of Christ upon earth, everyone will declare the wonders of His kingdom to those afar off, throughout the generations of those glorious times. In the Millennium, the Lord will reign before His saints gloriously in Mount Zion: *“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously”* (Isa. 24:23).

The Lord’s dominion will last forever, as we read in Daniel 7:14: *“And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall*

not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” May we seek to live a holy life so that we may qualify to rule and reign with Christ during His millennial reign (Rev. 20:6).

145:14 - *“The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.”* The Lord upholds all those who fall and picks them up again. We read in Proverbs 24:16, *“For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.”* We should take comfort from this scripture, beloved, for even as the Lord upheld Peter after he had denied Him, the Lord will uphold us.

145:15-16 - *“The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”* One of the Lord’s names is Jehovah-Jireh, which means, “The Lord our Provider.” We read in Psalm 104:21: *“The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.”* The Lord provides for the needs of every living thing (Mt. 6:24-34).

145:17-18 - *“The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.”* God provides for the needs of all mankind with equity. All His works are holy; there is no evil in anything He does.

In verse 18, there is a condition attached to the promise, as there is with virtually every promise. The Lord will be nigh to

those who call upon Him *in truth*. We see another condition promise in James 4:8, “*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.*” If we will call upon the Lord in sincerity, He will draw near to us.

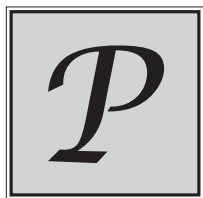
145:19 - “*He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*” In Holy Writ, there are many promises made to those who fear the Lord and always seek to please Him. The fear of the Lord makes us very sensitive about pleasing the Lord. When we fear the Lord, we do not want to do anything that displeases the Lord in thought or action.

145:20 - “*The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*” The Lord preserves those who love Him. Peter, who learned this from his own experience, said in 1 Peter 1:5, “*Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*” We cannot preserve ourselves, only the Lord can, and He preserves those who love and cherish Him. The Lord gives the wicked, however, over to their own desires and to the destruction of the pit.

145:21 - “*My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.*” It is fitting that David’s last psalm ends with a declaration that he will praise the Lord. The Hebrew name for the Book of Psalms is “*Sepher Tehillah,*” which means “Book of Praises.” Let all flesh bless the Lord’s holy name forever!

PSALM 146

The Hallelujah Psalms (146-150)



psalms 146-150 form another group of *Hallelujah Psalms*. The Septuagint version of the Old Testament ascribes Psalms 138, 146, and 147 to the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, but it is likely that Psalms 146-150 were all composed for worship in the Restoration Temple.

These five psalms represent the joy that the Israelites experienced when they were released from the long years of Babylonian captivity.

It appears from internal evidence that Psalm 126 was written during the early part of the Restoration Period (see verses 7-9). This psalm develops a strong exhortation not to trust in man, but in Jehovah alone, who is the only true and living God.

146:1 – *“Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.”* This psalm commences with a command to the psalmist’s soul to praise the Lord. This reveals a spiritual truth that is not understood by a number of believers. We are a triune being, having a body, soul, and spirit. Any of these three entities of our being can at any given moment have the ascendancy over the other parts, and therefore, control us.

Many people, even some believers, are controlled by the lusts of the flesh with their appetites. Others are prisoners of their emotions, which are governed by the soul. Because of this, they are often subject to fits of depression, fear, and torment. Then, just as quickly as they became depressed, their mood changes and they are suddenly happy. By contrast, when we are controlled by our spirit, we experience serenity and joy at all times, even in the midst of extreme trials.

Thus we can see here that the psalmist took authority over his emotions and commanded his soul to praise the Lord. We should do the same, beloved, and as we do, we will walk in the Spirit.

146:2 - *“While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.”* The psalmist has determined that praising the Lord will be a way of life for him. It can also be for us as we daily take command of our soul and likewise praise the Lord morning, noon, and night.

146:3-4 - *“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”* The alternative to praising the Lord is to look to man for help, which is disastrous.

All of man's purposes and plans will perish with him when he dies (see Gen. 3:19). We read in Psalm 60:11: *“Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.”* David said in Psalm

20:7: *“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.”*

146:5-6 - *“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever.”* What a blessing it is to have the God of Jacob as our help! Just as He helped Jacob, He will help us. We must put our trust and hope in the Lord.

The Lord is the Creator of the universe and He keeps truth forever. In other words, there is nothing false in Him. He will always do what He says He will do. Therefore, we can place our confidence in His Word because we know that He will keep His Word and His promises to us.

146:7 - *“Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners.”* The Lord is full of compassion, as was evidenced when Jesus fed the multitude. And the Lord releases the prisoners, as He released the children of Israel from Babylonian captivity.

146:8 - *“The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous.”* While the Lord opened the blind eyes during His earthly ministry, there is also another aspect of truth here. The Lord also opens our spiritual eyes, which have been blinded by sin, to behold wondrous things in His Word (Psa. 119:18). He also lifts up the beggar from the dunghill (1 Sam. 2:8; Psa.

113:7). However, above all, the righteous Lord loves the company of the righteous. He loves to be with them because they are like Him.

146:9 - *“The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.”* Here again we see demonstrated the tender and compassionate care of our Lord. He is ever mindful of the fears and insecurities that we experience when we are away from our families and friends, being strangers in a foreign land. He is also a Father to the fatherless and a Husband to the widows. This is pure religion, as we read in James 1:27: *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”*

The Lord wants us to be His hand extended, looking after those who are in need. To do this, we must have a heart that is filled with the love and compassion of Jesus.

146:10 - *“The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.”* With this note of triumph, looking forward to His millennial reign, the psalmist closes with a beautiful exhortation to praise Lord at all times. Praise is comely to those who dwell in Zion, the habitation of the Lord’s holiness.

PSALM 147



sed in the Restoration Temple services, Psalm 147 was written in the days of Nehemiah 12:27-43, at the dedication of the rebuilt walls of the city of Jerusalem. It is a three part song.

Part 1 (vs. 1-6)

147:1 – *“Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.”* It is a beautiful sight to the Lord when He beholds His saints praising Him in Spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:23-24). Praise is comely for the upright (Psa. 33:1). He inhabits the praises of His people.

147:2 – *“The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.”* This is the verse that causes us to conclude that this psalm was composed for the dedication of the walls of the holy city during the days of Nehemiah. It was at this time that there were many who returned to the Holy Land and their names were written in the genealogies of the families of Israel. (Please see Nehemiah 7:5.)

147:3 – *“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.”* In the ministry of restoration, which is also taking place in the Church today, there are many dear saints of God

who have been offended and hurt. They need someone to heal their broken heart and heal their wounds by pouring in the oil and the wine. They need someone who is willing to lend a hearing ear.

147:4 - *“He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.”* The psalmist now eulogizes the greatness of the Lord by His extraordinary feats of creation. The star population is estimated in the billions, so we can see the magnitude of God’s power. Not only did He create all the stars and place them in their orbits and galaxies, but then He also named them and knows each one by their names.

Remembering that stars are a symbol of the righteous (Dan. 12:3), we then realize that the Lord has not only created each one of us, but He also knows us by name. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus stated that each one of our hairs has a number (Mt. 10:30). He is a God of detail.

147:5 - *“Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.”* When we recognize God’s knowledge concerning every little detail in the universe, we realize that He knows our every need and concern as well. Knowing this should cause us to trust in our loving Heavenly Father.

147:6 - *“The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.”* The Lord raises up the meek from their pits and casts the wicked into the same pit. Let us seek to be meek and lamblike in nature, beloved.

Part 2 (vs. 7-11)

147:7 - *“Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.”* The Church of Jesus Christ is a singing church, both here on earth and in heaven above. Singing is a pleasure to the Lord. Therefore, we should have a song of the Lord within our hearts continually. Also, we should be thankful, abounding in thanksgiving to our wonderful Lord (Col. 2:7).

147:8 - *“Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.”* When we contemplate nature as the fruit of the creation of the Holy Trinity, we are absolutely amazed at how the Lord causes the rain to water the whole earth. Considering that the United States is about three thousand miles from coast to coast, it is amazing that God can cause the whole area to be watered, and therefore, bring forth grass to feed the cattle.

One pastor, talking to a hydraulics engineer on a flight across the United States, asked him if he believed in God, to which the engineer replied, “No.” Then the pastor asked him how much it would cost to transport water from the Pacific and Atlantic oceans and the Great Lakes to irrigate the inland areas if there were no clouds and no rain.

The engineer replied that there was not enough capital in the whole country to perform such a task. Then the pastor replied, “Where would this nation be without God?” The engi-

neer nodded his head, acknowledging that the pastor had made his point. Oh the greatness of our Lord in the infinite wisdom of His provision!

147:9 - *“He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.”* Not only does the Lord care for mankind, but also for the beasts and the fowls, as seen in Jonah 4:11: *“And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”*

God not only cared for the people of Nineveh, but also the cattle of Nineveh. What a loving God He is! Caring for animals is one of the attributes of a righteous man, as illustrated in Proverbs 12:10: *“A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.”*

147:10-11 - *“He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.”* In verses 10-11, we see what pleases the Lord. He does not take pleasure in those who strengthen their physical muscles or in a strong horse, but in those who fear Him and hope in His mercy.

Part 3 (vs. 12-20)

147:12-14 - *“Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God,*

O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.” And then the psalmist continues by recounting some of the blessings of the early restoration period that the Jews were enjoying.

There was a general spirit of prosperity that pervaded the land of Israel at this time. In like manner, when God turns our personal captivity or the captivity of our church, we are filled with joy and peace.

The little phrase, *“He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat,”* speaks, in a spiritual sense, of the best truths from the Word of God, since wheat represents the Word of God. When our ways please the Lord, the finest truths will flow from our lips and feed many.

147:15-18 - *“He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.”*

The psalmist reveals a fact of nature that is also captured by the patriarch Job: *“Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north. By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened. Also by watering*

he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud: And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth” (Job 37:9-12). God’s control of the weather gives us an understanding of His ways.

147:19-20 - *“He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.”* The law was given to Israel because it was preferred by God above all other nations. For this reason, Israel is exhorted to praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

PSALM 148



salm 148, the third in the series of five Hallelujah psalms written for the Restoration Temple, calls upon the whole of creation to praise the Lord. This psalm has basically two parts. In the first part, the heavens are commanded to praise the Lord. In the second part, the commandment to praise the Lord is repeated to those who inhabit the earth.

1. The praise of those in heaven (vs. 1-6)
2. The praise of those on earth (vs. 7-12)

Part 1

148:1-2 – *“Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.”* The command to praise the Lord starts with those who are in the highest place of glory in heaven, namely, those in the heights of heaven. Then the angels, who are on a descending scale of glory in heaven, are called to praise the Lord, and all the armies of heaven as well.

148:3 - *“Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.”* The psalmist now calls upon the celestial bodies to praise the Lord. Some have a problem with inanimate

objects praising the Lord, but Jesus Himself said in Luke 19:40: *“I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”* In reality, the heavens declare the glory of God. The Gospel message can be seen in the very formation of the sun, the moon, and the stars. (For further studies on this matter, I recommend a book by Bullinger entitled, *The Gospel in the Stars.*)

148:4-6 - *“Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.”*

Here there is a command for the clouds and the weather systems to glorify the Lord. As we have already observed in previous psalms, they obey Him and accomplish His most sovereign will. All of God’s creation keeps its course.

Part 2

148:7 - *“Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps.”* Here it is speaking of the sea monsters of all kinds. The Hebrew word *“tannin,”* translated “dragons” in the KJV, can refer to sharks, whales, or serpents. Every creature living in the depths of the sea is commanded to praise the Lord.

148:8 - *“Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word.”* Now the psalmist includes all the elements

of the climates. This is in accordance with Revelation 14:7, where we read, *“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”* Also, we read in Revelation 14:18: *“And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire...”*

148:9-10 - *“Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl.”* All the mountains, hills, fruit-bearing trees, cedars, and animals are commanded to praise God. All of creation, from the highest to the lowest, is commanded to praise the Lord.

148:11-13 - *“Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.”* Regardless of age or rank, every man, woman, and child is commanded to praise the Lord.

We see this repeated in Philippians 2:10-11: *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* Even babies, both natural and spiritual, should praise the Lord (Mt. 21:16).

148:14 - *“He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise*

of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.” This psalm concludes with a special reference to Israel as God’s chosen nation. We should not forget that we as believers are the spiritual “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16).

Therefore, in this verse the Lord promises Israel and the Church that He will lift up His people in His time and make them a praise in the earth. The Lord is near His people. Therefore, let us seek to praise and worship Him continually.

PSALM 149



New Song could be the title of Psalm 149. The Lord loves to hear us sing a new love song to Him. Just as our spouse, He likes to hear fresh and new expressions of our love for Him. For example, a newly wedded bride might be ecstatic upon receiving roses from her husband when he comes home from work, but if he gives her flowers every night, it might lose its excitement. She wants her husband to show his love for her in a new way and surprise her. In much the same way, our Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, rejoices when we sing new songs of praise to Him.

This psalm can be divided into two parts:

1. Praises of love and affection to our the Lord (vs. 1-5)
2. Militant praises of God's people (vs. 6-9)

Part 1

149:1 – *“Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.”* Matthew Henry wrote, “New mercies demand new songs of praise.” We should seek the Holy Spirit to bring us up to a new height of praise and birth a new love song in our hearts for the Lord. It is wonderful when worship leaders can introduce a new

song of praise to the congregation.

149:2 - *“Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.”* We should rejoice in the Lord and be joyful in Him. Joy is God’s gift to the righteous, as we read in Ecclesiastes 2:26: *“For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy...”* The key to having the joy of the Lord in our lives is to walk in righteousness (Psa. 45:7).

149:3 - *“Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.”* There are many ways to express our joy and our love for the Lord. We should seek to dance before the Lord in a way that is pleasing to Him, and not sensuous, as is the case in many churches.

At times, I have danced before the Lord in the privacy of my apartment with a God-given choreography. Dancing is so pleasing to the Lord when it is done the right way.

We can also worship the Lord with the tambourine (timbrel) and the harp. All scriptural instruments were created to make a joyful sound unto the Lord. Those who have musical talents should use them to glorify the Lord.

149:4-5 - *“For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.”* The Lord takes pleasure in His people and inhabits their praises (Psa. 22:3).

God will also bless the meek with His salvation. We are encouraged to praise the Lord even during the night hours. I cannot think of a better cure for insomnia than praising the Lord.

Part 2

The psalm now changes in content from one of love and adoration to our King to that of an army of soldiers on the march, doing spiritual warfare against the King's enemies.

149:6 - *“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.”* At times, Israel went out to face the enemy with the choir of priests leading the way, as in the days of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:19, 22). There are times when we as believers need to do spiritual warfare. As Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:12, our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers.

Therefore, we have to fight our spiritual enemies with spiritual weapons, as we read in 2 Corinthians 10:4: *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.”* Praise is one of the most effective weapons to defeat the enemy. We should do spiritual warfare with the Word of God, likened to a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16).

149:7-8 - *“To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains,*

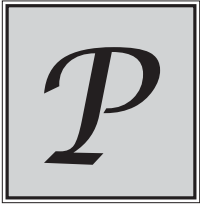
and their nobles with fetters of iron.” Our words, when spoken under the anointing of God, can release God’s judgment upon the wicked. The Lord has also given to believers the power to bind people, spirits, and situations in the name of the Lord (Mt. 18:18-19). However, let me stress that this can only be done in accordance with God’s will.

If we try to attack our spiritual enemies in our own strength, it is like stirring up a hornet’s nest, as did one of the sons of Sceva in Acts 19:15-16: *“And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”*

149:9 - *“To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.”* When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the Lord told them to execute His judgment upon the nations dwelling in the land of Canaan (Deut. 7:1-2).

It is also the honor of the saints to execute the Lord’s judgment upon the wicked. The saints are called to judge the world (1 Cor. 6:2). As we are anointed and led by the Holy Spirit, we can decree the Lord’s judgments upon our enemies, even on fallen angels and demons.

PSALM 150



salm 150 is the last psalm in the Book of Psalms and the last of the Hallelujah anthems. This psalm rises to a crescendo of praise to our blessed Lord. This psalm of triumph has been put to music in modern times. It carries us unto the very portals of heaven's glory.

150:1 – *“Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.”* The command to praise the Lord is given thirteen times in the six verses of this psalm. In Scripture, the number thirteen represents rebellion (Gen. 14:4) and also the Lord's atonement for rebellion (there being thirteen pillars in the Tabernacle of Moses). We are exhorted in verse 1 to praise the Lord in the Holy Place.

150:2 - *“Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.”* Here the psalmist directs our attention to the power and might of God, which should be worshipped in distinction to the gods of forces of iron and stone that the heathen worship. (See Daniel 5:4 and 11:38.)

150:3-5 - *“Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.”*

Here we have a list of the instruments that we are commanded to use to praise and worship the Lord. It is easy to see from the nature of these instruments why the modern piano and organ are two of the primary instruments used in church worship today.

The use of cymbals can be backed by Scripture, but not the use of drums. Having traveled to and ministered in over a hundred countries in my lifetime, I have found that drums do not enhance worship. In fact, they often hinder the presence of God from coming to a service. Drums are more suited for rock music, which is an abomination to the Lord.

150:6 - *“Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.”* The Book of Psalms was Israel’s hymnbook. It is a book of praise and worship. Thus it is fitting that the Book of Psalms ends with an exhortation to every living thing to praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord for ever and ever! Amen!

CONCLUSION

Thus, dear reader, we come to the end of Part Three of our devotional study on the Book of Psalms. 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. Meditating in the Psalms will 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.

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