

PSALM 115

OUR HELP AND OUR SHIELD

In this Psalm we have--

I. APPEAL
1,2

The Psalmist appeals to God to vindicate His (God's) honor, and thus to preclude the mocking upon the part of the heathen.

1. Give glory,
2. Not--
 - (1) To us;
 - (2) For our sakes;
3. To thyself--
 - (1) To thy name;
 - (2) For the sake of thy steadfast love;
 - (3) For the sake of thy steadfast faithfulness;
4. Why should the nations--the pagan peoples--ask:
Where is their God?

II. GOD
3

The Psalmist speaks of Israel's God:

1. He is in the heavens;
2. He does whatever it pleases Him to do.

III. IDOLS
4-8

The Psalmist speaks of the gods of the heathen:

1. They are made by men--
 - (1) Out of silver and gold;
 - (2) They are the work of men's hands;
2. They do nothing--
 - (1) They have mouths, but they do not speak;
 - (2) They have eyes, but they do not see;
 - (3) They have ears, but they do not hear;

2. Continued.

- (4) They have noses, but they do not smell;
- (5) They have hands, but they do not feel;
- (6) They have feet, but they do not walk;
- (7) They have throats, but they do not make a
sound in their throats.

IV. EXHORTATION
9-11

The Psalmist exhorts Israel to trust in the Lord
because He is their help and their shield:

- 1. Trust in the Lord!
- 2. He is your help;
- 3. He is your shield;
- 4. Fear the Lord; put your trust in Him.

V. PROMISE
12,13

The Psalmist emphasizes that God--as is seen in
previous blessings--will continue to bless His
people:

- 1. The Lord has been mindful of us;
- 2. He will bless us;
- 3. He will bless the house of Israel;
- 4. He will bless the house of Aaron;
- 5. He will bless all who fear the Lord--both great
and small.

VI. PRAYER
14,15

The Psalmist prays God's blessings to be upon His
people:

- 1. May the Lord bless you and your children;
- 2. May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven
and earth!

VII. PLEDGE
16-18

The Psalmist pledges continued praise to Jehovah:

1. The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth He
has given to the sons of men;
2. Those who are in their graves do not render
praise to Jehovah;
3. But, we will bless the Lord from this time
forth and for evermore.
4. Praise the Lord!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Lord is our Help and our Shield. Let us trust
in Him and praise Him--now and for evermore!

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. His name is to be held in honor, respect, and reverence;
2. We must be seriously and meaningfully concerned about bringing
honor and respect to His name;
3. Is characterized by steadfast love and faithfulness;
4. Is in the heavens;
5. Does what it pleases Him to do;
6. Is deserving of and worthy of our trust;
7. Is our help and our shield;
8. Is to be feared and respected;
9. Is mindful of us, and will bless us;
10. He will bless all who respect (fear) Him--both great and small;
11. He made the heaven and the earth;

I. Continued.

12. The heavens are His, but He has given the earth to men;

13. Is to be praised for evermore.

II. HEATHEN IDOLS. God's people could vividly recall the dumb idols of Babylon.

1. They are made by human hands;

2. They are speechless;

3. They are blind;

4. They are deaf;

5. They are not able to smell;

6. They cannot feel;

7. They cannot walk;

8. They cannot make a sound in their throats;

9. They bring their worshippers down to their level.

III. REWARDED TRUST.

1. Trust in the Lord--

(1) O Israel;

(2) O house of Aaron;

(3) You who fear the Lord;

2. God will bless--

(1) The house of Israel;

(2) The house of Aaron;

(3) Those who fear the Lord.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. We must work and pray that God's name may be glorified in all the earth.
2. Members of the Lord's church should so live and so labor that no one anywhere could be justified in asking: Where is their God?
3. God does what He pleases to do, but He cannot do anything that is unnecessary, or foolish, or inconsistent with His nature.
4. Idols are made by human beings, and are worshipped as these human beings want to worship them. God is our creator--not our creature--and we are compelled to worship Him as He has instructed us to worship--not as it pleases us.
5. True worship is essential in the development of right character. In truly worshipping God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the instructions of the New Testament, we are striving to become more and more like God.
6. If we are mindful of God and His will, He will be mindful of us and will bless us according to our needs.
7. God prepared the earth for man's dwelling. It is designed to meet the needs of man.
8. With the Psalmist, let us resolve to praise the Lord--from this time forth and for evermore.
9. The fact that God's people are often held in contempt by the world does not minimize or nullify the fact that they ARE His people, and that they are mightily blessed of Him. Cf. Acts 28:22.
10. In the deep realization of our own weaknesses, let us determine to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (Cf. Eph. 6:10).

PSALM 116

GRATEFUL PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE

In this Psalm we have--

I. DECLARATION

1

The Psalmist declares:

1. I love the Lord.

II. REASONS

1,2

He sets forth the reasons for his love:

1. He has heard my voice and my supplications;
2. He has inclined His ear to me.

III. ILLUSTRATION

3-11

The Psalmist illustrates his case:

1. The distress--

(1) The snares of death encompassed me;

(2) The pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;

(3) I suffered distress and anguish;

2. The deliverance--

(1) I called on the name of the Lord;

(2) I prayed: O Lord, I beseech thee, save
my life!

(3) The Lord is gracious, righteous, and
merciful;

(4) He preserves the simple;

(5) When I was brought low--He saved me;

(6) He has dealt bountifully with me;

(7) He has delivered--

A. My soul from death;

B. My eyes from tears;

C. My feet from stumbling;

(8) I walk before the Lord in the land of the
living;

(9) I kept my faith--even in great affliction;

(10) I recognized: "Men are all a vain hope."

IV. PROMISES
12-19a

The Psalmist makes promises to God:

1. Question--

What shall I render to the Lord for
all His bounty to me?

2. Answer--

(1) I will lift up the cup of salvation;

(2) I will call on the name of the Lord;

(3) I will pay my vows to the Lord--in

the presence of all His people;

(4) I will be a faithful servant;

(5) I will offer the sacrifice of

thanksgiving.

V. PROCLAMATION
15

The Psalmist proclaims:

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death
of His saints!

VI. EXHORTATION
19b

The Psalmist exhorts:

Praise the Lord!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is God who delivers from distress, and who prospers
our way as we walk before Him. We can never repay Him for what He has done,
and continues to do, for us--but we can keep on trying, by walking
before Him and keeping the faith.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the object of our love;
2. Hears our prayers (if they are prayed according to His will);
3. Is the one upon whom we call;
4. Is the one who delivers from distress;
5. Is gracious, righteous, and merciful;
6. Provides peace and rest to the soul;
7. Deals bountifully with His people;
8. Takes care of the helpless;
9. Is the object of our faith and the one in whom we place our hope;
10. Is the one to whom and before whom we speak--we must keep our word;
11. Is concerned about the death of His servants;
12. We are privileged to be His servants;
13. He is the one to whom we express our thanks;
14. Is the one whom we praise--in our lives, and in our worship.

II. PROMISED OF THE PSALMIST.

1. I will call upon Him as long as I live;
2. I will lift up the cup of salvation;
3. I will call on the name of the Lord;
4. I will pay my vows to the Lord;
5. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.

III. HIS BOUNTY TO ME.

1. He has heard my voice.
2. He has listened to me;
3. He delivered me--He saved me;

II. Continued.

4. He delivered--

- (1) My soul from death;
- (2) My eyes from tears;
- (3) My feet from stumbling;

5. He helped me to learn from affliction;

6. He has loosed my bonds, and made me His servant!

IV. I AM DEBTOR.

To the saints in Rome, Paul said: "I am debtor . . ." (Rom. 1:14). Through Jesus Christ, and upon the terms of the gospel of Christ, God delivers men from bondage to sin, and enables them to become devoted Servants of the Christ. When one becomes a Christian he takes upon himself an indebtedness--to God, to Christ, and to the whole world. As long as we live, we must recognize this tremendous indebtedness, and we must keep on striving to pay it. We can never pay this debt completely, but we must keep on trying.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Answered prayers should produce in our lives life-long praise, gratitude, and thanksgiving.
2. Even in times of suffering, distress, and anguish the Psalmist had the faith and the strength of character to call upon God for help. Let us see to it that our faith is a growing faith. Cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-10.
3. When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

E. O. Excell

4. Affliction often tests the faith of men. Like the Psalmist, let us keep our faith, even when greatly afflicted. Cf. 2 Cor. 4:13.
5. Hope that is founded in men is vain. Our hope must be anchored in God, and must rest solidly upon His word.
6. Careful and honest consideration of all that God has done for us should compel us to ask: What shall I render to the Lord for all His bounty to me?
7. We must be careful to keep our word, both to God and to men.
8. What indescribable comfort is found in the words: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.
9. In gratitude for deliverance from bondage to sin, the Christian rejoices that he can be a faithful "servant" of our Lord Jesus Christ--a loving, faithful, devoted, obedient servant.
10. God will accept our sacrifices of "thanksgiving."

PSALM 117

EXHORTATION TO PRAISE JEHOVAH

In this Psalm we have--

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|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I. EXHORTATION
1,2 | The Psalmist exhorts:

1. Praise;

2. Extol (laud). |
| II. IDENTIFICATION
1,2 | The Psalmist identifies the one to whom praise is
to be extended:

<u>The Lord.</u> |
| III. APPLICATION
1 | The Psalmist shows to whom this exhortation is
applicable:

1. All nations!

2. All peoples! |
| IV. EXPLANATION
2 | The Psalmist explains why the Lord is to be praised:

1. Great is His steadfast love toward us;

2. The faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever. |

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Let all men and all nations join together in praising Jehovah.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. He is the one to be praised by all men;
2. He is characterized by steadfast love;
3. His faithfulness endures for ever.

II. SPURGEON MENTIONS:

1. This Psalm is very little in letter, but exceedingly large in its spirit;

2. It reaches beyond all bounds of race or nationality and calls upon all mankind to praise the name of the Lord;
3. It is both short and sweet;
4. The same divine Spirit which expatiates in the 119th, here condenses his utterances into two short verses, but yet the same infinite fullness is present and perceptible.

III. THE PSALM RESTATED:

1. All nations (all peoples)
2. Are to praise (extol)
3. The Lord (Jehovah),
4. Because--
 - (1) His steadfast love is great; and
 - (2) His faithfulness endures for ever.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. This beautiful little Psalm is Messianic in its import, and reaches through the years and envisions the time when Gentiles (as well as Jews) could come to have the salvation which is in Christ, upon the terms of the gospel. It is quoted by Paul (and is applied to this thought) in Rom. 15:11. Note verses 8-12. In Christ, God confirms the promises given to the fathers. In Christ, God provides for salvation for all men--including Gentiles.
2. Old Testament Israel had the obligation (and the privilege) to make God known to all nations. New Testament Israel, the church of our Lord, has the obligation (and the privilege) to make known to all men the Christ and His gospel.

3. " . . . and let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23).
4. This Psalm stresses the Love of God: (1) the fact of it, (2) the nature of it, (3) the scope of it, (4) the design of it, and (5) the consequences of it.

PSALM 118

A PSALM OF REJOICING FOR VICTORIES GIVEN

This is a Psalm of joy in reflection upon victories granted. It was written to be sung by the procession of worshippers on their way to the temple. It may have been used in connection with the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles.

In this Psalm we have--

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|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I. CALL
1a | The Psalmist calls upon Israel to--

1. Give thanks to the Lord;

2. Praise the Lord. |
| II. REASONS
1b | The Psalmist sets forth reasons for the praise:

1. For He is good;

2. His steadfast love endures for ever. |
| III. SPECIFICATIONS
2-4 | The Psalmist specifies the messengers and the messages:

1. Who is to Praise?

(1) Israel;

(2) The house of Aaron;

(3) Those who fear the Lord.

2. What are these to say?

(1) His steadfast love endures for ever;

(2) His steadfast love endures for ever;

(3) His steadfast love endures for ever. |
| IV. THE SONG
5-18 | The singers emphasize that repeatedly God has delivered Israel out of distresses, and has given wonderful victories:

1. Out of my distress I called on the Lord--He answered me and set me free. |

IV. Continued.

2. With the Lord on my side I do not fear--What
can man do to me?
3. With the Lord on my side to help me--I shall
look in triumph on those who hate me.
4. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than
to put confidence in man;
5. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than
to put confidence in princes.
6. Nations surround me--
In the name of the Lord I cut them off;
7. I was pushed hard--but the Lord helped me;
8. The Lord is my strength and my song--
He has become my salvation;
9. The righteous sing the songs of victory--
The right hand of the Lord does valiantly;
10. I shall not die, but I shall live--
to tell the deeds of the Lord;
11. The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has
not given me over to death.

V. ENTRANCE
19

The procession reaches the gates of the temple and
called out for someone to open the gates:

1. Open to me the gates of righteousness;
2. Through them I will enter in;
3. I will give thanks to the Lord.

VI. RESPONSE
20

Someone responds:

1. This is the gate of the Lord;

VI. Continued.

2. The righteous shall enter through it.

VII. SONG
21-27

The worshippers, now within the gates of the temple, continue their praise and thanksgiving for the divine blessings given, and especially for the greatness of the day.

1. I thank thee--

(1) That thou hast answered me;

(2) That thou hast become my salvation;

2. The stone (Israel)--

(1) Which the builders rejected,

(2) Has become the head of the corner;

3. This--

(1) Is the Lord's doing; and

(2) Is marvelous in our eyes;

4. This (day of joy)--is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

5. We beseech thee, O Lord--

(1) Save us;

(2) Give us success!

6. Blessed are those who enter in the name of the Lord.

7. The Lord is God--He has given us light.

VIII. PROMISE
28

The Psalmist promises:

1. Thou art my God--I will give thee thanks;

2. Thou art my God--I will extol thee.

IX. EXHORTATION
29

The Psalmist exhorts: Give thanks to the Lord--

1. For He is good;
2. His steadfast love endures for ever!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: In righteousness, let us look forward to the time and the place of worship. Let us rejoice in the privilege and the obligation to worship--knowing (1) that God is good, (2) that His steadfast love endures for ever, and (3) that He is the source and means of victory.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. He is the one to whom we give thanks;
2. He is good;
3. His steadfast love endures for ever;
4. He is to be feared (to be respected, revered);
5. He answers prayers;
6. He enables us to be without fear;
7. He is the means and source of victory;
8. He is the one in whom we must place our confidence;
9. He is the proper source of strength;
10. He is the one about whom we sing;
11. He is our salvation;
12. He is exalted and He is powerful;
13. He chastens those whom He loves;
14. He is the giver of success;
15. He gives us light for guidance.

II. THE LORD IS:

1. My help;
2. My strength;
3. My song;
4. My salvation.

III. THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED:

1. Was the nation of Israel (dispised by surrounding nations);
2. Was so very important in God's eyes and in God's plan;
3. Was a type of the Christ Himself, and of His church (His kingdom).

Cf. Mt. 21:42; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Whatever the trials, the disappointments, the tribulations--let us assure ourselves that "His steadfast love endures for ever."
2. All who truly (scripturally) fear the Lord may join together in scriptural worship to Him.
3. "God and one man constitute a majority anywhere."
4. The Lord is the remover of fear, and He is the source of courage.
". . . for Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" (Heb. 13:5,6). Thus, Inspiration quotes from the 118th Psalm.
5. The Lord is the Great Deliverer. He delivers (1) out of sin, and to righteousness; out of bondage, and to liberty; (2) out of troubles; (3) from troubles; (4) out of the power of darkness, and into the kingdom of light (Cf. Col. 1:12,13). He will deliver all the dead from their graves (Jno. 5:28,29). Paul says: "The Lord will

- deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever, Amen" (2 Tim. 4:18).
6. "The Lord is my strength." In the deep realization of our personal weaknesses, let us determine to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10). Let us say with Paul: "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).
 7. An old soldier said: "They have us surrounded--don't let them get away!" Likewise, the world has us surrounded--don't let them get away."
 8. Note these words: "surrounded on every side," "surrounded like bees," "they blazed like a fire of thorns," "I was pushed very hard," "I was falling," "I cut them off," "the Lord helped me," "The Lord is my strength," "He has become my salvation." Regardless of how hard the problem, or how difficult the circumstances--we CAN BE VICTORIOUS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD! " . . . and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (1 Jno. 5:4).
 9. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (Heb. 12:6).
 10. It is significant to observe that in so many instances that which is of little value, or of no value, or which is even despised--in the eyes and thinking of men--is of utmost value in the sight of God. And, that which is often of great importance and value--in the eyes of men--is of little value, or of no value, or is even condemned, in the eyes of God.
 11. In context, "the day which the Lord hath made" is the day (or the occasion) of joyful worship. Such is (1) the day of worship, the Lord's Day, and (2) the time (or period) of New Testament Christianity--the "day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

PSALM 119:1-8 (Aleph)

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO KEEP THE LAW OF JEHOVAH

Psalms 119 is made up of 22 stanzas, according to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, with each stanza consisting of eight verses, and with each verse of each stanza beginning with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. For example, verses 1-8 constitute the "aleph" section, and each verse begins with the Hebrew letter "aleph."

In this section we have--

I. PRONOUNCEMENT 1-3

The Psalmist pronounces that certain ones are blessed:

1. Those whose way is blameless;
2. Those who walk in the law of the Lord;
3. Those who keep His testimonies;
4. Those who seek Him with their whole hearts;
5. Those who do no wrong;
6. Those who walk in His ways.

II. WORD 4

The Psalmist speaks of God's word:

1. The source: "Thou";
2. The authority: " hast commanded";
3. The nature: " thy precepts";
4. The obligation: " to be kept diligently."

III. PRAYER 5-8

The Psalmist prays that he might be found among those who keep God's word:

1. Prayer: "O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping thy statutes!"
2. Consequences: "Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all thy commandments";

III. Continued.

3. Promise: "I will praise thee with an upright heart, when I learn of thy righteous ordinances";

4. Plea: "O forsake me not utterly!"

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: As is stressed in the First Psalm, those are blessed who walk according to God's word. Let each one fervently desire and fervently pray that he may be included within that number. Cf. 119:105.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Blesses those who keep His law;
2. Is the one whom we are to seek;
3. Is the one whom we are to praise with upright hearts;
4. Is the one whose presence and favor we are to desire;
5. Is the giver of divine law, to be observed by all men.

II. THE WORD OF GOD.

1. The law of the Lord;
2. His testimonies;
3. His ways;
4. The precepts which He has commanded;
5. His statutes;
6. His commandments;
7. His righteous ordinances.

III. MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD'S LAW.

1. To walk in the law of the Lord;
2. To keep His testimonies;
3. To seek Him with the whole heart;

III. Continued.

4. To walk in His ways;
5. To keep His precepts diligently;
6. To keep His statutes;
7. To be mindful of His commandments;
8. To learn and to observe His righteous ordinances.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. This stanza involves two basic thoughts: BLESSEDNESS and DESIRE. The Psalmist stresses the blessedness of the person who keeps the will of God, and then emphasizes his own desire to be found among that number. Likewise, we must strive to be among that number.
2. Significant words indicating our responsibilities to God's law: walk, keep, seek, kept, respect (KJV), learn, observe.
3. Those who forsake God (by forsaking His word) will be forsaken by God.
4. God has the right to expect of us total commitment. Let us seek Him with our whole hearts; let us keep His commandments diligently.
5. David had a beautiful and wonderful attitude toward God's word, God's truth. He said: "I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments." Every person ought to rejoice upon learning God's word, regardless of the subject or topic at hand. But, unfortunately, such is not always the case. Instead of rejoicing in learning the truth, there are many who argue against the truth, and who seek vehemently to hold on to their wrong position. Cf. Acts 15:1. Instead of rejoicing that they had learned the truth (that it is the case that Gentiles can be saved), these Jewish Christians took another wrong position. They said, "Yes, Gentiles, can be saved. But, they must keep the Mosaic law after they have been saved!"

PSALM 119:9-16 (Beth)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

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| I. QUESTION
9a | The Psalmist asks:

How can a young man keep his way pure? |
| II. ANSWER
9b | The Psalmist answers:

By guarding his way according to the word of God! |
| III. CONSEQUENCE
10-16 | The Psalmist stresses his consequent concern about
God's word:

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. With my whole heart I seek thee;2. Let me not wander from thy commandments;3. I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I
might not sin against thee;4. Blessed be thou, O Lord; teach me thy statutes;5. With my lips I declare all the ordinances of
thy mouth;6. In the way of thy testimonies I delight as much
as in all riches;7. I will meditate on thy precepts and fix my
eyes on thy ways;8. I will delight in thy statutes;9. I will not forget thy word. |

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Let us be governed by the Law of God that our lives may be pure. The Law of Jehovah is the Way of Purity.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. LET THE YOUNG MAN . . .

1. Keep his way--his life--pure;
2. Govern himself by the word of God;
3. Seek God with his whole heart;
4. Be careful not to wander from God's word;
5. Treasure up God's word in his heart;
6. Understand that sin is against GOD;
7. Be an anxious student of God's word;
8. Teach others about God and His word;
9. Know that true riches are not material riches;
10. Not just read, but carefully--prayerfully--meditate upon God's word.

II. GOD.

1. God is concerned about the purity of the young;
2. Has given His sacred "rule book"--the guide for purity;
3. Is the one hurt when we transgress His law;
4. Is the one upon whose word we must meditate, and whose word we must not forget.

III. PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

1. I have laid up thy word in my heart;
2. With my whole heart I seek thee;
3. Teach me thy statutes;
4. In the way of thy testimonies I delight;
5. I will meditate on thy precepts;
6. I will fix my eyes on thy ways;
7. I will delight in thy statutes;
8. I will not forget thy word.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The young man must be meaningfully concerned about keeping himself pure.
He must understand that this is possible only by his walking (his living) in the light of the Word of God. Paul said to Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity (1 Tim. 4:12). He said further: "Keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22). The Lord Himself pronounces blessedness upon the "pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Mt. 5:8).
2. Young men can be spiritually strong. The word of God can abide in them. They can overcome the evil one. Cf. 1 Jno. 2:14b.
3. It is possible for one to "wander" from God's word, even when he does not deliberately plan to go astray. Cf. Lk. 15:3,4.

PSALM 119:17-24 (Gimel)

In this portion we have--

I. PRAYER
17-19

The Psalmist prays:

1. Deal bountifully with thy servant--
that I may live and observe thy word;
2. Open my eyes--
that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;
3. I am a sojourner on earth--
hide not thy commandments from me!

II. CONSEQUENCE
20-24

The Psalmist expresses his consequent concern
about God's word:

1. My soul is consumed with longing for thy
ordinances at all times;
2. Thou dost rebuke the insolent, accursed ones,
who wander from thy commandments;
3. Take away from me their scorn and contempt--
for I have kept thy testimonies;
4. Thou princes sit plotting against me, thy
servant will meditate on thy statutes;
5. Thy testimonies are my delight--
they are my counselors.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the way of divine guidance,
favor, joy, and counsel.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one whom we are to serve;
2. Is the one whose word we are to observe;
3. Has revealed to man wondrous things;
4. Has given His law for our guidance in life's journey;
5. Is displeased with all who wander from His word;
6. Is pleased with all who keep His testimonies;
7. Is the one in whose word we are to delight;
8. Has provided for us divine counsel.

II. GOD'S LAW IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy word;
2. Thy law;
3. Thy commandments;
4. Thy ordinances;
5. Thy testimonies;
6. Thy statutes;
7. My delight, and
8. My counselors.

III. FERVENT PRAYER:

1. Deal bountifully with thy servant;
 2. Open my eyes, that I may behold;
 3. Hide not thy commandments from me;
 4. Grant me thy favor.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God deals bountifully with those who observe His word.
2. We never cease to be amazed at the "wondrous things" characteristic of the Word of God.
3. In this life we are traveling a journey--we are sojourners. We have not made this trip before, and we need a guide--a divine guide, and infallible guide. God has provided this guide for us--His Word. It will take us safely home. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105).
4. "My soul is consumed with longing for thy ordinances." "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mt. 5:6).
5. When men wander away from the Word of God they wander away from divine favor.
6. We have the obligation to be diligent students of the Word, but we need to learn the real delight which the Psalmist mentions.
7. It is folly to listen to human counselors when we have available to us the divine counselors.

PSALM 119:25-32 (Daleth)

In this portion we have--

I. DESPAIR
25,28

The Psalmist sets forth his condition of despair:

1. My soul cleaves to the dust;
2. My soul melts away for sorrow.

II. PRAYER
25-31

The Psalmist prays:

1. Revive me according to thy word;
2. Teach me thy statutes;
3. Make me understand the way of thy precepts;
4. Strengthen me according to thy word;
5. Put false ways far from me;
6. Graciously teach me thy law;
7. Let me not be put to shame!

III. GOD'S WORD
26-32

The Psalmist expresses his concern about God's word:

1. Thou didst answer me;
2. I will meditate on thy wondrous works;
3. I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
4. I set thy ordinances before me;
5. I cleave to thy testimonies;
6. I will run in the way of thy commandments--
when thou enlarge my understanding!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the way of faithfulness, comfort, and strength.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is able to revive the despairing soul;
2. Hears and answers prayers;
3. Has revealed to men His statutes;
4. Has revealed His will in such way that men CAN understand it;
5. His ordinances enable us to walk in "the way of faithfulness";
6. Is the one to whose word we are to "cleave."

II. PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

1. I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
2. I set thy ordinances before me;
3. I cleave to thy testimonies;
4. I will meditate on thy wondrous works;
5. I will run in the way of thy commandments.

III. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy word;
2. Thy statutes;
3. Thy precepts;
4. Thy law;
5. Thy ordinances;
6. Thy testimonies;
7. Thy commandments.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The word of God has the power to lift up the despairing soul.
2. Like the Psalmist, we must pray and plead that God will help us to learn His statutes.

3. Men are wrong when they say that the Word of God cannot be understood.
4. God's way is "the way of faithfulness," and it is the word of God which leads men to and guides men in that way.
5. Every way that is out of harmony with "the way of faithfulness" is a false way.
6. The husband is instructed to "cleave" to his wife (Cf. Eph. 5:31), and we are obligated and privileged to "cleave" to the word of God.
7. We must run in the way of God's commandments. We walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), understanding that "faith comes by hearing the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17), and understanding that "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

PSALM 119:33-40 (He)

In this portion we have--

I. PRAYER
33-44

The Psalmist prays:

1. Teach me the way of thy statutes;
2. Give me understanding;
3. Lead me in the path of thy commandments;
4. Incline my heart to thy testimonies;
5. Turn my eyes from looking at vanities;
6. Give me life in thy ways;
7. Confirm to thy servant thy promise;
8. Turn away the reproach which I dread;
9. In thy righteousness give me life!

II. GOD'S WORD
33-40

The Psalmist emphasizes his concern about God's word:

1. I will keep thy word;
2. I will keep thy law;
3. I will observe it with my whole heart;
4. I delight in thy word;
5. I know the value of it;
6. Thy ordinances are good;
7. I long for thy precepts.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the Way of Life. Cf. Jno. 6:63--

"It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life."

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one who teaches us His way;
2. Is the giver of understanding;
3. Leads men by His commandments;
4. Gives men life through His word;
5. Is faithful to keep His promises;
6. Is the righteous giver of life!

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy statutes;
2. Thy law;
3. Thy commandments;
4. Thy testimonies;
5. Thy ways;
6. Thy ordinances;
7. Thy precepts.

III. WITH REGARD TO GOD'S WORD, LET US--

1. Long for it;
 2. Learn it;
 3. Increase our understanding;
 4. Keep (observe) it with the whole heart;
 5. Treasure it;
 6. Delight in it;
 7. Enjoy and appreciate its blessings.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. We must study to learn and to know God's will, but we can also pray to God for wisdom. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2:15; Jas. 1:5).
2. Like the Psalmist, we must promise God, promise ourselves, and promise others, that we will keep His word "to the end" (of our lives).
3. As we travel life's journey God will lead us if we will let Him do so. He leads us by (through) His Word. He leads us in no other way. In His power and providence He will take care of us, but our "guide" is the Bible.
4. Like the Psalmist, let us understand that knowing God's word is far more valuable than silver and gold. Here is the key that unlocks the heavenly treasures of eternity. How does one describe or explain the value of a key like that?
5. A knowledge of and appreciation for the Word of God will keep us from "looking at vanities." David said: "I will set no wicked things before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" (Ps. 101:3). The Revised Standard Version has: "I will not set before my eyes anything that is base."
6. The Word of God in the human heart keeps one from covetousness, from vanities (idolatry), and from divine reproach. Brother H. Leo Boles often told the story about the mother who--as her son was leaving home to go away to college--handed him a copy of the Bible. Later, at college, the son opened his new Bible to the page on which his mother had written: "This little book can keep you from sin. Nothing but sin can keep you from this little book."

7. God wants people who will serve Him with the "whole heart." God demands total commitment! O, the wonderful spirit of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh! While others were fussing, and grumbling, and complaining, Caleb said: "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). God said; "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Num. 14:24).

PSALM 119:41-48 (Waw)

In this portion we have--

I. PRAYER
41-43

The Psalmist prays:

1. Let thy steadfast love come to me;
2. Let thy salvation--according to thy promise--
come to me;
3. Take not the word of truth utterly out of my
mouth.

II. BLESSINGS
41-48

The Psalmist speaks of blessings which come through
God's word:

1. God's love is made known;
2. Salvation is revealed;
3. I shall have answer for those who taunt me;
4. My hope is in thy ordinances;
5. I shall walk in liberty;
6. I shall not be put to shame.

III. ATTITUDE
41-48

The Psalmist explains his attitude toward God's word:

1. I trust in thy word;
2. I will keep thy law continually, for ever and
ever;
3. I have sought thy precepts;
4. I will speak of thy testimonies before kings;
5. My delight is in thy commandments;
6. I revere thy commandments, which I love;
7. I will meditate on thy statutes.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the way of love, the way of
salvation, the way of explanation, the way of hope, and the way of liberty.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is characterized by steadfast love;
2. Is the one who provides salvation for man;
3. Is the giver of His word;
4. Is the giver of hope--through His word;
5. His word must be taught even to Kings.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. The word of truth;
2. Thy ordinances;
3. Thy law;
4. Thy precepts;
5. Thy testimonies;
6. Thy commandments;
7. Thy statutes.

III. RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD:

1. I trust in thy word;
2. It is the foundation of my hope;
3. I will keep thy law;
4. I have sought thy precepts;
5. I will speak of thy testimonies;
6. My delight is in thy commandments;
7. I love thy commandments;
8. I will meditate upon thy statutes.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. It is the steadfast love of God which brings salvation to men.
2. The word of God produces faith (Rom. 10:17), and faith produces our hope (Heb. 11:1), and this hope is the "anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6:19).
3. We must be anxious to make know the word of God to all men everywhere-- even to those in high places.
4. Those who study, learn, know, and do God's word are "workmen that need not be ashamed" (2 Tim. 2:15).
5. We must love His commandments, and we must love Him who gave the commandments. The Lord said: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (Jno. 14:15).
6. Love for and delight in God's word leads to meditation upon it.

PSALM 119:49-56 (Zayin)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. PRAYER
49a

The Psalmist prays:

Remember thy word to thy servant.

II. BLESSINGS
49-54

The Psalmist speaks of blessings which come
through God's word:

1. Hope;
2. Comfort;
3. Life;
4. Joy.

III. ATTITUDE
51-55

The Psalmist speaks of his attitude toward God's
Word:

1. Godless men utterly deride me, but I do not
turn away from thy law;
2. I meditate upon it;
3. Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked
who forsake thy law;
4. I sing thy statutes;
5. I remember thy name in the night, O Lord, and
keep thy law.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah provides hope, comfort, life, and
joy. In a very special sense it is The Way of Comfort.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Remembers His word to His people;

I. Continued.

2. Makes it possible for us to have hope;
3. Provides comfort in times of affliction;
4. Is the maker of life-giving promises;
5. It is His word about which we are to sing;
6. He is the one whom we are to keep in our memories;
7. He blesses those who keep His precepts.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy word;
2. Thy law;
3. Thy ordinances;
4. Thy statutes;
5. Thy precepts.

III. GOD'S WORD BRINGS:

1. Hope;
2. Comfort;
3. Joy;
4. Life;
5. Sacred memories.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God's word is the basis for His servant's hope.
2. It is the word of God which brings spiritual life.
3. The word of God is the most satisfying comfort.
4. Godless men are prone to criticize the righteous, but the righteous will not be ill-affected by these criticisms.

III. Continued.

5. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).
6. God is the God of patience, and of comfort, and of hope (Cf. Rom. 15:5,13).
7. Let us prayerfully, thoughtfully, and joyfully sing the statutes of God's law.
8. Marvelous blessings come to those who keep God's law.

PSALM 119:57-64 (Heth)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. AFFIRMATION
57a

The Psalmist affirms:

1. The Lord is my portion (my inheritance).

II. PROMISE
57b

The Psalmist promises:

1. I will keep thy words.

III. PLEA
58

The Psalmist makes a fervent plea:

1. I entreat thy favor with all my heart;
2. Be gracious to me according to thy promise.

IV. CONCERN
59-63

The Psalmist explains that because of his concern for God's law--

1. I turn my feet to thy testimonies;
2. I hasten to keep thy commandments;
3. In spite of opposition, I do not forget thy law;
4. At midnight, I rise to praise thee, because of thy righteous ordinances;
5. I am companion of all who fear thee, of those who keep thy precepts.

V. PRONOUNCEMENT
64

The Psalmist pronounces--

The earth, O Lord, is full of thy steadfast love.

VI. PRAYER
64b

The Psalmist prays:

Teach me thy statutes!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: By keeping God's law we have fellowship with Him, and with all others who keep His law. Cf. 1 Jno. 1:3-7. The Law of Jehovah is the Way of Fellowship.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the inheritance of the righteous;
2. Expects His words to be kept;
3. Is the one whose favor we should seek to have;
4. Is the one whose word we must keep;
5. Is the one whom we must praise--even at midnight (Cf. Acts 16:25,26).

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy words;
2. Thy ways;
3. Thy testimonies;
4. Thy commandments;
5. Thy law;
6. Thy righteous ordinances;
7. Thy precepts;
8. Thy statutes.

III. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD:

1. I promise to keep thy words;
 2. When I think of thy ways . . . ;
 3. I turn my feet to thy testimonies;
 4. I do not delay to keep thy commandments;
 5. I am not turned away from thy word by criticism;
 6. I do not forget thy law;
 7. I praise thee because of thy righteous ordinances;
 8. I fellowship those who keep thy word!
 9. Teach me thy statutes!
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. What a marvelous heritage we have in the Christ, upon the terms of the gospel. Cf. Eph. 1:11-14.
2. By walking according to the word of God we can come to have God's favor, and we can keep that favor upon our lives. These are our basic obligations.
3. "Thinking" upon the Word should cause us to "turn" our feet to God's testimonies, and to "keep" the law of Jehovah.
4. Let us not be disturbed by the criticism of the wicked. Let us not be disturbed by criticisms of brethren who refuse to walk according to the truth.
5. Let us be careful to praise God--even in inconvenient times.
6. We must be concerned about fellowship. By walking by the word of God--and ONLY by walking by the word of God--we can be in fellowship with God, and with all who likewise walk according to the word of God. What a beautiful statement:

"I am a companion of all who fear thee, of those who keep thy precepts."

PSALM 119:65-72 (Teth)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. AFFIRMATION
65

The Psalmist affirms:

Thou hast dealt well with thy servant.

II. PRAYER
66-68

The Psalmist prays:

1. Teach me good judgment;
2. Teach me knowledge;
3. Teach me thy statutes.

III. ILLUSTRATIONS
67-71

The Psalmist illustrates the fact that God has dealt well with him:

1. Enemies do not overcome me--
 - (1) The godless besmear me with lies;
 - (2) Their heart is gross like fat; but
 - (3) They do not keep me from thy word.
2. Affliction does not turn me from thy word:
 - (1) Before I was afflicted I went astray;
but now, I keep thy word;
 - (2) It is good for me that I was afflicted,
that I might learn thy statutes.
3. Thou hast blessed me--
 - (1) Thou has dealt well with thy servant;
 - (2) Thou hast dealt with me according to thy
word;
 - (3) Thou art good and doest good.

IV. WORD
66-72

The Psalmist sets forth his attitude toward God's word:

1. I believe in thy commandments;
2. Now, I keep thy word;

IV. Continued.

3. With my whole heart, I keep thy precepts;
4. I delight in thy law;
5. The law of thy mouth is better to me than
thousands of gold and silver pieces.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God deals with His servants. Even affliction can be a wonderful blessing. The Christian learns to rejoice, even in tribulation (Rom. 5:3). The law of God is better than (is more valuable than) silver and gold. The law of Jehovah is the Way of True Riches.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. God deals with men according to His word;
2. He wants men to learn good judgment and knowledge;
3. It is His commandments that we must believe and obey;
4. Is good, and He does that which is good;
5. It is His law in which we must delight;
6. We must always recognize God's Word as being more valuable than silver and gold.

II. GOD'S WORD.

1. Is that according to which God deals with men;
2. Is the source of knowledge and good judgment;
3. God wants us to know it, and we must want to know it;
4. We must believe it, understanding that Bible faith (availing faith)
means obeying it;
5. Must be kept;

II. Continued.

6. Must be kept with one's whole heart;
7. We are obligated and privileged to "delight" in it;
8. Is more valuable than silver and gold.

III. AFFLICTION.

1. Affliction can be mighty valuable to the individual afflicted--
 - (1) It can make one more concerned about the right way;
 - (2) It can cause one to be more concerned about keeping God's word;
2. The Christian learns to rejoice even in tribulation (Rom. 5:3);
3. Like the Psalmist, we must learn and profit by our afflictions;
4. Affliction can contribute to our learning God's statutes.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God, as He has promised, will "deal well" with all those who put Him and His kingdom first in their lives (Mt. 6:33).
2. God deals with men according to His word, and God (through the Christ) will judge men finally according to his word (Jno. 12:48).
3. We ought to pray to God that He will ever teach us His word, that we may have good judgment and good knowledge, and that we may believe and obey His commandments.
4. Paul commands: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice."
The Christian strives to learn this lesson, and what a wonderful attitude it indicates. The council beat the apostles, and charged them "not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name" (Acts 5:40,41).

5. Many, many people have experienced serious affliction and have written valuable books setting forth the lessons which they learned.
6. God is good, and God does that which is good. He CANNOT do anything which is out of harmony with His nature.
7. May God help us always to be able to distinguish between material riches and "true riches." Moses accounted the "reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb. 11:26).

PSALM 119:73-80 (Yodh)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. AFFIRMATIONS
73-75

The Psalmist affirms:

1. Thy hands have made and fashioned me;
2. Those who fear thee shall see me and rejoice;
3. Thy judgments are right;
4. In faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.

II. PRAYER
73-80

The Psalmist prays:

1. Give me understanding;
2. Let thy steadfast love be ready to comfort me;
3. Let thy mercy come to me, that I may live;
4. Let the godless be put to shame, because they
have deceived me;
5. Let those who fear thee turn to me, that they
may know thy testimonies;
6. May my heart be blameless in thy statutes, that
I may not be put to shame.

III. WORD
73-80

The Psalmist sets forth his concern about God's word:

1. I want to learn thy commandments;
2. I have hoped in thy word;
3. Thy law is my delight;
4. I will meditate on thy precepts;
5. I want to teach thy testimonies to others;
6. I want to live according to thy statutes.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is The Way of Understanding and
Life.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the creator of man;
2. Has given commandments to man;
3. We must seek to understand His commandments;
4. Is always right in His judgments;
5. Can and does afflict human beings according to their needs;
6. Is the God of steadfast love and comfort;
7. Keeps His promises;
8. Is the source of mercy which brings life;
9. Is to be feared (loved, honored, respected, obeyed);
10. Makes it possible for one to be blameless before Him.

II. GOD'S WORD.

1. Involves commandments to be obeyed;
2. Is to be studied and to be learned by men;
3. Is the source of the Christian's hope (Cf. Heb. 11:1);
4. Is the divine law in which we must delight;
5. Is to be taught to all men;
6. Enables one to be blameless before God.

III. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy commandments;
2. Thy word;
3. Thy law;
4. Thy precepts;
5. Thy testimonies;
6. Thy statutes.

IV. MARVELOUS BLESSINGS POSSIBLE FROM GOD:

1. Understanding;
2. Knowledge;
3. Hope;
4. Love;
5. Comfort;
6. Promises;
7. Mercy;
8. Life;
9. Blamelessness;
10. Fulfillment of precious promises.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. You, my friend, have been made and fashioned by the very hands of God.
That significant fact inherently involves your responsibility to Him!
2. As we grow in understanding we grow in learning ability, and which ability we must keep on applying to the study of God's word.
3. It is the word of God which produces our faith, and which faith undergirds our hope, and which hope ties us securely to "that within the veil." (Cf. Heb. 11:1; Heb. 6:19).
4. Though it is the case that God can and does send afflictions, I must not conclude that all afflictions are from God. Often they are the tragic consequences of our own actions.
5. The greatest source of comfort that we have (as we encounter life's problems, difficulties, disappointments, heartaches, tribulations, sorrows) is the Word of God.

6. Understanding that there are many who would seek to lead us astray, let us--all the more--be determined to meditate upon the Word of God.
7. Like the Psalmist, let us pray that we may be the means by which the word of God may be taught to others.
8. If we walk according to the word of God we will be blameless before Him, and we will not meet with disappointment in the final day.

PSALM 119:81-88 (Kaph)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. CONDITION
81-87

The Psalmist describes his condition:

1. My soul languishes for thy salvation;
2. My eyes fail with watching for thy promise;
3. I long for thy comfort;
4. I have become like a wineskin in the smoke;
5. Godless men have dug pitfalls for me;
6. They persecute me with falsehood;
7. They have almost made an end of me on earth.

II. PRAYERS
82-88

The Psalmist prays:

1. When wilt thou comfort me?
2. How long must thy servant endure?
3. When wilt thou judge those who persecute me?
4. Help me!
5. Spare my life.

III. WORD
81-88

The Psalmist expresses his attitude toward God's word:

1. I hope in thy word;
2. I have not forsaken thy statutes;
3. All thy commandments are sure;
4. I have not forsaken thy precepts;
5. I want to keep thy testimonies.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the Way out of Darkness and Despair.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one who provides salvation;
2. Is the one whose word provides hope;
3. Is the one who is able to comfort those who call upon Him;
4. Does sometimes allow His servants to be persecuted;
5. Is the judge of the persecutors;
6. Has given commandments to men;
7. Is characterized by steadfast love;
8. Has spoken testimonies to be kept by men.

II. GOD'S WORD.

1. Is the source of hope;
2. Is intended to be obeyed by men;
3. Is "sure";
4. Is the divine revelation from God to man.

III. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy word;
2. Thy statutes;
3. Thy law;
4. Thy commandments;
5. Thy precepts;
6. Thy testimonies of thy mouth.

IV. BLESSINGS POSSIBLE FROM GOD:

1. Salvation;
2. Hope;
3. Fulfillment of His promises;
4. Comfort;

IV. Continued.

5. Divine judgment upon the persecutors;
6. Divine help;
7. Steadfast love;
8. Sparing of life.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Our very souls should constantly long for the salvation provided by God and made know to us in the New Testament of our Lord.
2. Thanks be unto God for the wonderful hope which is held out before us in His word. Cf. Rom. 8:24; Heb. 6:19.
3. The Psalmist did not ask whether or not God would comfort him. Rather, he asked: "When wilt thou comfort me?" Let us (1) be strong in faith, and (2) learn patience.
4. We must not allow difficult circumstances to keep us from remembering the word of God.
5. "How long must thy servant endure?" "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."
6. In times of persecution we must turn to God for comfort, for deliverance, and for His steadfast love.

PSALM 119:89-96 (Lamedh)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. GOD
89-91

The Psalmist speaks of God:

1. Thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens;
2. Thy faithfulness endures to all generations;
3. Thou hast established the earth, and it stands fast;
4. By thy appointment they stand this day;
5. All things are thy servants.

II. WORD
89-96

The Psalmist emphasizes God's word:

1. It is fixed firmly in the heavens;
2. It brings delight;
3. It delivers from affliction;
4. It deserves to fill the memory;
5. It gives life;
6. It brings salvation;
7. It is to be sought;
8. It is the means of overcoming persecution;
9. It meets every need.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The word of God is fixed, and it endures. It brings wonderful blessings. It is sufficient to furnish the "man of God completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy word;
2. Thy law;

I. Continued.

3. Thy precepts;
4. Thy testimonies;
5. Thy commandments.

II. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S WORD:

1. Recognize that it is firmly fixed in the heavens;
2. Is intended to be our delight;
3. Recognize its power to prevent despair;
4. By it God gives life;
5. Is to be sought by men;
6. Is designed to furnish the "man of God" completely unto every good work."

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God's word stands firmly fixed. In it we place our trust and our confidence.
2. God is concerned about every generation, and His faithfulness endures to all generations.
3. It is God who established the heavens and the earth, and because of His word and His power these continue to stand. God upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3).
4. Genuine delight in the Law of Jehovah can keep one from being overwhelmed by his affliction.
5. God's word is designed to fill our memories, and by it He gives us life.
6. All those who belong to God must keep on seeking the Divine precepts.
In fact, all men have this obligation.

7. We must let nothing come between us and our constant consideration of God's testimonies.
8. The word of God is inspired of God, is authoritative, is powerful, and is designed to meet human needs.

PSALM 119:97-104 (Mem)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. THE WORD
97-104

The Psalmist expresses his attitude toward God's

Word:

1. Oh, how I love thy law!
2. It is my meditation all the day;
3. It is ever with me;
4. Thy testimonies are my meditation;
5. I keep thy precepts;
6. I keep thy word;
7. I observe thy ordinances;
8. I respect thy teaching;
9. How sweet are thy words to my taste, sweeter
than honey to my mouth!

II. THE BLESSINGS
97-104

The Psalmist speaks of the marvelous blessings which
come as a consequence of keeping God's law:

1. I am wiser than my enemies;
2. I have more understanding than all my teachers;
3. I understand more than the aged;
4. I hold back my feet from every evil way;
5. Through thy precepts I get understanding:
therefore, I hate every false way.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Diligent and delightful study of the Law of Jehovah
brings wisdom, understanding, faithfulness, and protection from every false
way.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one who issues divine law;
2. Sets forth commandments to be obeyed;
3. Through His word, He gives understanding;
4. Desires to teach men His will and His way;
5. Makes it possible for men to know and to walk in the true way.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy law;
2. Thy commandment;
3. Thy testimonies;
4. Thy precepts;
5. Thy word;
6. Thy ordinances;

III. RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD:

1. Love it;
2. Meditate upon it all the day;
3. Seek to understand it;
4. Keep it;
5. Walk according to it;
6. Learn it;
7. Delight in it;
8. Hate everything and anything which opposes or contradicts it.

IV. BLESSINGS FROM THE WORD:

1. Wisdom;
2. Understanding;
3. Profitable and delightful meditation;

IV. Continued.

4. Deterrence from sin;
5. Learning from God Himself;
6. Love for the right way--hatred for every false way.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The Christian has a deep and abiding love for the Word of God. This love compels him to seek to know it, to live it, to defend it, and to teach it to others.
2. Do you want to know more than might be indicated by your years? Then study and learn your Bible!
3. We can (and must) pray for wisdom, but we must also study the word of God that we might be truly wise. "But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Jas. 1:5). "Study (Give diligence) to shew (present) thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (handling aright) the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).
4. A mother wrote in a new Bible purchased for her son: "This little book can keep you from sin; nothing but sin can keep you from this little book."
5. The Sacred Testimonies revealed to us in the Word are lessons from God!
6. Note verses 97 and 104: "Oh, how I love thy law!" ". . . therefore I hate every false way." Love for the Word of God will compel a deep hatred for every thing that opposes or contradicts it.

PSALM 119:105-112 (Nun)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. CONDITION
105-112

The Psalmist speaks of his condition:

1. I am sorely afflicted;
2. I hold my life in my hand continually;
3. The wicked have laid a snare for me.

II. PRAYER
105-112

The Psalmist prays:

1. Give me life, according to thy word!
2. Accept my offerings of praise;
3. Teach me thy ordinances.

III. WORD
105-112

The Psalmist emphasizes his attitude toward God's
Word:

1. Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to
my path;
2. I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to observe
thy righteous ordinances;
3. I do not forget thy law;
4. I do not stray from thy precepts;
5. Thy testimonies are my heritage for ever;
6. Thy testimonies are the joy of my heart;
7. I incline my heart to perform thy statutes for
ever.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah brings life and joy. It is the
all-sufficient guide for the weary pilgrim.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one who guides us through life's journey. He guides through His word.
2. Is the revealer of righteous ordinances;
3. Can deliver from affliction;
4. Is the one whom we are to praise;
5. Desires to teach us His ordinances;
6. Has given us His testimonies as our wonderful heritage;
7. Is the one whose statutes we are to perform.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy word;
2. Thy righteous ordinances;
3. Thy law;
4. Thy precepts;
5. Thy testimonies;
6. Thy statutes.

III. RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S WORD:

1. "I have sworn . . . to observe thy righteous ordinances";
2. "Teach me thy ordinances";
3. "I do not forget thy law";
4. "I do not stray from thy precepts";
5. "Thy testimonies are my heritage for ever";
6. "Thy testimonies" . . . are the joy of my heart";
7. "I incline my heart to perform thy statutes for ever."

IV. BLESSINGS FROM THE WORD:

1. Divine guidance;
2. Life;
3. Knowledge;
4. Divine heritage;
5. Joy.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. In this life we are travelling a journey. We have not made this journey before. We need (and we must have) a divine guide--an all-sufficient, infallible guide. This guide is the Bible--the Word of God.
2. "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).
3. If we carry this "lamp" with us through the darkness of life, it will take us safely home.
4. Like the Psalmist, we must make a solemn vow to ourselves and to God that we will observe His righteous ordinances.
5. The Word of God is the source of spiritual life. The Lord said:
" . . . the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life"
(Jno. 6:63).
6. Let us be careful always to hold the Word of God in our memories.
7. We must be careful never to stray from the divine precepts.
8. "Sweeter than honey," "my heritage for ever," "the joy of my heart" -- such phrases indicate to us the attitude we must have toward the word of God.

PSALM 119:113-120 (Samekh)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. PRAYER

The Psalmist prays:

1. Uphold me according to thy promise,
that I may live;
2. Let me not be put to shame in my hope!
3. Hold me up, that--
 - (1) I may be safe;
 - (2) I may have regard for thy statutes
continually!

II. WICKED

The Psalmist speaks of the wicked:

1. I hate double-minded men;
2. God spurns all who go astray from His statutes;
3. Their cunning is in vain;
4. All the wicked of the earth God counts as dross;
5. Depart from me, you evildoers.

III. GOD

The Psalmist speaks of God:

1. Thou art my hiding-place;
2. Thou art my shield;
3. My flesh trembles for fear of thee;
4. I am afraid of thy judgments.

IV. WORD

The Psalmist speaks of God's word:

1. I love thy law;
2. I hope in thy word;
3. I want to keep thy commandments;
4. I want to live;
5. I want to have regard for thy statutes
continually;

IV. Continued.

6. I love thy testimonies.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the Way of Life, the Way of Hope, the Way of Safety, and the Way of Divine Favor.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one whose law we are to love;
2. Is our refuge and our protection;
3. Is the source of our hope;
4. Is the one whose commandments we are to keep;
5. Is the means of spiritual life;
6. Is our security;
7. Is displeased with those who stray from His word;
8. Hates all wickedness;
9. Is to be feared (loved, honored, respected, obeyed).

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy law;
2. Thy word;
3. The commandments of my God;
4. Thy statutes;
5. Thy testimonies;
6. Thy judgments.

III. BLESSINGS FROM GOD'S WORD:

1. Security and comfort;
2. Protection;

III. Continued.

3. Hope;
4. Steadfastness;
5. Promises;
6. Life;
7. Divine favor.

IV. RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD:

1. I love thy law;
2. I hope in thy word;
3. I want to keep thy commandments;
4. I seek the life that comes from thy word;
5. I want to have regard for thy statutes continually;
6. I love thy testimonies.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The Christian properly hates all hypocrisy.
2. We must be characterized by deep and abiding love for the Word of God.
3. We can---and we must---go to God for comfort, security, and blessed hope.
4. The Word is the source of the Christian's hope, and this hope will not meet with disappointment (Cf. Rom. 5:5).
5. "Be not deceived: evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33).
6. "Uphold me according to thy promise." We are upheld by God when we stand upon the promises of God.

PSALM 119:121-128 (Ayin)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. CONDITION

The Psalmist speaks of his condition:

1. My eyes fail with watching--
 - (1) For thy salvation;
 - (2) For the fulfillment of thy righteous promise;
2. The circumstances are such as to require God's action;
3. The law of God has been broken.

II. PRAYER

The Psalmist prays:

1. Do not leave me to my oppressors;
2. Be surety for thy servant for good;
3. Let not the godless oppress me;
4. Deal with thy servant according to thy steadfast love;
5. Teach me thy statutes;
6. Give me understanding.

III. ATTITUDE

The Psalmist sets forth his attitude:

1. I have done what is just and right;
2. I am thy servant;
3. I want to know thy testimonies;
4. I love thy commandments;
5. I direct my steps by all thy precepts;
6. I hate every false way.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the Way of Deliverance from Oppression.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Can deliver His servant from oppressors;
2. Works that which is good for His servant;
3. Is the one who makes salvation possible;
4. Fulfills His promises;
5. Deals with His servants according to His steadfast love;
6. Wants men to know His statutes;
7. Gives understanding to His servants;
8. Takes action when men violate His law;
9. Gives commandments for men to obey.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy statutes;
2. Thy testimonies;
3. Thy law;
4. Thy commandments;
5. Thy precepts.

III. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S WORD:

1. Teach me thy statutes;
 2. Give me understanding;
 3. I want to know thy testimonies;
 4. I love thy commandments;
 5. I direct my steps by all thy precepts.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The Christian is determined (at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances) to do what is just and right--as justness and rightness are set forth in the New Testament.
2. The righteous are not free from oppression and persecution. But the Christian learns to "glorify God" even in the midst of suffering and persecution. "For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Pet. 4;15,16).
3. The Christian is a faithful, devoted, consecrated, dedicated servant of God. "For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son . . . " (Rom. 1:9).
4. God works all things together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28-30).
5. God's steadfast love caused Him to reveal His will to us, and our steadfast love will cause us to be obedient to that will.
6. Let us strive always to love the commandments of God, and let us strive to realize that these commandments are more valuable than fine gold.
7. If we love God's word we will direct our steps by that word, and we will "hate every false way."

PSALM 119:129-136 (Pe)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. GOD

The Psalmist speaks of God:

He is gracious to those who love His name.

II. PRAYER

The Psalmist prays:

1. Turn to me;
2. Be gracious to me;
3. Keep steady my steps according to thy promise;
4. Let no iniquity get dominion over me;
5. Redeem me from man's oppression;
6. Make thy face shine upon thy servant;
7. Teach me thy statutes.

III. ATTITUDE

The Psalmist sets forth his attitude toward God's word:

1. Thy testimonies are wonderful;
2. My soul keeps thy testimonies;
3. The unfolding of thy words gives light;
4. Thy word imparts understanding to the simple;
5. With open mouth I pant for thy word;
6. I long for thy commandments;
7. I want to keep thy precepts;
8. My eyes shed streams of tears because men do not keep thy law.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the Way of Righteousness, Redemption, Divine Favor, our Guiding Light, and our Understanding.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Has given to men testimonies which are "wonderful";
2. Through His word, He imparts understanding to men;
3. Has issued commandments to be obeyed;
4. Wants to bless men, and wonderfully blesses those who love Him;
5. Enables us to be free from the dominion of iniquity;
6. Delivers from oppressors;
7. Extends His favor to His servants.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy testimonies;
2. Thy words;
3. Thy commandments;
4. Thy precepts;
5. Thy statutes;
6. Thy law.

III. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S WORD:

1. Thy testimonies are wonderful;
2. I keep them;
3. It gives light and understanding;
4. I long for thy commandments;
5. I want to keep thy precepts;
6. Teach me thy statutes;
7. My eyes shed streams of tears because men do not keep thy law.

IV. BLESSINGS FROM THE WORD:

1. Light;
2. Understanding;
3. Love extended;
4. Direction (guidance);
5. Freedom from sin;
6. Deliverance from oppression;
7. Divine favor.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The Word of God is wonderful (marvelous) indeed! It is wonderful in all its multitudinous characteristics.
2. Keeping God's law is for our benefit--the better life while here, and eternal life in the hereafter.
3. It is only the word of God which can give us true light and true understanding.
4. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."
5. In a very special way God blessed all those who love Him.
Cf. Rom 8:28-30.
6. When we walk according to God's word, sin can not gain or have dominion over us.
7. Only by our learning and doing God's will can we have His favor upon our lives.
8. Like the Psalmist, we ought to "shed streams of tears" because men refuse to respect God's law.
9. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 Jno. 4:11).

PSALM 119:137-144 (Tzaddi)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. SELF

The Psalmist speaks of himself:

1. I am zealous of thy word;
2. I am small and despised;
3. Trouble and anguish have come upon me.

II. GOD

The Psalmist shows his attitude toward God:

1. Thou art righteous;
2. Thy judgments are right;
3. Thou hast appointed thy testimonies--
 - (1) In righteousness;
 - (2) In faithfulness;
4. Thy righteousness is righteous for ever.

III. WORD

The Psalmist speaks of his attitude toward God's Word:

1. My zeal consumes me, because my foes forget thy words;
2. Thy promise is well tried;
3. I love thy promise;
4. I do not forget thy precepts;
5. Thy law is true;
6. Thy commandments are my delight;
7. Thy testimonies are righteous for ever.

IV. PRAYER

The Psalmist prays:

Give me understanding that I may live.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is Righteousness. It brings understanding and life.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is righteous;
2. Is right in His judgments;
3. In righteousness, He has given us His word;
4. His promises are sure;
5. His righteousness is righteous for ever;
6. His law is true.
7. Enables men to have understanding.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy judgments;
2. Thy testimonies;
3. Thy words;
4. Thy precepts;
5. Thy law;
6. Thy commandments.

III. ON RIGHTEOUSNESS:

1. God Himself is righteous;
2. He appointed His testimonies in righteousness;
3. God's righteousness is righteous for ever;
4. His testimonies are righteous for ever.

IV. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S WORD:

1. It is from God's righteousness, and it makes possible man's
righteousness;
2. I do not forget thy precepts;
3. Thy law is true;
4. Thy commandments are my delight;

IV. Continued.

5. Thy testimonies are righteous for ever.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The gospel of the Christ is God's plan for man's righteousness
(Cf. Rom 1:16,17; Rom. 3:21ff).
2. God, who made man, best knows man, and best knows what is best for man, and has reserved to Himself the right to govern man. The Sacred Rule-Book by which God seeks to govern man is the Bible. This is the very foundation of all law. Laws which men make to govern themselves are rooted in (that is, they must be rooted in) the fact that laws must flow from God (in whom all justice is inherent). God has given to men the right to make laws by which to govern themselves, but with the restriction that these laws must be according to His will. It is true that men often make laws which are not according to God's will, but any and all such is in violation of the basic philosophy of law.
3. We ought to know--even if and when we can not understand certain things--that God's judgments are right.
4. Righteous people are disturbed when men "forget" God's law. God's people are instructed to " . . . have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them . . . " (Eph. 5:11).
5. Even in times of trouble, let us be careful to find genuine "delight" in our study of the commandments of God.
6. Understanding of God's Word is the means of real life.

PSALM 119:145-152 (Qoph)

In this portion of the Psalm we have---

I. CONDITION

The Psalmist speaks of his condition:

1. Persecutors draw near;
2. The persecutors are far from God's law, but
God is near.

II. PRAYER

The Psalmist prays:

1. With my whole heart I cry;
2. Answer me;
3. Save me;
4. I rise early and cry for help;
5. Hear my voice;
6. Preserve my life.

III. WORD

The Psalmist speaks of God's word:

1. I will keep thy statutes;
2. I want to observe thy testimonies;
3. I hope in thy words;
4. I awake early that I may study thy word;
5. All thy commandments are true;
6. Long have I known from thy testimonies that
thou hast founded them forever.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God is near those who are properly concerned about His word. The Law of Jehovah is true, and deserves to be studied. It is salvation, life, hope, and love.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one to whom we cry in times of need;
2. Has given His law to be observed;
3. Is the one who makes it possible for us to have hope;
4. Has given to men precious promises;
5. Is characterized by steadfast love;
6. Is characterized by absolute justice;
7. Is the preserver and sustainer of life;
8. Is not far from each one of us (Cf. Acts 17:27).

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy statutes;
2. Thy testimonies;
3. Thy words;
4. Thy law;
5. Thy commandments.

III. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S WORD:

1. "I will keep thy statutes";
2. " . . . that I may observe thy testimonies";
3. "I hope in thy words";
4. " . . . that I may meditate upon thy promise";
5. " . . . all thy commandments are true";
6. " . . . thou hast founded them for ever."

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. We ought to be deeply grateful that--whatever the need, whatever the problem--we can "take it to the Lord in prayer."

2. Like the Psalmist, we should be anxious to get up early and to stay up late in order to learn more of God's word.
3. Those who persecute the righteous are far away from God's law. Saul of Tarsus--in all honesty, sincerity, and with clear conscience--persecuted the church of the Lord. In so doing, he was persecuting the Christ, and was far away from doing what was right. And, in many other ways men can find themselves far away from God's law.
4. In verse 86 the Psalmist says: All thy commandments are sure. In verse 151 he says: All thy commandments are true. God's commands are sure, and they are true.
5. "The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth for ever." See 1 Pet. 1:24,25.

PSALM 119:153-160 (Resh)

In this portion of the Psalm we have--

I. WICKED

The Psalmist discusses the wicked:

1. Salvation is far from them;
2. They do not seek God's statutes;
3. I look at the faithless with disgust;
4. They do not keep God's commandments.

II. GOD

The Psalmist speaks about God:

1. He delivers;
2. He pleads the cause of the righteous;
3. He redeems;
4. He gives life;
5. He gives salvation;
6. He is great in mercy;
7. He delivers from persecutors.

III. PRAYER

The Psalmist prays:

1. Look on my affliction;
2. Deliver me;
3. Plead my cause;
4. Redeem me;
5. Give me life--according to thy promise;
6. Give me life--according to thy justice;
7. Preserve my life--according to thy steadfast love.

IV. WORD

The Psalmist speaks of God's word:

1. I do not forget thy law;
2. I do not swerve from thy testimonies;

IV. Continued.

3. Consider how I love thy precepts;
4. The sum of thy word is truth;
5. Every one of thy righteous ordinances
endures for ever.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the Way of Life.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Is able to provide deliverance;
2. Is able to "redeem" men;
3. Is the giver and sustainer of life (physical and spiritual);
4. Makes salvation possible;
5. Is great in His mercy;
6. Is wonderful in justice;
7. Is great in steadfast love;
8. Is the giver of righteous ordinances which will endure for ever.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy law;
2. Thy statutes;
3. Thy testimonies;
4. Thy commands;
5. Thy precepts;
6. Thy word;
7. Thy righteous ordinances.

III. BLESSINGS POSSIBLE FROM GOD.

1. Deliverance from affliction;
2. Redemption;
3. Life;
4. Sacred promises;
5. Salvation;
6. Mercy;
7. Justice;
8. Steadfast love;
9. His enduring word.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Let us imitate the Psalmist's attitude toward God's law: (1) He did not forget it; (2) He did not swerve from it; (3) He loved it; (4) He recognized that it would endure for ever.
2. As was the case with the Psalmist, we need someone to plead our cause. The Christian has "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jno. 2:1).
3. Those who persecute the righteous are "far from" the law of God (verse 150). Salvation is "far from" the wicked (verse 155).
4. A common factor in the lives of evil persons is: they do not seek God's law.
5. Regardless of how many the persecutors or how many the adversaries, we must not swerve from God's testimonies.
6. The whole of anything is the sum of its parts. If each part is truth, the whole is truth. "The sum of thy word is truth; and every one of thy righteous ordinances endures for ever."

PSALM 119:161-168 (Schin)

It is significant that this stanza contains no petition. The Psalmist stresses his love for God's word.

He speaks of--

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I. AWE | Even in the midst of persecution,
I stand in awe of thy words. |
| II. JOY | I rejoice at thy word--
like one who finds great spoil. |
| III. LOVE | I hate and abhor falsehood,
but <u>I love thy law</u> . |
| IV. PRAISE | Seven times a day I praise thee
for thy righteous ordinances. |
| V. SECURITY | Those who love thy law have great peace.
Nothing can make them stumble. |
| VI. HOPE | I hope for thy salvation, O Lord. |
| VII. OBEDIENCE | I do thy commandments. |
| VIII. LOVE | My soul keeps thy testimonies;
<u>I love them exceedingly</u> . |
| IX. OBEDIENCE | Knowing that my whole life is before thee,
I keep thy precepts and thy testimonies. |

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is the Way of Joy, Hope, Love, and Security. It is the proper object of our love. Biblical love for God and His Word compels obedience to God's word. Cf. Jno. 14:15.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Has given to man His sacred words;
2. Is deserving of our constant praise;
3. Is the giver of His righteous ordinances;
4. Is the giver of "great peace" to those who love His law;
5. Makes possible our salvation, and
6. Gives us wonderful hope;
7. Expects men to do His commandments;
8. Is the one before whom we spend our lives.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy words;
2. Thy word;
3. Thy law;
4. Thy righteous ordinances;
5. Thy commandments;
6. Thy testimonies;
7. Thy precepts.

III. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S WORD:

1. "My heart stands in awe of thy words";
 2. "I rejoice at thy word like one who finds great spoil";
 3. "I love thy law";
 4. " . . . I praise thee for thy righteous ordinances";
 5. "I do thy commandments";
 6. "My soul keeps thy testimonies";
 7. "I do love thee exceedingly."
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The Psalmist says: "Princes persecute me without cause, but my heart stands in awe of thy words." The Berkeley reading suggests that the Psalmist dreaded desecration of God's word more than he dreaded the force of his enemies. Likewise, we should be careful and fearful before God lest we mis-use His word. Too, we should be appalled when men desecrate God's word.
 2. Every wonderful lesson we learn from God's word is more valuable than a gold nugget dug out of the ground.
 3. Love for the right compels hatred for every false way. The Christian cannot be neutral. The Record says: " . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).
 4. We must be thankful to God and praise Him constantly for His righteous ordinances.
 5. Great and wonderful peace comes to those who love the Word of God. The Christ is the Prince of Peace, and the gospel is the Gospel of Peace.
 6. Those who love the word of God love the Son of God. Those who love the Son of God "keep His commandments (Jno. 14:15). Those who keep on keeping His commandments do not stumble.
 7. Blessed hope is directly related to our keeping God's commandments.
 8. Like the Psalmist, let us love the Word, and keep it faithfully-- understanding that all our ways are before God. He is our audience!
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PSALM 119:169-176 (Tau)

In This portion of the Psalm we have---

I. WORD

The Psalmist speaks of God's word:

1. It gives me understanding;
2. It provides deliverance;
3. It brings God's help;
4. It makes possible man's salvation.

II. ATTITUDE

The Psalmist shows his attitude toward God's word:

1. I want understanding--according to thy word!
2. I seek deliverance--according to thy word!
3. I want to know thy statutes;
4. All thy commandments are right (righteous);
5. I have chosen thy precepts;
6. I long for thy salvation, O Lord;
7. Thy law is my delight;
8. I do not forget thy commandments;

III. PRAYER

The Psalmist prays:

1. Listen to me;
2. Give me understanding according to thy word!
3. Let my supplication come before thee;
4. Deliver me according to thy word.

IV. PROMISE

The Psalmist promises:

1. My lips will pour forth praise that thou dost
teach me thy statutes;
2. My tongue will sing of thy word.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Law of Jehovah is The Way of Understanding,
Deliverance, Help, Salvation, and Life.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one to whom we pray;
2. Is the source of true understanding;
3. Is the source of deliverance;
4. Is the one whom we constantly praise;
5. Teaches us His statutes;
6. We are to sing of His word;
7. Is ready to help us;
8. Is the one who makes our salvation possible;
9. Is the one in whose law we must delight;
10. Is the giver and sustainer of life;
11. Helps us through His word;
12. Is ever concerned about us.

II. GOD'S WORD IS HERE CALLED:

1. Thy word;
2. Thy statutes;
3. Thy commandments;
4. Thy precepts;
5. Thy law;
6. Thy ordinances.

III. BLESSINGS FROM THE WORD OF GOD:

1. Understanding;
2. Deliverance;
3. Lessons;
4. Help;
5. Salvation;

6. Joy;
7. Life;
8. Restoration.

IV. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S WORD:

1. " . . . give me understanding according to thy word";
2. " . . . deliver me according to thy word";
3. " . . . thou dost teach me thy statutes";
4. " . . . for all thy commandments are right";
5. " . . . for I have chosen thy precepts";
6. " . . . thy law is my delight";
7. " . . . let thy ordinances help me";
8. " . . . I do not forget thy commandments."

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Man's second highest privilege: Talking to God in prayer!
2. Man's highest privilege: Listening as God talks to him through His Word.
3. All proper understanding comes from or is in harmony with the word of God.
4. The Word of God can deliver us from difficulties, and the word of God can keep us from getting into difficulties.
5. We must constantly praise God in ordinary speech, and in song.
6. All God's commandments are sure (verse 86); all God's commandments are true (verse 151); all God's commandments are right (righteous) (verse 172).
7. The Word of God is the way to salvation.
8. Like the Good Shepherd, God is concerned about the sheep that have gone astray. He has instructed His people to seek out those lost sheep, and try to bring them back into the fold.

PSALM 120

A CRY TO GOD, IN THE MIDST OF LYING TONGUES

In this Psalm we have--

I. CONDITION The Psalmist speaks of his condition:

1. A condition of distress;
2. As dwelling among--
 - (1) People who are hostile as rude barbarians;
 - (2) People of lying lips;
 - (3) People who hate peace;
 - (4) People who are for war.

II. PRAYER
1,2 The Psalmist cries to God for deliverance from--

1. Lying lips;
2. A deceitful tongue.

III. QUESTION
3,4 The Psalmist addresses the possessor of the lying and
deceitful tongue, and asks--

1. What shall be given to you?
2. What more shall be done to you?

IV. LAMENTATION
5-7 The Psalmist laments the fact that he is compelled to
live among wicked people:

1. Woe is me, I dwell--
 - (1) In Meshech;
 - (2) Among the tents of Kedar;
 2. Too long have I had my dwelling among those who
hate peace--
 - (1) I am for peace;
 - (2) They are for war.
-

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is possible for one to live righteously in spite of the wickedness of the world. Cf. 2 Pet. 2:7,8. The Psalmist's condition of distress caused him to "cry to the Lord." Distressing (even wicked) circumstances should compel us all the more to be determined to worship God, and to do that which is right. Cf. Heb. 10:25.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one to whom we cry--to whom we pray;
2. Is the one who delivers;
3. Is the one who hears and answers our prayers;
4. Can decisively punish the enemy.

II. DWELLING WHICH PRODUCES DISTRESS:

1. Among people of lying lips;
2. Among people of deceitful speech;
3. Among rude barbarians;
4. Among people who hate peace;
5. Among people who want war!

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. "In my distress I cry to the Lord, that he may answer me." Note: (1) the condition, (2) the cry, and (3) the confidence. Regardless of the situation or the problem at hand, let us--in all confidence--be anxious to take the matter to God in prayer.
2. Tragic indeed can be the consequences of lying. Good reputations have been destroyed by lying tongues. " . . . and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is

the second death" (Rev. 22:8).

3. A boat in the water is a good thing, but water in the boat can be a bad thing. It was bad when Lot moved his house into Sodom; it was worse when Sodom moved into Lot's house.
4. The Lord showed us how to live. He demonstrated that it is possible for one to live righteously, in spite of the wickedness of the world. He is our marvelous--perfect--example.
5. The strain and the stress of living in the midst of ungodly attitudes and conduct should create within each of us the deeper longing for the place of worship--the place of fellowship with those of kindred spirits.
6. Inspiration says: "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Eph. 4:29). Also, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6).

PSALM 121

JEHOVAH IS MY HELP

In this Psalm we have--

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I. SEARCH
1a | The Psalmist refers to his longing for needed help:

1. Jerusalem--toward which he was journeying--was
surrounded by beautiful hills.

2. "I lift up my eyes to the hills." |
| II. QUESTION
1b | The Psalmist asks:

"From whence does my help come?" |
| III. ANSWER
2 | The Psalmist answers the question:

"My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and
earth." |
| IV. ASSURANCE
3,4 | The Psalmist speaks forth words of assurance:

1. He will not let your foot be moved;

2. He who keeps you will not slumber;

3. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor
sleep. |
| V. ELABORATION
5-8 | The Psalmist elaborates upon the help which comes
from God:

1. The Lord is <u>your</u> keeper;

2. He is your comfort and protection at all times;

3. He will keep you--
(1) From all evil;
(2) In protecting your life;
(3) In your going out and in your coming in--
from this time forth and for evermore. |
-

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Psalmist speaks of help: (1) the need for it; (2) false helps; (3) right-true-help. Men often look to the mountains for help, but our real help comes from Him who made the mountains. Cf. Heb. 13:6. When we have the right attitude toward worshipping God we can rest in the security of His love and protection and presence--even when we are away from the designated place of worship.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one who provides genuine help;
2. Is the one who made heaven and earth;
3. Will direct our steps if we will let Him do so;
4. Is our protection and security;
5. Is our joy and comfort.

II. JEHOVAH--THE KEEPER OF ISRAEL.

1. He will not let your foot be moved;
2. He will stay awake and watch;
3. He will provide wonderful comfort;
4. He will keep you from evil;
5. He will keep your life;
6. He will keep your going out and coming in.

III. THE GREAT GUARDIAN OF ISRAEL:

1. Is the source of our help;
2. Is all-powerful;
3. Is constant in His watchful care;
4. Is the source of comfort and security;
5. Is our mighty shield.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. "So that with courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me" (Heb. 13:6).
2. Obviously, there are different kinds of "help." But in matters pertaining to spiritual life, salvation, godliness, hope, eternity--our "help" can come only from God (through Jesus Christ, according to the terms of the gospel).
3. The Psalmist did not believe the theory of evolution. He simply and forthrightly declares that God "made the heaven and the earth."
4. God will provide the right way for us, but we must be careful to walk in that way--within the confines of the light of His word.
5. The ever-watchful Watchman (1) is all-powerful, (2) is all-protecting, (3) is all-comforting, (4) is all sustaining, and (5) is all-caring.

PSALM 122

JOY IN CONTEMPLATION OF JERUSALEM

In this Psalm we have--

I. JOY

1

The Psalmist speaks of personal joy:

1. This is the joy that was his when he received the invitation to join with others in the journey to Jerusalem.
2. He says: "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'"

II. APPROACH

2

The Psalmist speaks of the delight of the pilgrims when they came within the gates of the city: "Our feet have been standing (are standing) within your gates, O Jerusalem!"

III. JERUSALEM

3-5

The Psalmist speaks a beautiful doxology about Jerusalem:

1. Jerusalem is built as a city which is bound firmly together;
2. It is the city to which the tribes of the Lord go up;
3. The tribes of the Lord go up to this city because God so decreed;
4. The tribes of the Lord go up to this city to give thanks in the name of the Lord;
5. There, thrones of judgment were set;
6. There, were set the thrones of the house of David.

IV. EXHORTATION

6

The Psalmist exhorts:

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!"

V. PRAYER

6b-7

The Psalmist himself prays for Jerusalem:

1. May they prosper who love you;
2. May peace be found within your walls;

V. Continued.

3. May security be found within your towers!

VI. PROMISE
8,9

The Psalmist promises:

1. For my brethren and companions' sake I will say:

Peace be within you;

2. For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I
will seek your good.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: We ought to rejoice as we contemplate the blessings and privileges and opportunities inherent in our worship to God. There is something wrong in the heart of the worshipper when worship is a matter of obligation only.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the object of our worship;
2. Is the one whom we delight to worship;
3. Is the one whom we obey;
4. Is the one to whom we give our thanks;
5. Is concerned about righteous judgment;
6. Is able to prosper (abundantly bless) those who love His church;
7. Is the giver of peace and security.

II. OUR JERUSALEM:

Old Testament Israel was a type of New Testament Israel (Spiritual)-- the church of our Lord. Paul says: ". . . but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and

to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn (ones) who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, . . . " (Heb. 12:22,23).

Thus, we note--

1. Our Jerusalem is the church of our Lord;
2. It is the city of the Living God;
3. It is the city bound firmly together;
4. It is the city to which all men of all nations and tribes are invited--that they might share its blessings;
5. It is the city in which thanksgiving is expressed to God;
6. It is ruled by Him who occupies the throne of David;
7. We must pray for the peace of our Jerusalem;
8. We must tell others about the peace and security to be found in Jerusalem;
9. We must all always seek the good of Jerusalem.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. We ought to be glad--truly glad--in our opportunities to worship God.
I have an obligation to worship, and I intend to meet that obligation.
But, I do not want to worship just because I have the obligation. I want to experience the real joy, delight, and gladness that God intends.
2. Let us constantly remind and encourage our brethren to be faithful in the assemblies of worship (exhortation). Cf. Heb. 10:25.
3. In New Testament Christianity the "house of the Lord" is not a literal, physical, building. Rather, it is a spiritual temple, consisting of

all those who are truly obedient to God's will. Cf. 1 Cor. 3:16,17;
1 Cor. 6:19,20.

4. God intends for His people to be firmly bound together--(1) by the love of God, (2) by love for each other, (3) by love for and obedience to the word of God, (4) by working together for the salvation of souls.
 5. God expected Old Testament Israel to obey His law, and He expects New Testament Israel (and all men for that matter) to obey His will.
 6. Marvelous blessings (peace, prosperity, security, fellowship) are to be found in Jerusalem--in the church of the Living God.
 7. Let us constantly seek the good of the church. Paul says: "I do all things for the gospel's sake" (1 Cor. 9:23).
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PSALM 123

LOOKING TO GOD AND PLEADING FOR MERCY

In this Psalm we have--

I. LOOK
1,2

The Psalmist speaks of his looking to God:

1. To thee--who art enthroned in the heavens--I lift
my eyes;

2. My eyes look to thee--

(1) As the eyes of servants look to the hand of
their master;

(2) As the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her
mistress;

3. Our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he have
mercy upon us.

II. MERCY
3,4

The Psalmist pleads for mercy:

1. The plea: Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy
upon us;

2. The grounds for the plea:

(1) For we have had more than enough of contempt;

(2) Too long our soul has had more than enough of
the contempt of the proud.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The faithful are "servants" and "maids" of Jehovah.
They are loving, humble, submissive, obedient, and dependent. In joy and
confidence they look to the Master for His blessings.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one to whom we pray;
2. Is enthroned in the heavens;
3. Is the one to whom we look for mercy;
4. Is the one who can and who does extend mercy.

II. THE FAITHFUL SERVANT:

1. Belongs to God;
2. Looks to God for divine blessings;
3. Works to accomplish the Master's will;
4. Realizes his complete dependence upon His master.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Like the Psalmist, we must lift up our eyes--not to the hills, but to--
the God of the hills.
2. God is enthroned in the heavens, and has the authority and the power to
rule the universe.
3. God is a God of mercy, and His mercy is extended to men because of His
love.
4. The Lord taught the importance of persistence in prayer (Lk. 18:1-8).
Likewise, with regard to mercy. We must " . . . look to God till he
have mercy upon us."
5. The rich mercy of God extended to us enables us to forget (or disregard)
the contempt and the scorn of the wicked.
6. The Psalmist speaks of the wicked: (1) they hold the righteous in con-
tempt; (2) they scorn the righteous; (3) they are haughty and proud;

(4) they are at ease; (5) they are not the ones upon whom God pours out His mercy.

7. When they have had "more than enough of contempt," and when we are treated with scorn by "those who are at ease"--let us rejoice that we can look to God for His continuing mercy.

PSALM 124

THANKSGIVING FOR ESCAPE FROM DANGER

In this Psalm we have--

I. RECOGNITION

1-5

The Psalmist speaks in recognition of the fact that it was the Lord who provided escape from great danger.

1. Circumstances--

(1) When men rose up against us;

(2) When their anger was kindled against us;

2. Condition--If it had not been the Lord who was on our side . . .

3. Consequences--

(1) They would have swallowed us up alive;

(2) The flood would have swept us away;

(3) The torrent would have gone over us;

(4) The raging waters would have gone over us.

II. THANKSGIVING

6-8

In thanksgiving, the Psalmist exclaims:

Blessed be the Lord!

1. We have not been left as prey;

2. We have escaped as a bird from a trap;

3. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is God who watches over, provides for, and gives protection to His people. "If God is for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8:3).

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Stands near, ready and able to help;
2. Is concerned about the perils of His people;
3. Is not deterred by the fierce anger of the enemy;
4. Is abundantly able to protect His people;
5. He made the heaven and the earth.

II. WHEN GOD IS WITH US.

1. If God had not been with His people, enemies
 - (1) Would have swallowed them up alive;
 - (2) Would have swept them away like a flood;
 - (3) Would have gone over them like raging waters.
2. But, since, God was with His people--
 - (1) He did not allow them to be captured as prey;
 - (2) He enabled them to escape the snare of the fowlers;
 - (3) He provided for them the help which gave them victory.
3. This beautiful little Psalm so aptly describes so many situations in Israel's history.
 - (1) God did not allow the Israelites to be captured by Pharaoh's army;
 - (2) He did not allow the enemies to keep Nehemiah and his workers from building the wall;
 - (3) He did not allow the powers of Babylon and Persia to hold them for ever in captivity.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. If we are on the Lord's side, then we must be certain that the Lord is on our side. It is our responsibility to be on the Lord's side. A

lady once asked Abraham Lincoln: "Mr. Lincoln, are you sure the Lord is on your side?" He responded: "Ma'am, I am not really concerned about whether or not the Lord is on my side--but I am mightily concerned about whether or not I am on the Lord's side."

2. What wonderful comfort, joy, consolation--to know that regardless of the problem at hand, the Lord is standing near and is ready to help.
"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Rev. 2:1).
The CHRIST OF THE CANDLESTICKS, the LORD OF THE LAMPSTANDS!
3. Even when men had forsaken Paul, the Lord stood by him--strengthened him, and delivered him (2 Tim. 4:16-17).
4. The righteous are not exempt from hatred and persecution. The righteous learn to rejoice even in tribulation, " . . . knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness, and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame . . . " (Rom. 5:3-5).
5. "So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me" (Heb. 13:6).
6. The Berkeley Version has this interesting note: "During the twenty-three hundred bombings of the Island of Malta in World War II, as the people gathered for prayer, this was their favorite Psalm."

PSALM 125

JEHOVAH, THE PROTECTORY OF HIS PEOPLE

The Psalmist--

I. EXPRESSES

1

Confidence in Jehovah:

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion--

1. It cannot be moved;

2. It abides for ever.

II. SPEAKS

2

Of God's protecting care:

The Lord is round about His people--as the mountains
are round about Jerusalem.

III. STRESSES

3

That God will not allow wickedness to destroy
Israel:

1. The power of wickedness shall not rest upon the
land allotted to the righteous;

2. This is the case so that the righteous will not
be induced to put forth their hands to do wrong.

IV. PRAYS

4

For God's blessings to be upon the righteous:

1. Do good, O Lord, to those who are good;

2. Do good, O Lord, to those who are upright in
their hearts!

V. WARNS

5

With regard to the wicked:

Those who turn aside upon their crooked ways, the
Lord will lead away with evildoers!

VI. PRAYS

5b

For peace:

Peace be in Israel!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The Lord is the protector of those who place their
trust in Him.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one in whom we are to place our trust;
2. Is the constant and enduring protection of His people;
3. His enduring protection is symbolized by the mountains surrounding Jerusalem;
4. Does "good" to those who are "good";
5. Punishes the evildoers;
6. Is the God of peace.

II. PEACE BE IN ISRAEL.

1. God is the God of Peace;
2. Christ is the Prince of Peace;
3. The gospel is the Gospel of Peace;
4. The Christian's mind is the Mind of Peace.

III. THOSE WHO TRUST IN THE LORD---

1. Cannot be moved;
2. Have the protection of the Lord;
3. Will not be induced to evil;
4. Will receive the good which comes from the Lord;
5. Will experience the peace which comes from God.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Morgan says: "As in the previous song they looked back to that from which they had escaped, in this they look forward to that to which they go." " . . . forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before . . . " let us " . . . press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling

of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13,14).

2. Certain things cannot be moved: (1) Mount Zion, (2) those who trust in the Lord, (3) the New Testament church--Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28; Mt. 16:18--(4) the Word of God--1 Pet. 1:25--(5) the life which is built upon the rock. Mt. 7:24ff.
3. We are easily influenced by those about us--by those with whom we associate. God forbids that our associations be such as would lead us into sin. For this reason God commanded the Israelites to drive out (to destroy) the Canaanites. Paul says: "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20). Cf. Ps. 1:1; Rom. 12:1,2.
4. God's people are required to be doers of that which is "good."
Cf. Jas. 1:23-25; Gal. 6:10. This does not mean that we can earn or merit our salvation. But, the fact remains that the kind of faith which avails before God is the live, active, working, obedient faith (James 2:14-26). "My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous . . . " (1 Jno. 3:7).

PSALM 126

JOY IN RESTORATION

"The pilgrims have looked back and praised Jehovah for escape. They have looked on, and praised Him for their hope and present sense of security. Now they break forth into an expression of their glad experience" (Morgan).

The Psalm likely relates to the early part of the Ezra-Nehemiah period. Cyrus had given the great Emancipation Proclamation, which allowed all the Jews who desired to do so to return to their homeland. Many (under Zerubbabel) had returned. They had returned with great joy, and for a time all things were well with them. As they had been charged, they began work on Jehovah's house. However, they met some opposition. They became discouraged. They ceased their work on Jehovah's house, and concentrated upon their own houses and upon their own affairs. God ceased to pour out His blessings upon them. Cf. Haggai 1. In fear and anxiety--yet, in wonderful confidence--the people pray for and look forward to "better days."

In this Psalm we have--

I. JOY
1-3

The Psalmist speaks of the joy of God's people when deliverance came. When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion (when the Lord brought back those who returned to Zion, ASV)--

1. We were like those who dream--we could scarcely believe it;
2. Our mouth was filled with laughter;
3. Our tongue was filled with shouts of joy;
4. Even the nations acknowledged that God had done great things for us;

I. Continued.

5. And, we acknowledge that God has done great things for us;

6. We are glad.

II. PRAYER
4,5

The Psalmist prays:

1. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the water-courses in the Southland are restored when the rains come;
2. May those who sow in tears (in deep realization of the desperate need even for the seed which is being sown) reap with shouts of joy (in realization of bountiful harvest).

III. PROMISE
6

In wonderful confidence the Psalmist promises:

1. He that goes forth weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy;
2. The sower shall return home bringing his sheaves with him.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Contemplation of the great things which God has done for us causes us to be filled with joy. We should express that joy in private and in public. We should express that joy in worship, in living, and in teaching others. Even in times of disappointment we must maintain our confidence that God will bring about "better days."

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. It was God who brought His people back to Zion.

I. Continued.

2. Does great things for His people;
3. Is the source of the greatest joy;
4. Is abundantly able to provide for His own;
5. Is fully aware of the sins of His people, and allows them to suffer the consequences of their unfaithfulness;
6. Can bless the seed sown to the realization of wonderful harvest.

II. OFTEN, BECAUSE OF DIVINE BLESSINGS RECEIVED--

1. We find it difficult to accept the reality of it;
2. We are filled with laughter;
3. Our tongues are filled with shouts of joy;
4. Even the outsiders are compelled to recognize that "God has done great things for them."

III. CHRISTIANS REJOICE IN THEIR SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST--BECAUSE OF

1. The incomprehensibleness of it;
2. The sheer delight which it brings;
3. The marvelous blessings which it entails;
4. The fact that it was made possible by God, and through Jesus Christ;
5. The new life which it makes possible.

IV. THE SOWER MAY WEEP--

1. Because of the desperate need to use the seed for food;
 2. Because of the great value of the seed;
 3. Because of the unfavorable soil and circumstances for sowing;
 4. Because enemies may not allow the realization of fruition;
 5. Because of the great labor indicated (yet to be performed) when the seed is sown.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. In churches of Christ we are sincerely concerned about bringing men to Zion. We constantly plead with men to return to the gospel as God gave it, and to the church as the New Testament describes it. We plead with men to leave the maze of denominationalism and to be content to be simple, New Testament Christians.
2. Only God could take Israel out of bondage and restore them to their homeland. Only God can take the sinner out of bondage to sin and enable him to experience the joys of salvation in Christ.
3. So often our blessings received are so great and so numerous and so wonderful that "we scarce can take it in."
4. It would be interesting and profitable for us to make a list of some of the great things which God had done for Israel. It would be interesting and profitable for us to make a list of some of the great things which God has done for us.
5. As Christians, we have the sacred obligation and divine privilege of sowing the seed of the kingdom. The "seed" is the word of God (Lk. 8:11). There is a desperate need for more "sowers." It is our job to plant and to water, knowing that in His own time and in His own way God will give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

PSALM 127

EXCEPT THE LORD EXTEND HIS BLESSINGS . . .

In this Psalm we have--

I. FUTILITY
1,2

The Psalmist speaks of the futility of human effort without divine favor and blessings:

1. Unless the Lord builds the house (family)--
they labor in vain that build it;
2. Unless the Lord watches over the city--
the watchman stays awake in vain--
3. Unless the Lord bestows His blessings--
it is vain to rise early, labor anxiously, and
stay up late to extend the day;
4. Unless the Lord bestows His favor--
even the sleep will not be as wonderful as it
otherwise would be.

II. CHILDREN
3-5

The Psalmist speaks of children--in the family built by God:

1. Children are a heritage of Jehovah;
2. Children are a reward from God;
3. They are like the arrows of a warrior;
4. Happy is the man who has many children;
5. They are a source of strength to their father.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: This Psalm emphasizes the absolute futility of life without divine favor and blessings. It thus stresses the importance of our being approved unto God.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the BUILDER of the HOUSE;
2. Is the WATCHMAN over the CITY;
3. Is the GIVER of wonderful REST to the LABORER;
4. Is the DEFENDER of the FATHER and of the FAMILY.

II. OUR PROTECTOR: Jehovah protects--

1. The HOUSE;
2. The CITY;
3. The LABORER;
4. The FATHER.

III. VANITY. Without divine favor and blessings, it is in vain that men attempt--

1. To build a FAMILY;
2. To establish a CITY;
3. To LABOR meaningfully;
4. To try to crowd more WORK into the DAY.

IV. CHILDREN--

1. Are entrusted to our care by God Himself;
2. Are intended to be wonderful blessings to their parents;
3. Can extend the strength and influence of their parents;
4. Are intended to be a tremendous source of joy--not sorrow--to their parents.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God is the protector of the family, of the city, and of the nation. The strength of any nation is its righteousness--not its atom bombs!

2. It is tragic indeed when God refuses to bless the labors of human hands. God said to Israel: "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; yet eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (Hag. 1:6).
3. Every human being has two basic obligations in life: (1) To come to have God's favor upon his life, and (2) to keep that favor upon His life. It is the gospel of Christ that makes it possible for us to come to have and to keep this divine favor. Nothing else can do the job.
4. If we realize the futility of labor without divine favor, we realize our utter dependence upon God. He is the one from whom all blessings come (Jas. 1:17).
5. It is God who meets even our physical needs---including wonderful, refreshing, renewing sleep and rest.
6. God is concerned about the family, and God's people must always be concerned about the family. In order for the home to be what God wants it to be, it must conform to the divine rule-book, the Bible.

PSALM 128

BLESSED IS THE FATHER WHO FEARS THE LORD

As the previous Psalm placed special emphasis upon the family, this Psalm places special emphasis upon the father in the family.

In this Psalm we have--

I. PRONOUNCEMENT

1

The Psalmist proclaims that certain fathers are blessed:

1. Those who fear (revere) the Lord;
2. Those who walk (live) in His ways.

II. EXPLANATION

2-4

The Psalmist explains wherein this father will be blessed:

1. He will eat the fruit of the labor of his hands;
2. He will be happy;
3. Things will be well with him;
4. His wife will be a wonderful blessing to him;
5. His children will be a wonderful blessing to him.

III. PRAYER

5,6

The Psalmist prays:

1. May the Lord bless you from Zion;
2. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life;
3. May you see your grandchildren;
4. May you experience peace.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: In order that we may be blessed of God and that we may be a blessing to our families--May God help us to be the kind of fathers we ought to be--fathers who fear the Lord. (Cf. Eph. 6:4).

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Blesses those persons who have the right attitude toward Him;
2. Has made known His ways in which He expects men to walk;
3. Is able to bless the labors of human hands;
4. Is the source of real happiness and joy;
5. In blessing the man "who fears the Lord" God blesses the man's wife and children;
6. Pours out His blessings in and through Zion--the New Testament Church;
7. Grants us our children and our grandchildren--with all the responsibilities attendant thereto;
8. Is the source of real peace.

II. THE FAMILY BLESSED OF GOD.

This Psalm refers in a very special way to the family, and--in particular--to the father in the family. It stresses that the right attitude (the fear of the Lord) is that which produces the family which God desires. It teaches that the family blessed of God is a blessing to Zion. Blessings come through Zion, and God's families are blessings to Zion.

The family blessed of God (1) has a father (husband) who fears the Lord; (2) a wife and mother who is "like a fruitful vine"; and (3) children

and grandchildren who are a delight to their parents and grandparents.

An ancient proverb holds--

If there be righteousness within the individual,
there will be happiness within the home.

If there be happiness within the home,
there will be harmony within the nation;

If there be harmony within the nation,
there will be peace in the world!

The message is: Blessed is the father who fears the Lord.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. When a person fears the Lord and walks in His ways--(1) he shall eat the fruit of the labor of his hands; (2) he shall be blessed with wonderful happiness; (3) it shall be well with him; (4) God will bless the other members of his family.
2. God wants His people to be happy, and He has set forth the sacred rules which will make possible the greatest happiness. But, human beings must follow the rules.
3. In New Testament times, Zion is the church of our Lord. To be in the church is to be in the Christ. All spiritual blessings are granted to and are bestowed upon those who are in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
4. May God help us at all times to be properly concerned about the welfare of Jerusalem (about the church of our Lord).
5. When the families are what God wants them to be, there will be "peace in Israel."
6. Morgan refers to the God-fearing man, the God-fearing family, and the God-fearing city. The God-fearing family issues from the God-fearing husband/father. The God-fearing city issues from the God-fearing families. So much depends upon that God-fearing husband/father.

PSALM 129

A PSALM OF CONFIDENCE

In this Psalm we have--

I. AFFLICTION
1-3

The Psalmist speaks of Israel's affliction in times past:

1. Sorely have they afflicted me from my youth;
2. Yet, they have not prevailed against me;
3. The plowers plowed upon my back (I have been beaten, scourged);
4. The plowers made long their furrows--the beatings have been severe.

II. PROCLAMATION
4

The Psalmist makes a proclamation about the Lord:

1. The Lord is righteous;
2. He had cut the cords of the wicked.

III. PRAYER
5-8

The Psalmist prays with regard to the enemies. May those who hate Zion--

1. Be put to shame;
2. Be turned backward;
3. Be like grass upon the housetops--
 - (1) Which withers before it grows up;
 - (2) Which the reaper does not reap;
 - (3) Which the binder does not bind;
 - (4) Which does not have God's blessings.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: G. Campbell Morgan suggests: "In times of peril it is a good thing for the pilgrim to strengthen the heart by looking back and remembering past deliverances." Consideration of past deliverances

leads to confidence with regard to the future. This great lesson is vividly taught in the book of Numbers. Old Testament Israel was slow to learn that blessings of the past were intended by God to be assurances with regard to the future. Seeing what God has done in the past, why should I be afraid of the present? or of the future?

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is righteous;
2. Sometimes allows His people to be persecuted;
3. Is able to defeat the efforts, schemes, and labors of the wicked;
4. Has dealt with the wicked in times past, and He will deal with the wicked in the present and in the future.

II. A WONDERFUL ATTITUDE.

Israel was afflicted from her youth, was persecuted, and was enslaved. But, she was not "prevailed against." She was not destroyed. She recognized that God is righteous. She was mindful of and depended upon God's power. In the midst of sufferings she could still pray to God for deliverance.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The church of our Lord, even from its infancy, has been hated and has been persecuted. Thousands and thousands of efforts have been made to bring about her destruction. And, time and time again the church has been temporarily defeated. But, the church lives to proclaim: "Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up." It is the "kingdom

which cannot be shaken" (Heb. 12:28). It is that kingdom which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:14).

2. It is right for the faithful to pray to God for the defeat of the efforts of those who hate the church, the gospel, the Word of God.
3. God never promised that the righteous would be exempt from persecution--from hatred and from suffering. The Lord said: "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also" (Jno. 15:19,20). Paul says, "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).
4. The Christian, even in the midst of persecution, never questions the righteousness of God. The Christian learns to rejoice even in tribulations, " . . . knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame; . . . " (Rom. 5:3-5). Peter says: "For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (1 Pet. 2:20). Peter says further: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye . . . but if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Pet. 4:14,16). The Lord said: "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you,

and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you" (Mt. 5:10-12).

PSALM 130

JEHOVAH, A GOD OF FORGIVENESS

In this Psalm we have--

I. A FERVENT PRAYER
1-4

The Psalmist prays:

1. The condition: Out of the depths (of misery and overwhelming affliction);
2. The plea:
 - (1) I cry to thee, O Lord;
 - (2) Lord, hear my voice!
 - (3) Let thy ears be attentive to my supplications!
3. Acknowledgment of sin: If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark (keep in memory) our iniquities, Lord, who could stand?
4. Realization of forgiveness, and consequent worship:
 - (1) There is forgiveness with thee, that
 - (2) Thou mayest be feared (revered).

II. A WONDERFUL ATTITUDE
5,6

The Psalmist expresses his attitude:

1. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits;
2. I hope in His word;
3. My soul waits for the Lord, more than the watchmen wait for the morning--more than the watchmen wait for the morning.

III. SIGNIFICANT INSTRUCTIONS, v. 7

The Psalmist instructs Israel:

1. The imperative: O Israel, hope in the Lord!
2. The explanation: With the Lord--

III. Continued.

(1) There is steadfast love;

(2) There is plenteous redemption.

IV. A CONFIDENT PROMISE
8

The Psalmist confidently promises:

God will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Sins--with no forgiveness--would drown men in despair. But, God is a God of forgiveness, and He has provided the sacred plan for man's salvation. Realization of forgiveness produces patience, hope, and worship.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD--is a God

1. Who will listen;
2. Who will heed;
3. Who will forgive the penitent;
4. Who is to be worshipped;
5. Who inspires wonderful hope;
6. Who inspires steadfastness;
7. Who provides redemption.

II. WITH REGARD TO GOD, I MUST--

1. Pray;
2. Confess;
3. Enjoy;
4. Wait;
5. Hope.

III. WITH A VIEW TO FORGIVENESS, ONE MUST--

1. Recognize and confess his sins;
2. Call upon God for forgiveness;
3. Know that God is a God who forgives;
4. Wait for the Lord;
5. Hope in the Lord's word;
6. Recognize that with God there is steadfast love;
7. Recognize that with God there is plenteous redemption.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Even in times of deepest despair we must be confident that God is willing and able to forgive our sins.
2. Through the blood of the Christ, and because of our obedience to the gospel of the Christ and our continuing to walk in the light (1 Jno. 1:7), God is able to make our sins as if they never existed!
3. God stresses that God has " . . . granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Peter. 1:4). This helps us better to understand forgiveness.
4. Realization of sin, without actual forgiveness! This is a terrible, sad, distressing situation. This is the kind of condition which Paul (in Romans 7) discusses with regard to the Mosaic Law. The Law made sin clear in the life of the individual. It caused the man to realize his guilt, and his condemnation before God. But, the Law did not provide actual forgiveness (Cf. Heb. 10:4; Acts 13:39). Paul uses the word "wretched"--"Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of

the body of this death?" Answer: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 7:24,25; 8:1). There is now actual forgiveness (1) in the Christ, (2) in the church of the Christ, (3) upon the terms of the gospel of the Christ.

5. As the 129th Psalm stresses the importance of one's looking backward to consider blessings and deliverances of the past, the 130th Psalm stresses the importance of one's looking within. This inward look is often an experience producing a sense of frustration. But, out of this frustration comes genuine joy--when we remember that God is a God who loves and who forgives the penitent soul.
6. Note the order: (1) realization of sin; (2) confession of sin; (3) forgiveness of sin; (4) acceptable worship.
7. Who could stand? If God were not a God of forgiveness--(1) who could stand before God with His favor? (2) who could stand to live in constant realization of guilt? (3) who could have any hope of standing victoriously before the Lord of Judgment?
8. Because we can have forgiveness, we can have wonderful hope. God loves us. God hears us. God forgives us. We can worship Him. We can have hope. Steadfast hope will not meet with disappointment (Rom. 5:5). Faith is the substance of things hoped for (Heb. 11:1). This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil (Heb. 6:19). Paul says: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24,25).

PSALM 131

THE CONTENTED SOUL

In this Psalm we have--

I. DESCRIPTION
1,2

The Psalmist describes himself--

1. Negatively:

- (1) My heart is not lifted up
(in haughtiness);
- (2) My eyes are not raised too high
(I am not trying to see things beyond
human capabilities);
- (3) I do not occupy myself with things too
great and too marvelous for me (I am
not trying to delve into that which
has not been revealed):

2. Positively:

- (1) I have calmed and quieted my soul;
- (2) I am like a child which has learned
contentment after being weaned.

II. SECRET
3

The Psalmist sets forth the secret of his
contentment: "O Israel, hope in the Lord from
this time forth and for evermore."

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: In this Psalm we have: (1) the restless storm
(implied), (2) the trustful humility, (3) the marvelous calm, and (4) the
sacred secret (means). In full realization of our inabilities to cope with
the storms of life, let us be determined to possess the peace, the quiet,
the serenity, the contentment--to be found only in the Christ.

SPECIAL LESSON:

" . . . AS A CHILD THAT IS WEANED . . . "

1. The illustration:

- (1) The time comes when a child must be weaned;
- (2) This creates turmoil within the child (as well as within the mother, and sometimes within the father and the rest of the family).
- (3) But, the child eventually overcomes what had been his strong desires.
- (4) The child is able to have peace, contentment, in the state of having been weaned.

2. The application---to the individual (the Psalmist):

- (1) The time came when the Psalmist had to get away from things and attitudes which had been so very important to him.
- (2) This created turmoil (storms) within his life.
- (3) But, he was able to overcome his former desires.
- (4) He was able to have peace, contentment, in the state of having overcome.

NOTE: The closing line (verse 3) shows that the Psalmist intended for these points to be applied to the nation of Israel, as well as to the individual.

3. The secret: Hope in the Lord.

Looking back (Ps. 129) gives confidence in God. Looking within (Ps. 130) emphasizes redemption. Confidence and redemption gives marvelous hope--the hope which produces the peace which passeth understanding.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Consider: The winds and the waves obey Thy will,
 Peace be still! Peace be still!
 Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea,
 Or demons, or men, or whatever it be,
 No water can swallow the ship where lies
 The Master of ocean and earth and skies;
 They all shall sweetly obey Thy will,
 Peace, be still! Peace, be still!
 They all shall sweetly obey Thy will,
 Peace, peace, be still!

2. Consider also: Higher than the highest heavens,
 Deeper than the deepest sea,
 Lord, Thy love at last has conquered
 "None of self, and all of Thee."

 None of self and all of Thee,
 None of self and all of Thee,
 Lord, Thy love at last has conquered
 "None of self and all of Thee."

3. Peace, personal peace, is something tremendously important--a subject frequently dealt with in the Scriptures. God is the God of peace (Rom. 15:33). The Lord is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). The Gospel is the Gospel of Peace (Rom. 10:15 KJV). We are instructed to follow after peace (2 Tim. 2:22), to seek peace and pursue it (1 Pet. 3:11). Paul says: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6,7).

4. The Psalmist stresses the need for and importance of humility. Along the same line, Paul says: "Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:16).

5. It is good for us--from time to time--to at least ponder things that are too wonderful for us, but we must recognize that "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 the law" (Deut. 29:29). David said: "Such knowledge is too
wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Ps. 139:6).
"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of
God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing
out" (Rom. 11:33).

PSALM 132

THE PILGRIM'S CONTEMPLATION OF ZION

In this Psalm we have--

I. PRAYER 1-5

The Psalmist prays to God, with respect to David. He says--

1. Remember David's hardships (his affliction) which he endured;
2. Remember his vow to find a permanent dwelling place for Jehovah;
3. Remember how he said: I will not enter into my house, or get into my bed, or give sleep to my eyes, or give slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for Jehovah--a tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob.

II. PEOPLE 6,7

The Psalmist speaks of the enthusiasm and cooperation of the people, relative to David's plan. They say--

1. We have heard of the ark in various places;
2. Let us go to His dwelling place;
3. Let us worship at His footstool.

III. PLEA 8-10

The Psalmist pleads with Jehovah:

1. Arise, O Lord;
2. Go into thy resting place;
3. Go in, thou and the ark of thy strength;
4. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness;
5. Let thy saints shout for joy;
6. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed.

IV. PROMISE
11,12

The Psalmist speaks of God's promise to David:

1. Jehovah promised unto David in truth;
2. Jehovah will keep His promise;
3. He said: "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne";
4. He said: "If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children also shall sit upon thy throne forevermore."

V. PLACE
13-18

GOD speaks of Zion--HIS dwelling place:

1. Jehovah has chosen Zion;
2. He hath desired it for His habitation;
3. This is my resting-place for ever;
4. Here will I dwell; for I have desired it;
5. I will abundantly bless her provision;
6. I will satisfy her poor with bread;
7. I will clothe her priests with salvation;
8. Her saints shall shout aloud for joy;
9. There, I will make the horn (power) of David to bud;
10. I have appointed a lamp for mine anointed;
11. I will clothe her enemies with shame;
12. Upon Himself shall his crown flourish (shine, send forth its luster).

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: In a way, the Psalm consists of two major sections:

(1) there is a fervent prayer that God will allow David--according to his plans and his vow--to find a permanent resting place for the ark;

then (2) there is the response of God that He has chosen Zion to be His dwelling place. Our Zion (the real fulfillment of this Psalm) is the church of our Lord. It is God's habitation, His resting place, that which He abundantly blesses, the place of priests, the place of salvation, the place of joy, the place of the Christ, Zion's King! Let us rejoice--in our pilgrim journey--in contemplation of Zion, the church of our Lord. Cf. Heb. 12:18-24.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Remembers our circumstances;
2. Has made great and wonderful promises (Cf. 2 Pet. 1:3,4);
3. Is faithful to keep His promises (Cf. Rom. 4:20,21);
4. Expects men to be obedient to His word;
5. Has special love for Zion;
6. Dwells in His people (Cf. Eph. 2:21,22);
7. Sends us wonderful blessings;
8. Is concerned about the poor;
9. His people are His "saints";
10. His people have reasons for wonderful joy.

II. DAVID.

1. Was a man who experienced many afflictions in life;
2. Was a man of prayer;
3. Was beautifully concerned about God's dwelling place;
4. As king, was a type of the Christ--the King of kings and Lord of lords;
5. Was a progenitor of our Lord Jesus Christ (Cf. Rom. 1:3; Rom. 9:5).

III. DAVID'S DESIRE.

1. David desired to build a permanent dwelling place--a "house"--for God.

David himself had a fine house made of cedar, built for him by the King of Tyre (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Chron. 14:1). David also made for himself "houses" (1 Chron. 15:1). But, the ark of God dwelt in a tent (1 Chron. 15:1). David bemoaned the fact that he dwelt in a "house of cedar" while the ark of God dwelt in curtains (1 Chron. 17:1). David determined to do something about it. He was not permitted by God to build the house, but he did make the preparations for it, so that the work could be done by his son, Solomon.

2. In our day, the "house of God" is the "church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15). We must ever be concerned about building this house, God's house. It must come first in our lives. We build by : (1) converting the lost, (2) restoring the wayward, and (3) strengthening the saved.

IV. GREAT THEMES IN VERSES 11-18.

Think and ponder about the tremendous Bible themes referred to in verses 11 through 18.

1. God's great promise to David;
2. God's faithfulness;
3. The seed of David;
4. David's throne;
5. The seed of David upon David's throne;
6. The word of God;
7. The importance of obedience to God and His word;
8. The Chosen City (Zion);
9. Priestly Attire (Cf. Gal. 3:27);

IV. Continued.

10. God's blessings upon the faithful;

11. The Joy of God's People.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God swore to David (and He would not turn from it) that "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." On Pentecost of Acts 2, Peter said that God had sworn with an oath to him (to David) that He (God) would set one upon his (David's) throne (Acts 2:30), and that this one would be "of the fruit of his loins." Peter concluded his great sermon by saying: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Peter said that God had made Him "Christ." But, "Christ" means "the anointed one." As "the anointed One He is the Christ. As the Christ, He is King. If He is King, then He has a kingdom. If He has a kingdom, then His kingdom has been established. If His kingdom has been established, then human beings can enter into it and experience the marvelous blessings, privileges, opportunities, and responsibilities of citizenship in it.
2. The Old Testament ark of the covenant was intended to symbolize to Israel God's presence--God's dwelling place. Now, God's dwelling place is the New Testament church, the church of our Lord, God's "house," a "holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Cf. Eph. 2:21,22). "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16).

3. If ". . . the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Mt. 10:30), and if not one sparrow falls on the ground without God's knowledge of it (Mt. 10:29), then--obviously--the Heavenly Father is mindful of our tears, our trials, our tribulations. He knows our afflictions. And, He blesses those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (Mt. 5:10). It is good for us to know that God knows, and that He cares. Peter says: ". . . casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).
4. We can be certain that God will keep His promises. Abraham was "fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:21). Inspiration says: ". . . let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23).
5. God wanted David's children to learn His (God's) testimony, and God wants our children to learn His (God's) testimony. In this connection, God places a great and frightening responsibility upon the father (Eph. 6:4).

PSALM 133

THE BLESSEDNESS OF UNITY

In this Psalm we have--

I. PROCLAMATION

1

The Psalmist proclaims: for brethren to dwell
together in unity--

1. Is good;
2. Is pleasant.

II. ELABORATION

2,3

The Psalmist explains that this dwelling together
in unity is like two things:

1. It is like the precious anointing oil--
 - (1) Upon the head of Aaron;
 - (2) Which flowed down upon his head;
 - (3) Which ran down upon his collar (the edge
of his garments);
2. It is like the dew of Mount Hermon--
 - (1) Which falls upon the Mountains of Zion;
 - (2) Which is life-giving (as in Zion there is
life for evermore).

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The message is plain, simple, and powerful. It is
wonderful--good and pleasant--for brethren to dwell together in unity.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

1. UNITY AMONG BRETHREN.

1. Is exalted in this Psalm;
2. Is proclaimed to be good;
3. Is proclaimed to be pleasant;
4. Is like precious anointing oil related to the Old Testament

4. Continued.

Levitical priestly system (that is, its blessings flow to the entire congregation);

5. Is like the dew of Mt. Hermon (that is, contributing mightily to spiritual life).

II. GOOD AND PLEASANT.

1. Some things are good, but not pleasant;

2. Some things are pleasant, but not good;

3. Some things are both good and pleasant at the same time.

Here is one: brethren dwelling together in unity.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. As the diffusion of the anointing oil symbolized the consecration of the whole body of the High Priest, so the blessings of unity flow to the whole body--the entire congregation.

2. As the dew of Mount Hermon brings vigorous life to plants, even so unity brings vigorous life to God's people.

3. The Psalmist refers to physical blessings and to spiritual blessings.

As Aaron was to Israel spiritually, so Mount Hermon was to Canaan physically. We need (and must have) both kinds of blessings. God knows our physical needs and has promised to provide for us, if we work and live according to His will. Every spiritual blessing is to be had in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

4. The Lord prayed for his apostles: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou has given me, that they may be one, even as we are" (Jno. 17:11). The Lord prayed for others: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that

4. Continued.

they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou has given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me" (Jno. 17:20-23). To the Corinthian brethren Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

Another great section of Scripture on unity is found in Eph. 4:1-6. Brethren are enjoined to give ". . . diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Paul explains the matter further: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. This is God's one-derful plan!

5. It needs to be stressed that not all unity is blessed of God. Not all division is condemned of God. What is worse than division? Answer: unity in error! The kind of unity that counts before God is that which is based solely and completely upon His word.
6. Certain things which contribute to unity among brethren: (1) knowing that unity is important in the sight of God; (2) knowledge of the word

of God; (3) knowing how God authorizes--knowing how to ASCERTAIN BIBLICAL AUTHORITY; (4) being determined to uphold the right and to oppose the wrong; (5) walking in the light (1 Jno. 1:7); (6) genuine brotherly love; (7) knowing the difference between matters of faith and matters of opinion, matters of judgment. We must never attempt to make a law which God did not make. We must never treat lightly any law which God did make. We must never treat matters of faith as if they were matters of opinion, and we must never treat matters of opinion as if they were matters of faith. We must not bind where God has loosed; we must not loose where God has bound.

PSALM 134

JOY UPON ARRIVAL FOR WORSHIP

Psalms 120 through 134 seem to have been a special collection, and--in the King James Version each is called a song of Degrees. In the American Standard Version each of these Psalms is called a song of Ascents. The CAMBRIDGE BIBLE speaks of "The Songs of the Goings Up." It is generally thought that these were Psalms which were sung by the Israelites on their way to the place of worship--that each Psalm had something to do with their coming a little closer.

This Psalm therefore, would stress that at long last the worshippers have arrived at the place of worship. They address the priests, exhorting them to praise God, and the priests in turn pronounce blessings upon the worshippers.

In this Psalm we have--

I. EXCLAMATION

1

The worshippers (having arrived) exclaim:

Behold!

II. EXHORTATION

1,2

The worshippers exhort the priests:

1. Bless ye the Lord;
2. Bless ye the Lord all ye servants of the Lord;
3. Bless ye the Lord all ye servants of the Lord,
who by night stand in the house of the Lord;
4. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and
5. Bless ye the Lord.

III. RESPONSE

3

The priests respond to the worshippers:

1. The Lord that made the heaven and earth;
2. May He bless thee out of Zion.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: In the full realization of the wonderful blessings which flow from Zion--now, the New Testament church--like Old Testament worshippers, we ought to be filled with joy as we seize the opportunities for worship.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is to be blessed (praised, worshipped) by His people;
2. Has those who serve Him;
3. Is to be worshipped by those who serve Him;
4. His blessings are in, and from, and by means of Zion (now, the New Testament church);
5. Is the creator of the heaven and the earth.

II. THE PLACE OF WORSHIP:

1. In Old Testament Judaism the place of acceptable worship (the place specified by God) was Zion (Jerusalem).
2. Now, in New Testament time, the place for acceptable worship is Zion--the church of our Lord, the anti-type of Old Testament literal Zion. Cf. Heb. 12:22ff. Now, acceptable worship is in the Lord's church, and must be according to the pattern for worship set out in the New Testament.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. In Old Testament worship there was a very special, divinely ordained and prescribed priesthood, and men approached God in worship through these priests. In New Testament Christianity, every Christian is a

1. Continued.

priest in his own right, and does not approach God in worship through a human priest. Peter says: "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation . . . " (1 Pet. 2:9).

2. Those who bless Jehovah (worship and praise Him) will in turn be blessed by Him.

3. The initial word "Behold" seems to set forth at least two thoughts:

(1) We have longed to come, and (2) We are so thankful and glad to be here! This ought to be our attitude when we come together to worship God.

PSALM 135

A SONG OF PRAISE

This Psalm overlaps the preceding one, and is in reality an expansion of that Psalm. It picks up the basic points stressed in Psalm 134, and elaborates upon them.

In this Psalm we have--

I. ADDRESS 1,2,19,20

The Psalmist addresses certain ones:

1. First, the priests--
 - (1) Servants of the Lord;
 - (2) You that stand in the house of the Lord;
2. Second, the people--the worshippers who have arrived--
 - (1) You that stand in the courts of the house of our God;
 - (2) The house of Israel;
 - (3) The house of Aaron (the High Priest);
 - (4) The house of Levi (all the priests);
 - (5) All you that fear the Lord.

II. EXHORTATION 1-3, 20,21

The Psalmist exhorts:

1. Praise the Lord;
2. Praise the name of the Lord;
3. Give praise;
4. Sing to His name;
5. Bless the Lord;
6. Praise the Lord.

III. GROUNDS 3-18

The Psalmist sets forth the grounds upon which the Lord is to be praised. Praise Him--

III. Continued

1. Because of His nature and character (v.3);
2. Because of His having chosen Israel (v. 4);
3. Because of His greatness and superiority (v. 5);
4. Because of His power (verses 6-12);
5. Because of His name and attitude toward His people (13,14);
6. Because He is greater than the gods of this world (13-18).

IV. POWER
5-14

The Psalmist elaborates upon and emphasizes God's power.

1. Our Lord is above all gods.
2. His power is declared in His creation. Whatever He pleases to do, He does--in heaven, on earth, in the sea, and in all the deep places.
3. His power is declared in nature. He causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain; He bringeth the wind out of His treasures.
4. His power is declared in history:
 - (1) In Egypt--He smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast; He sent signs and wonders in the midst of Egypt, upon Pharaoh and all his servants.
 - (2) In Canaan--He smote many great nations, and slew mighty kings: Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. He smote

(2) Continued.

all the kingdoms of Canaan, and gave their
land for a heritage unto Israel, His people.

V. GREATNESS
13-18

The Psalmist elaborates upon God's greatness:

1. The name of Jehovah endures for ever;
2. Jehovah will judge (will vindicate) His
people;
3. He is not like the heathen idols:
 - (1) They are made of silver and gold;
 - (2) They are the work of men's hands;
 - (3) They have mouths, but they can not
speak;
 - (4) They have eyes, but they can not see;
 - (5) They have ears, but they can not hear;
 - (6) There is no breath in their mouths;
 - (7) Those who make these idols become
like those idols.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: We must always praise Jehovah: because of who He is, and what He is; because of what He has done, is doing, and will continue to do. We must praise Him because of His power, which is so forcefully declared (1) in creation, (2) in nature, and (3) in history.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. A CALL TO PRAISE.

1. This Psalm calls upon true worshippers to praise Jehovah.
2. It forcefully sets forth reasons for rendering such praise:

2. Continued.

- (1) Because of His nature and character;
- (2) Because true worshippers are numbered among the chosen;
- (3) Because of His great creative and sustaining power;
- (4) Because He delivered Israel out of the Egyptian bondage;
- (5) Because He drove the Canaanites out of their land, and gave it to Israel;
- (6) Because of His enduring faithfulness;
- (7) Because He is not like the false gods made by men: they can neither speak, nor see, nor hear, nor breathe.

II. GOD.

- 1. Is the one who is to be praised (honored, revered, worshipped);
- 2. All are obligated to praise Him, but only true worshippers can praise Him acceptably;
- 3. Is the one who has chosen "Spiritual Israel"--the church--for His own possession (Cf. Titus 2:14);
- 4. He is the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, omnibenevolent One;
- 5. He is able to do anything which is in harmony with His nature, and is thus according to His will. It is impossible for God to do anything which is not according to His very nature--which is not according to His will. It is impossible for God to lie. It is impossible for God to be unjust. It is impossible for God to be unloving.
- 6. He is the one who causes the clouds to 'rise, the lightnings to flash, the rains to come, and the wind to blow!
- 7. His power is clearly seen in the history of His dealings with man. But, He is completely and satisfactorily revealed only in and

7. Continued.

through and by means of His Word, the Bible.

8. He destroys those people and those nations that are no longer fit to dwell upon the earth;

9. He is eternal--the one who is "forever, from generation to generation."

10. He is the Great Vindicator. He will vindicate His people and the Cause of Righteousness.

11. He is not like the "dumb idols." He can speak and see and hear and do. And, "He Is Alive."

12. He is the one who blesses and blesses again.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. At all times, in all places, and in all circumstances of life--we must be of the disposition to praise Jehovah. But, in a very special way we praise Him in scriptural worship. Paul says: "Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen." (Eph. 3:20,21).
2. Praise ye Jehovah. Praise Him in worship. Praise Him in word. Praise Him in work.
3. God chose Old Testament Israel to be His special people, and God has chosen the church of our Lord to be Spiritual Israel, His chosen, special, people. The Lord gave Himself for us, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possessions, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). In this connection, Peter says: "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy

3. Continued.

nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 1:9,10).

4. God's greatness is seen in His power, and His power is seen (1) in His creation, (2) in nature, and (3) in the history of His dealings with man.

5. Whatsoever Jehovah did--in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas, and in the deep places--was that which pleased Him to do. We must be concerned about what pleases Him. When He instituted worship to be carried on in the New Testament church, He instituted that which pleases Him. In striving to worship Him acceptably, we ask--not what will please us, but--what will please God? The only way I can know what will please Him is to read and to learn what He has said will please Him. In all that we say, and in all that we do--we must strive to be pleasing to Him.

6. The Bible and History declare that when a nation becomes so wicked that it is no longer fit to exist among men, God--in His own way--destroys that nation. America (and all other nations) needs to learn this lesson well. The powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1).

" . . . He removeth kings, and setteth up kings . . . " (Dan. 2:21).

7. God "gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people" (verse 12). Reference clearly is to the land once occupied by the "kingdoms of Canaan" (verse 11). The millennialists are wrong--so terribly wrong--in their view that God's land promise to Israel has never been fulfilled.

8. In discussing the heathen idols, the Psalmist stresses the principle that men become like that which they worship. We must ever strive to

8. Continued.

become like God--so far as it is possible for a human being to become like God--as exemplified to us and for us in Jesus Christ, our Perfect Example. The Berkeley has: "Those who make them become like them . . ."

9. "The Lord be blessed from Zion" (Berkeley reading). Every spiritual blessing is located in Zion (in the Christ, in the Church of the Christ), Eph. 1:3. The Prophet stressed one great blessing which would go forth from Zion, to all men: ". . . for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

PSALM 136

THANKSGIVING FOR JEHOVAH'S STEADFAST LOVE

(HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOR EVER)

In this Psalm we have--

I. EXHORTATION
1-3

The Psalmist exhorts:

1. Give thanks--

- (1) To the Lord;
- (2) To the God of gods;
- (3) To the Lord of lords;

2. For--

- (1) He is good;
- (2) His steadfast love endures for ever.

II. EXPLANATION
4-25

The Psalmist explains that God's steadfast love is clearly seen in:

1. Creation (4-9)--His creative power--

- (1) He does great wonders;
- (2) He, by understanding, made the heavens;
- (3) He made the great lights--

A. The sun, to rule over the day;

B. The moon and stars, to rule over the night;

2. Deliverance (10-15)--His delivering power--

- (1) He smote the first-born of Egypt;
- (2) He brought Israel out from among them;
- (3) He divided the Red Sea in sunder;
- (4) He made Israel pass through the midst of it;
- (5) He overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red

Sea;

II. Continued.

3. Guidance (16-22)--His guiding and governing power--

(1) He led His people through the wilderness;

(2) He smote great kings--including

A. Sihon, king of the Amorites;

B. Og, king of Bashan;

(3) He gave their land as a heritage to Israel;

4. Restoring (23-25)--His restoring power--

(1) He remembered us in our low estate;

(2) He rescued us from our foes;

(3) He gives food to all flesh.

III. EXHORTATION
26

The Psalmist repeats the exhortation to praise Jehovah:

1. Exhortation--Give thanks to the God of heaven;

2. Reason--His steadfast love endures for ever.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Twenty-six times it is declared in this Psalm that "His steadfast love endures forever." Because of His love He exercises His power. We must praise Jehovah for His steadfast love, and for the power which He exercises in behalf of the world and in behalf of His people.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. THANKS BE UNTO GOD.

1. God is the one--

(1) To whom we must ever be thankful;

(2) To whom we must ever express our thanks.

I. Continued.

2. We must be thankful to Him--

(1) Because He is good (and because what He does is good);

(2) Because His steadfast love abides for ever (it is impossible for God to be unloving);

(3) Because of His great power, as demonstrated in--

A. The creation;

B. The deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian Bondage;

C. The parting of the Red Sea and guidance of Israel through the midst of the sea;

D. The overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts;

E. The overthrow of the great kings;

F. His giving Israel the land of Canaan;

G. His great blessings bestowed upon Israel.

(4) Because of the great blessings which He unceasingly bestows upon us.

II. GOD--

1. Is the one to whom we are thankful;

2. Is the one to whom we must ever express our thanks;

3. Is good (and all that He does is good);

4. Is characterized by steadfast love;

5. Is Jehovah, Elohim, and Adonahy;

6. Is the one whose steadfast love is clearly perceived (1) in His creation of the heavens and the earth, (2) in His deliverance of Israel. (3) in His overthrow of the great kings, (4) in His giving Israel the land of Canaan, (5) in His multitudinous blessings which bestowed upon Israel, and (6) in the marvelous blessings which He constantly bestows upon us (and upon all mankind).

II. Continued.

7. Is the one who is just and whose justice clearly reveals His love;
8. Is the one whose steadfast love compels the exercise of His power,
in behalf of all that is right and just and honorable;
9. Is the one who is the Great Provider. He remembers, He rescues
(redeems), and He provides.
10. Is the omniscient, the omnipotent, the omnipresent, and the omni-
benevolent One.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The Psalmist exalts the one true and living God--the very same God
whose creative powers are clearly set out in the Genesis record; the
very same God whose power and love and justice are clearly revealed
throughout His dealings with Old Testament Israel.
2. It is amazing that the Psalmist, in these few verses, reflects upon
such a vast amount of Old Testament history. These are written for our
learning.
3. God smote the first-born of Egypt. He overthrew Pharaoh and his army.
He slew famous kings--including Sihon and Og. He drove out the Canaanites,
and gave Israel their land. But even these, the Psalmist declares,
were involved in and were demonstrations of His steadfast love. The God
of love is also the God of justice. God can not be unloving, and He can
not be unjust, and He can not be unholy. God's works are always consis-
tent with all His attributes.
4. God (1) remembered Israel in their low estate, (2) rescued--redeemed--
them from their desperate situation, and (3) bestowed upon them His
wonderful blessings. These factors vividly stand out in connection with
His delivering them from the Egyptian Bondage and from the Babylonian

4. Continued.

Captivity. Likewise, (1) God has remembered all men in their low estate of sin, (2) has provided for rescue--for redemption--and (3) bestows wonderful blessings in the Christ, in the church of the Christ, and upon the terms of the gospel of the Christ.

5. Paul says: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:4-7). "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). Numerous passages show that Paul was a man of thankfulness. He was thankful to God; he expressed his thanks to God; and he told the brethren about it. Cf. Rom. 1:8.

PSALM 137

SILENT HARPS IN BABYLON

In this beautiful Psalm we have--

I. REFUSAL
1-4

The Psalmist speaks of sadness and silence, of request and refusal.

1. We were by the rivers of Babylon, near the willow trees;
2. We sat down and we wept;
3. We hanged our harps upon the willows;
4. Our captors--our tormentors--asked us to sing a song of Zion (this, for their own "mirth");
5. We refused to comply with their request.

II. REMEMBRANCE
4-6

The Psalmist promises that he will always remember Jerusalem.

1. If--
 - (1) I forget you, O Jerusalem,
 - (2) I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy--
2. Then--
 - (1) Let my right hand wither;
 - (2) Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.

III. RETRIBUTION
7-9

The Psalmist pleads for divine retribution upon Babylon:

1. He recalls God's wrath upon the Edomites;
2. He speaks of retribution upon the Babylonians.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: We must be faithful to God, even in times of adversity and sadness.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD--

1. Is the one to whom we must be faithful--at all times, in all places, and in all circumstances of life.
2. Is the one whom we worship in our beautiful songs of "Zion."
3. Is the God of love and justice--the one to whom vengeance belongs.
4. Is the one who blesses the righteous and who pours out His wrath upon the wicked.

II. ZION--

1. Was strong in the minds of these Jews--these captives in a strange land;
2. Was the subject of many of Israel's great songs;
3. Would always be remembered by the Psalmist;
4. Her well-being, in the life and mind of the Psalmist, would be placed above his own personal joy;
5. Being away from Zion, and being unable to worship in Zion, brought sadness and sorrow to the hearts of the captive Jews.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. It is possible for one to be faithful to God, even in unpleasant and antagonistic surroundings and circumstances. The Lord said to Smyrna: "Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).
2. When the sun is shining and things are going well with us, it is good to reflect upon the trials and tribulations of the past--the battles fought and the glorious victories won. Likewise, when we find ourselves in

2. Continued.

hard circumstances, even as we strive to accomplish the Lord's will among men, it is good and proper for us to find indescribable hope, rooted and grounded in the power and providence and promises of God.

" . . . for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" (Heb. 13:5,6). Consider Paul: (1) ". . . we are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body" (2 Cor. 4:8-11). (2) "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. 4:16-18).

3. The Old Testament Jews regarded their worship as being occasions of great joy. In the beautiful 95th Psalm we have: "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (verses 1 and 2). But, as captives in Babylon, there was so very little that could produce joy in their hearts. They placed their harps upon the willow trees. This was a symbol of their sadness and of their deep despair. Now, in New Testament Christianity, regardless of our feelings and circumstances, we must strive to avoid despair. As noted above, Paul said: ". . . perplexed, yet not unto despair" (2 Cor. 4:8). Even when things are not as pleasant as we would like them to be,

3. Continued.

let us not fail to assemble with the saints in services of worship (Cf. Heb. 10:25). These services of exhortation are a tremendous source of encouragement and strength. "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ" (Eph. 5:18-21).

4. It must be kept in mind that God's love necessarily involves God's justice (Cf. Ps. 136). God's love and justice make necessary the punishment of evil doers. When He comes finally, the Lord will take " . . . vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:8,9). Morgan correctly observes: "That conception of God which denies the equity of retribution is weak and false."

5. The Psalmist said the people were sad--they were sorrowful--when they remembered Zion. But, we note that they did remember Zion. In fact, the Psalmist promises: "I will always remember Zion." He says: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem--If I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy--let my right hand forget her skill; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." Zion would come first in his thinking--in his life.

In New Testament times, Zion is the church of our Lord. We " . . . are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general

5. Continued.

assembly and church of the firstborn (ones) who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24). We must not forget Zion. The church must come first in our lives (Cf. Mt. 6:33; Col. 3:1,2).

Let us remember Zion: (1) the Old Testament preparation for the existence of the New Testament church; (2) the Lord's great promise to build His church (Mt. 16:18); (3) the New Testament record of the establishment of the Lord's church (Acts 2); (4) the Lord Himself, as the builder of it, the head of it, the foundation of it; (5) Zion, as the beautiful bride of the Christ (Eph. 5); (6) her doctrine--let us live it, and love it, and teach it: when we can, where we can, how we can, and to the extent that we can: (7) her enemies--false teachers and false doctrines that are "drawing away the disciples after them"; (8) her purity--and let us be determined to keep her pure in doctrine, in worship, and in the lives of her members; (8) that "troublesome times are here" and that we must at all times, in all places, and in all circumstances " . . . contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). What a frightening responsibility! God's faithful servants--custodians of the faith!

6. As we have often stressed in our study of the Psalms, we must read and study and teach and learn in the light of the New Testament teaching. While it is right for us to pray that God will--in His own time and in His own way--destroy the forces of evil, we must at the same time keep in mind: "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath

6. Continued.

of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:19-21).

7. The captors, the tormentors, requested the Jews to sing for them "songs . . . one of the songs of Zion." The captors were seeking to be amused by such. The Jews were right in refusing to sing the songs of Zion for any such purposes. They would have been wrong in complying with this request. Likewise now: it is always right to refuse to treat lightly that which is sacred. To have sung the songs of Zion--in a strange land, and for the entertainment of the captors--would have been to bring reproach upon Zion. We must be careful never to bring reproach upon the church of our Lord--never to place upon it a spot or wrinkle or blemish or any such things (Eph. 5:26,27). It pained the exiles when they remembered the devastation of Zion. It should pain us when harm and injury come to the church.

PSALM 138

PRAISE AND CONFIDENCE

In this Psalm we have--

I. PRAISE
1,2

The Psalmist proclaims that he will praise God:

1. I will praise Thee, O Lord, with all my heart;
2. In the presence of the gods I will sing praise to Thee;
3. I will bow down toward Thy holy temple, and
4. I will praise Thy name.

II. GROUNDS
2,3

The Psalmist states the grounds upon which his praise would be expressed:

1. Because of thy steadfast love;
2. Because of thy faithfulness;
3. Because Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name;
4. Because in the day when I called--
 - (1) Thou didst answer me;
 - (2) Thou didst encourage me with strength in my soul.

III. ANTICIPATION
4-6

The Psalmist anticipates the praise to Jehovah that would be given even by heathen kings, upon contemplation of the deliverance of Israel, wrought by Jehovah.

1. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord;
2. This, when they have heard the words of Thy mouth;
3. They shall sing of the Lord's dealings;
4. Great shall be the glory of the Lord;

III. Continued.

5. Though the Lord is exalted, He looks upon the
lowly;

6. The Lord is mindful of the haughty man.

IV. CONFIDENCE
7,8a,b

The Psalmist expresses his confidence that God will
continue to work in behalf of His people, as He has
promised:

1. When I walk through the midst of trouble, Thou
bringest me through alive;

2. Thou dost stretch forth Thy hand against the
wrath of my enemies;

3. Thy right hand delivers me;

4. The Lord will fulfil his purpose on my behalf;

5. Thy steadfast love endures for ever.

V. PRAYER
8c

The Psalmist prays:

Do not forsake the works of Thine own hands!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Especially in view of the blessings received and the
previous deliverances experienced, we should be ever confident that God will
continue to work out His plans and purposes in our lives. He will work all
things together for good to those who love the Lord, and who are called
according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28-30).

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Is the one who deserves and who is worthy of our praise;

2. Is the one to whom we express our thanks;

3. Is characterized by steadfast love;

I. Continued.

4. Is characterized by faithfulness;
5. Has magnified (exalted) His word;
6. Has magnified (exalted) His name;
7. Is the one who hears and answers our prayers;
8. Is the one who gives strength to our souls;
9. Deserves the respect and honor and praise of all the rulers of the world;
10. In spite of His greatness, He is mindful of the sons and daughters of men;
11. Prescribes and appreciates an attitude of humility, but does not appreciate a proud look (Pr. 6:17) or a haughty spirit;
12. Is able to deliver the faithful from trouble;
13. Will do His part to fulfil His purpose in the life of each person.

II. PRAISE TO GOD:

1. We are obligated and privileged to express our praise to God;
2. We are to praise him with the whole heart--unreservedly;
3. We praise Him--
 - (1) In our songs;
 - (2) In our worship services;
 - (3) In our words;
 - (4) In our lives--by living so as to bring honor and glory to Him;
 - (5) In our works--doing all things for the gospel's sake (Cf. 1 Cor.9:23);
4. We praise Him because of--
 - (1) His love;
 - (2) His exalted name;
 - (3) His exalted word;
 - (4) His faithfulness;

4. Continued.

- (5) His answering our prayers;
- (6) His giving us the necessary strength;
- (7) Our being the work of His hands.

III. MARVELOUS BLESSINGS:

- 1. The obligation and privilege of worship;
- 2. Answers to our prayers;
- 3. Encouragement;
- 4. Strength;
- 5. Deliverance--that is, victory over our troubles;
- 6. His fulfilment of His purpose in our lives.

GENERAL LESSONS:

- 1. The Psalmist looks back upon His experiences with God, and declares that He is good and is deserving of all honor and glory and praise. He looks forward to further experiences with God, being characterized by comfort and hope.
- 2. God intends that blessings of the past constitute assurance with regard to the future. This was a lesson Old Testament Israel was mighty slow to learn. Cf. the book of Numbers.
- 3. The Psalmist would praise God even before heathen "gods"--before rulers of the earth. We must be willing and determined to praise God--not just when circumstances are favorable, but when circumstances are not favorable. We must be faithful to praise God even when we are in the midst of His enemies. Paul, knowing that he would soon stand before Nero, asked the brethren to pray for him ". . . that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may

3. Continued.

speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:19,20). Think of Peter and John, before the Sanhedrin, and the great sermon which was proclaimed upon that occasion: ". . . be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12). Verse 13 says: "Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." May God help us to have this same spirit--this same boldness for truth.

4. What marvelous joy comes to human hearts in the realization that God will keep His promises. ". . . let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23). Paul says about Abraham: "Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:18-21).

5. The Psalmist prayed and received strength from God. He is the eternal source of indescribable strength. Let us say with Paul: "I can do all

5. Continued.

things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). God can and will give us strength: (1) to bear the burdens, (2) to resist temptations, (3) to accomplish His will. We pray--not that the load will be lighter, but that we may have the strength to bear the load.

6. God loves us, is concerned about us, and has promised to meet our needs. He has not promised to grant our wants. He has not promised to grant us what we think we need. But, He has promised to meet our needs. Cf. Mt. 6:33- ". . . and all these things shall be added unto you." David said: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. 37:25).

7. Humility is an essential characteristic of the child of God. It is included in one's having "the mind of Christ" (Cf. Phil. 2:5-7). "Wherefore the scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6). Peter says: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time . . ." (1 Pet. 5:6).

8. Christians are not exempt from troubles. They expect to "walk in the midst of trouble." They expect to become stronger because of their troubles. They learn to rejoice even in tribulations (Rom. 5:3-5; 2 Cor. 12:10). They confidently expect God (1) to hear their cries, (2) to stretch forth His helping hand, and (3) to give the deliverance and victory. The Christian life is not an easy life. It was not easy for Paul. It was not easy for Peter. It is not easy for me, and it will not be easy for you. It was not easy for the Lord to bear "the old rugged cross" to Calvary. But, the Lord has promised: ". . . I will be with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28:20).

Must I be carried to the skys
on flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
and sailed through bloody seas?

PSALM 139

THE NATURE OF GOD

This beautiful Psalm emphasizes the nature of God, especially in regard to the personal relationship of God to the individual.

In this Psalm we have--

I. God's OMNISCIENCE 1-6

The Psalmist speaks of God's perfect knowledge of the Psalmist's life and thoughts:

1. Thou hast searched me and known me;
2. Thou knowest--
 - (1) When I sit down;
 - (2) When I rise up;
 - (3) My thoughts;
 - (4) My day by day activities;
 - (5) My words--even before they are spoken;
3. This kind of knowledge--
 - (1) Is too wonderful for me;
 - (2) Is too high for me to reach--I cannot attain unto it.

II. God's OMNIPRESENCE 7-12

The Psalmist stresses that God is everywhere present--that man cannot escape His presence:

1. Where could I possibly go from thy Spirit?
2. Where could I possibly go to escape thy presence?
3. I cannot escape His presence--
 - (1) If I ascend up into the heaven;
 - (2) If I make my bed in Sheol;
 - (3) If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the

3. (3) Continued.

sea--even there shall thy hand lead
me, and thy right hand shall hold me;

(4) Even in the midst of total darkness--
the darkness and the light are both
alike to Him.

III. God's OMNIPOTENCE
13-18

The Psalmist speaks of God's power, especially
as that power is evident in the very life of
the Psalmist:

1. Thou didst form my inward parts;
2. Thou didst knit (weave) me together in my
mother's womb;
3. I will praise thee for thy wonderful works--
 - (1) I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
 - (2) That, my soul knoweth right well.
4. My frame (my bones, my skeleton) was not
hidden from Thee--
 - (1) When I was being made in secret;
 - (2) When I was being intricately wrought
in my mother's womb;
 - (3) Thy eyes beheld my unformed (not yet
perfect) substance;
 - (4) In thy book all my members were written
(when as yet there was none of them),
which in continuance were fashioned.
5. Thy very thoughts, O God (which also demon-
strate thy power)--

5. Continued.

- (1) Are precious unto me;
- (2) Are great individually; and
- (3) How great is the sum of them!
- (4) Are more in number than the sand.

6. In spite of thy greatness and thy power, I am always confident of thy presence--whether I am sleeping, or am awake.

IV. God's OMNIBENEVOLENCE
19-24

The Psalmist speaks of God's hatred of sin and love of righteousness. This emphasizes His omnibenevolence. Because He is all-good He necessarily hates sin and loves righteousness.

- 1. The Psalmist asks God to slay the wicked;
- 2. The Psalmist commands: "Depart from me, ye blood-thirsty men."
- 3. He stresses that he hates those who hate God;
- 4. He stresses that he is grieved with those who rise up against God;
- 5. About those who oppose God, the Psalmist says:
 - (1) I hate them with perfect hatred;
 - (2) I count them mine enemies;
- 6. In view of God's hatred of sin and love of righteousness, the Psalmist pleads with God:
 - (1) Search me, O God, and know my heart;
 - (2) Try me, and know my thoughts;

6. Continued.

(3) See if there be any wicked way in me;

(4) Lead me in the way that is right--in the
way everlasting.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: In spite of His greatness, His power, and His goodness, God is still mindful of the individual human being. In a very special way He is mindful of the individual who wants to do His will and to be pleasing in His sight. In view of this stupendous fact, let each one constantly ask (1) for personal examination and (2) to be led in the right way.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. He is omniscient (verses 1-6);
2. He is omnipresent (verses 7-12);
3. He is omnipotent (verses 13-18);
4. He is omnibenevolent (verses 19-24);
5. He searches us and knows us--
 - (1) He knows when we sit down;
 - (2) He knows when we get up;
 - (3) He knows our thoughts;
 - (4) He knows the time and the circumstances of our working;
 - (5) He knows the time and the circumstances of our rest;
 - (6) He is acquainted with all our ways;
 - (7) He knows our words--even before they are formed or spoken;
 - (8) For our own good, He "hems us in" and exercises His authority
over us;

I. Continued.

6. His knowledge is too great for human comprehension;
7. No one can escape His presence;
8. He leads us in the right way and upholds us in His right hand;
9. He sees in the darkness and He sees in the light;
10. He is mindful of conception, and He is mindful of the babe in its mother's womb (Don't you reckon that He is mindful of every abortion that takes place?);
11. By His power the body is made, and He is the one from whom our spirits come (Heb. 12:9);
12. He is the one whose works are marvelous;
13. His every individual (particular) thought is great, and "How great is the sum of them";
14. He is the one of whose presence we can be assured;
15. He hates wickedness and He loves righteousness;
16. He searches our hearts and He knows our thoughts;
17. If we will do our part, He will lead us in the way everlasting.

II. THE PSALMIST'S PRAYER.

1. The BACKGROUND for it: Understanding that God is--
 - (1) Omniscient,
 - (2) Omnipresent,
 - (3) Omnipotent,
 - (4) Omnibenevolent.
2. The MOTIVE of it--the sincere desire to be right with God.
3. The PETITIONS in it--
 - (1) Know my heart;
 - (2) Try me--test me, examine me;

3. Continued.

- (3) Know my thoughts;
- (4) See if there be any wicked way in me;
- (5) Lead me in the way everlasting.

III. FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE.

(In the January 23, 1969 issue of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE there was an excellent article writtten by Dr. Russell C. Artist. The article was entitled "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made." Often through the years I have read this material to my classes, and I reproduce it here.)

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."
(Psalm 139:14).

In these words of praise and wonderment, David points up some of the ways in which we are wonderfully made. While I am sure the passage was not given just to teach biology, I would like to call the reader's attention to just two examples--two out of a million--which show how fearfully marveous are the works of the Lord. Suppose we begin with a human being when he starts out on what we call birth--the beginning of life's journey.

In the very fact of being born every human being gives, I believe, a most remarkable demonstration of how fearfully and how wonderfully we are made. The average person on the street knows, of course, that his heart is like a double pump. The right side contains only impure blood which must be sent to the lungs to be aerated and purified, the left side contains only pure blood ready to be sent out to the body by way of the great freeway--the aortic arch. Thus two separate systems of circulation keep the two types of blood from mixing. In medical parlance, the right

III. Continued.

side is called the pulmonary system and the left side is called the systemic system.

But the unborn child has no need for this complete separation of the two types of blood. The mother does the breathing for the embryo or foetus as it is called after six weeks of development, and the mother's bloodstream provides for the aeration of the child's blood. One of the tremendous challenges faced by the new-born baby is his sudden and complete dependence on his heretofore unused and untested lungs. Until birth, the blood is diverted around the perfectly developed but nonfunctional lungs by a system of bypasses which normally become closed off at birth, thus forcing the blood to flow through the lungs.

Thus there are two such by-passes or "short circuits" in the fetal circulation before birth. One of these is a small opening between the right auricle and the left auricle--the receiving chambers of the heart--and it is called the foramen ovale. This opening directly through the wall separating the two articles allows the blood to flow uninterrupted through the two cavities. The other bypass in the system of circulation before birth is a short and thick vessel, covered by a tough sheet of smooth muscle. This unique blood vessel, the ductus arteriosus, is designed to carry the blood from the pulmonary directly across to the great aortic arch, thus eliminating the passage of the blood through the lungs not now in use.

The planning and precision of it all are wonders in themselves and, with God ruled out, problems of considerable dimensions. With God recognized, however, they become parts of his creational design.

But now for that thrilling moment of birth, when this little dependent parasite must now take up an independent existence for himself outside the warmth of his mother's body! The opening between the two auricles, the foramen ovale, is in embryonic life guarded by two flaps of tissue that permit the flow of blood through the opening. At birth, and of course, instantaneously, because of certain pressure relationships, the flaps are closed, never to open again! The exact nature of these pressure relationships is not known. We are facing here one of the unsolved problems of biology. Eventually new tissue grows across the opening, and in the majority of people this shortcut is completely sealed off in adult life. Otherwise there would be a condition called leakage of the heart, in which a mixing of the two types of blood mentioned in the description of the adult heart would occur. In about one-fifth of the population, however, a tiny opening remains to mark the spot.

It is indeed a marvel of unique design that can provide for a system that operates efficiently all through embryonic life and then, at the proper moment, and only then, operates to close off the short cut at the moment of birth.

But now we come to the muscle that contracts only once. This short-circuit, which we called the ductus arteriosus, is clamped shut at the moment of birth by a ring of strongly contracting muscle. Job speaks of "man that is born of woman" (Job 14:1); I know of no other kind! We are in a most ludicrous position, dangling by our heels, on the verge of living inside as well as outside at the same time! The doctor slaps you smartly on the back--the lungs fill with air, and the first lusty yell announces that a man-child has been born into the world! This tiny muscle remains firmly contracted until the by-pass blood vessel has

withered away and then, it too, degenerates and disappears, after contracting only one time! After birth the breathing and circulation are similar to those of the adult body. One could not find a better example of wise planning and intelligent design than in these two rather simple . . . and yet fearfully wonderful . . . adjustments, which are made by ever fetus at birth.

At this point I need to mention that this so-called "fetal circulation" of the body is the subject matter of a good many top-notch biology textbooks as well as those of human anatomy and physiology. These are all set forth and beautifully diagrammed in one text, Garret Hardin's, "The Implications of Biology." Since he is an evolutionist his account is offered as proof of evolution. The authors of the physiology text (King and Shoers, Human Anatomy and Physiology) present the facts but pass over the matter without comment.

That it is absolutely essential for the two by-passes to function properly at the moment of birth--without training or research--lies in the sobering fact that in the case of failure there are no second chances. (emphasis, RD). As the lungs have not inflated before in the unborn child, there must be no slip-ups in this function when the baby must breathe for itself. Also, consider the fact that these two short-cuts must operate simultaneously and correctly the first time means the difference between life and death!

The vital role of this tiny muscle could not have been fulfilled by a more rudimentary muscle which gradually developed to its present function through a process of evolution, because the muscle must have been fully developed and have operated perfectly for the first infant to survive.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Having discussed in detail (in Romans 1 through 11) "The Gospel of Christ--God's Plan for Man's Righteousness" Paul exclaims: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. 11:33-36). Such knowledge is "too wonderful" for the human mind to grasp. "It is high, I cannot attain unto it." But, we can (and we must) know that which God has revealed. Let us respect the principle set forth in Deut. 29:29, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."
2. The whole of anything is the sum of its parts. If each part is great, then "how great is the sum of them." The New Testament is the sum of its parts. This point Paul stressed in 1 Cor. 13:9,10. It is that which is perfect. It is "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). Each part is perfect, and the totality is therefore perfect.
3. God is everywhere present. This fact Paul stressed in the great sermon recorded for us in Acts 17. Paul says: " . . .and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (verses 26-28).

4. It is recorded in Gen. 1:26 that God said: "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Then, verse 27 says: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving God made man. Obviously, God made man as God wanted to make man. God, who made man, and who therefore best knows man, best knows what is best for man, and He has reserved to Himself the divine right to govern man. He seeks to govern man by means of the sacred Rulebook, the Bible. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

PSALM 140

A FERVENT PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE

In this Psalm we have--

I. PRAYER
1-5

The Psalmist prays for deliverance from evil men:

1. Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men;
2. Preserve me from violent men;
3. Guard me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked;
4. Preserve me from violent men.

II. DESCRIPTION
2-5

The Psalmist describes the evil men;

1. They plan evil things against me;
2. They stir up wars continually;
3. They speak violent and poison words;
4. They make plans to trip up my feet;
5. They have hidden a trap for me.

III. PRAYER
6-11

The Psalmist further prays for deliverance:

1. Thou art my God;
2. Hear my supplication;
3. Thou art--
 - (1) My strong deliverer;
 - (2) My helmet;
4. Do not help the wicked men;
5. Let those wicked men who surround me be destroyed;
6. Let not the slanderers be established in the land;
7. Let evil hunt down the violent men speedily!

IV. CONFIDENCE
12,13

The Psalmist expresses confidence that God will always uphold the cause of the righteous and will condemn the cause of the wicked:

IV. Continued.

1. I know--

(1) That the Lord maintains the cause of the
afflicted;

(2) That the Lord executes justice for the needy;

2. Surely--

(1) The righteous shall give thanks to thy name;

(2) The upright shall dwell in thy presence.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: At all times, in all places, and in all circumstances,
we ought to be confident that God is the strong deliverer of the righteous.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is the one who delivers from the evil men;
2. Is the one who preserves from the violent men;
3. Is the one who guards from the hand of the wicked;
4. Is "my God";
5. Is the one who hears our supplications;
6. Is the one who protects us in the day of battle;
7. Is the one who opposes the desires and the plots of the wicked;
8. Is the one who maintains the cause of the afflicted;
9. Is the one who executes justice for the needy;
10. Is the one to whom the righteous give their thanks;
11. Is the one in whose presence the upright shall dwell.

II. THE WICKED PERSON WHOM THE PSALMIST DESCRIBES:

1. Is evil;
2. Is violent;
3. Is characterized by impure heart and
4. Plans evil things;
5. Stirs up wars continually;
6. Speaks evil things;
7. Plans to overthrow the righteous;
8. Is arrogant (haughty, proud);
9. Is opposed to righteous persons and righteous things;
10. Brings upon himself the wrath of God.

III. THE PSALMIST'S PRAYER:

1. Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men;
2. Preserve me from the violent men;
3. Deliver me from those evil men who--
 - (1) Think evil things in their hearts;
 - (2) Continually stir up wars;
 - (3) Constantly speak evil things;
4. Guard me from the hands of the wicked;
5. Preserve me from those who plan to entrap me and to overthrow me;
6. Hear the voice of my supplications;
7. As you have protected me in the day of battle in times past, so do now;
8. Grant not the desires of the wicked, nor their plans;
9. Let the mischief of the wicked come upon (and overwhelm) them;
10. Let the wicked be irrevocably defeated--to rise no more!
11. Let not the slanderer be established in the land;
12. Let the wicked be defeated by his own wickedness;

III. Continued.

13. Let righteousness and justice prevail;
14. Let me be numbered among those who will dwell in thy presence.

IV. THE PSALMIST'S CONFIDENCE:

1. He knows that God is the one who can deliver, preserve, and protect;
2. He knows " . . . Thou art my God";
3. He knows that God upholds the right and opposes the wrong;
4. He knows of God's help extended to him in times past;
5. He says: "I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted";
6. He says: "I know that the Lord will maintain the right of the poor, the needy";
7. He says: "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence."

V. JEHOVAH--THE GREAT DELIVERER:

1. He delivered Noah and his family from the wicked ante-diluvian world;
2. He delivered "righteous Lot" (2 Pet. 2:7) and two of his daughters when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed;
3. He delivered the Israelites from the Egyptian Bondage (Cf. Gen. 45:7);
4. He delivered the Hebrew men from the fiery furnace (Cf. Dan. 3:17-29);
5. He delivered Daniel from the den of lions (Cf. Dan. 6:16,20,26,27);
6. He delivered Israel from the Babylonian Captivity;
7. He delivered the child Jesus from the wrath of Herod the Great;
8. He delivered the Lord from the tomb; (Cf. Acts 2:24).

VI. THE LORD ALSO IS THE GREAT DELIVERER:

1. Upon the terms of the gospel, He delivers men from sin--
 - (1) Its guilt;
 - (2) Its practice;

1. Continued.

- (3) Its other tragic consequences--condemnation, hopelessness, death.
- 2. He delivers men from living in wickedness by making it possible for them to live righteously (Cf. Titus 2:11-14);
- 3. He can deliver the godly out of temptation (Cf. 2 Pet. 2:9; 1 Cor. 10:13);
- 4. He will deliver all the dead from their graves (Jno. 5:28,29; Cf. 1 Cor. 15:50-58);
- 5. He will "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father" (1 Cor. 15:24);
- 6. He delivered Paul from a mad lion named Nero (2 Tim. 4:16-18);
- 7. He delivers the penitent erring child of God from spiritual death (Jas. 5:19,20).

GENERAL LESSONS:

- 1. At least some wicked persons are violent. The nature of their hopes and plans and works is clearly evident. These are readily detectable. But, many wicked persons are careful and deliberate deceivers (Cf. Titus 1:10). Many are honest, sincere, religious--but wrong! (Cf. Mt. 7:22,23). Many are "grievous wolves" seeking to destroy the flock (Cf. Acts 29:29,30); they ". . . come to you in sheep's clothing" (Mt. 7:15). We must be mindful of this type also.
- 2. With the Psalmist, let us recognize that God-given victories of the past are assurances of God-given victories of the present and of the future. Old Testament Israel was slow to learn this lesson. Or, did they ever learn it?
- 3. In spite of the terrible situation in which he was encompassed the Psalmist was still characterized by beautiful and amazing confidence. Let us be careful to have that kind of confidence. Let us say with the

writer of Hebrews: "So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" (Heb. 13:6).

4. It is right for us to pray that in God's power and providence the efforts of the wicked will be destroyed (and precluded). It is right (and necessary) for the righteous to work for the defeat of all wickedness. With regard to right and wrong, the Christian does not occupy a neutral position. He is constantly at war with all the forces of evil (Cf. 1 Tim. 6:12; Eph. 6:10ff; 2 Cor. 10:3-6). Paul enjoins: " . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove (convict) them" (Eph. 5:11).
5. God is able. This refers to His omnipotency. He is also omnibenevolent; He is omni-just. It is impossible for God to be unloving, or unjust. He knows and is concerned about the needy, the afflicted. In justice He will maintain their right cause.
6. "He Is Able to Deliver Thee." Song #171, in SONGS OF THE CHURCH (Howard Pub. Co.).

'Tis the grandest theme thro' the ages rung;
 'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue;
 'Tis the grandest theme that the world e'er sung,
 "Our God is able to deliver thee."

Chorus

He is able to deliver thee,
 He is able to deliver thee;
 Tho' by sin opprest, go to Him for rest;
 "Our God is able to deliver thee."

7. We need to study carefully Rom. 8:31-39. God is for us. Who can successfully be against us? By His Son He will freely give us all things. No one can successfully lay a charge against God's elect. It is God that justifies. It is the Lord who has the power to condemn, but He, too, is on our side: He makes intercession for us! No person and no thing can separate us from the love of Christ or God. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PSALM 141

BUT MY EYES ARE TOWARD THEE, O LORD GOD!

In this Psalm we have--

I. PLEA
1,2

The Psalmist pleads for God to hear his prayer:

1. I call upon thee, O Lord;
2. Make haste to me!
3. Give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee;
4. Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee;
5. Let the lifting up of my hands (in prayer) be as
an evening sacrifice.

II. PRAYER
3,4

The Psalmist prays that God will help him to be pure:

1. Pure in his speech;
2. Pure in his heart;
3. Pure in his conduct;
4. Pure in his associations.

III. PRONOUNCEMENT
5,6

The Psalmist pronounces (1) that he will be steadfast in prayer, and (2) that the wicked opposition will be defeated.

1. Let a righteous man rebuke me--correct me--it will
be a kindness;
2. Such correction will be as oil upon my head--which
my head does not refuse;
3. Even in the calamities of the wicked opposition
I will continue to pray;
4. Their judges shall be overthrown;
5. The opposition shall come to understand that my
words are true.

IV. PRESERVATION
7-10

The Psalmist prays for deliverance from the snare of the wicked opposition:

1. We are as scattered bones out of the grave, and as splintered chips of wood;
2. But, my eyes are toward thee, O Lord God;
3. In thee I seek refuge--in thee is my trust;
4. Be thou my defense;
5. Keep me from the snares of the wicked men;
6. Let the wicked (opposition) be caught in their own trap.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: This Psalm seems to breathe forth the idea that David was sincerely and persistently seeking inward strength--the strength that could only come from God--as he constantly dealt with his opponents. He desperately needed strength to hold on, strength to endure. Like David, let us constantly seek after and fervently pray for the strength that can only come from God. Let us keep our eyes upon the Lord and His way, and let us be determined always to do that which is right--regardless of the consequences. Cf. Heb. 12:1,2.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Is the one to whom we cry out in prayer;
2. Is the one who is able to hear and to answer our prayers;
3. Can help us to be pure in heart, pure in speech, and pure in practice;
4. Can work through others to help us to do better and to be better;
5. Is the one upon whom we fasten our eyes in relationship to every aspect of life;

I. Continued.

6. Is the one in whom we trust;
7. Is the protector of our souls;
8. Is the one who is able to deliver us from the snares of wicked persons;
9. Is the one who is able to give us victory over wicked persons and
evil plans.

II. DAVID PRAYED:

1. Listen to my prayer;
2. Let my prayer be pleasing to thee;
3. Keep my speech pure;
4. Help me to be pure in heart;
5. Keep me from ever being inclined to want to practice wicked words with
wicked men;
6. Help me never to eat the dainties of wicked persons;
7. Let the righteous reprove me in kindness;
8. Leave not my soul destitute or defenseless;
9. Keep me from the snares of wicked persons;
10. Let the wicked fall into their own snares, while I myself escape
those snares.

III. DAVID'S ENEMIES:

1. The wicked persons (of this Psalm) were opposed to David;
2. They practiced wicked works;
3. Their judges were wicked;
4. Too late they would come to listen to David's words;
5. Were constantly trying to entrap David;
6. It was a serious matter with David for him to have to deal with
these enemies.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. David was concerned that His prayers be acceptable to God. Likewise, we must be concerned that our prayers be acceptable to God. They must be in accord with the New Testament teaching on prayers and praying. In fact, we must be determined that all our worship (and, in fact, all our thoughts and activities) be acceptable to God.
2. God, through his word, will help us to guard our hearts and our speech. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Mt. 12:34). "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Mt. 12:37). "If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also . . . And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body . . . " (Jas. 3:2,6).
3. David fervently prayed that God would keep him from any and every sinful inclination. He did not want there to be in his heart any inclination toward wicked persons or wicked actions. If David--by God's help--could keep himself from any and all such inclinations he would be pure: pure in heart, pure in speech, pure in worship, pure in work, pure in doctrine, and pure in teaching. David did not always measure up to this sacred principle, but the principle is right.
4. We need to be able to gracefully receive and deeply appreciate correction that is given us in kindness and in love. All such can be of great benefit to us as we seek to grow in the service of the Master.
5. In the great Judgment Day, untold millions who have died outside God's favor will come to learn that the words of God are true--they are sweet. But, then it will be too late. Why not learn these true words now? Why

not help others to learn these words?

6. In the light of verse 8, (1) Let us fasten our eyes upon God; (2) Let us place our trust in Him; and (3) Let us know that He is the sustainer and defender of our souls.