

THOU ART MY HELP AND MY DELIVERER

In these verses we have--

I. JOY
1-3

The Psalmist speaks of his great joy because the Lord has heard his cry:

1. I waited patiently for the Lord;
2. He inclined to me and heard my cry;
3. He drew me up from the desolate pit;
4. He took me out of the miry bog;
5. He set my feet upon a rock;
6. He made my steps secure;
7. He put a new song in my mouth;
8. He thus enabled me to praise God;
9. Many will see and fear, and will put their trust in the Lord.

II. BLESSEDNESS
4

The Psalmist speaks of the one who is blessed of God:

1. The man who makes the Lord His trust;
2. The man who does not turn to the proud;
3. The man who does not turn aside after false gods!

III. DEEDS
5

The Psalmist emphasizes God's wondrous deeds:

1. O Lord my God, thou hast multiplied thy wondrous deeds;
2. Thou hast multiplied thy wondrous thoughts toward us;
3. None can compare with thee!
4. I could not tell of them--they would be more than can be numbered.

IV. OBEDIENCE
6-8

The Psalmist emphasizes his desire to do God's will:

1. Thou dost not desire sacrifice and offering;
2. Thou hast opened my ears;
3. Thou hast not required burnt offering and sin offering;

4. Then said I, "Lo, I come"--I come offering myself!
5. Thy law is written in my heart, and I delight to do thy will.

V. PRAISE
9,10

The Psalmist praises God for blessings received:

1. In the great congregation I have told the glad news of salvation;
2. I have not hid thy saving help within my heart;
3. I have spoken of thy faithfulness and of thy salvation;
4. I have not concealed thy steadfast love and thy faithfulness from the great congregation.

VI. CONDITION
12

The Psalmist speaks of his personal condition:

1. Evils have encompassed me without number;
2. My iniquities have overtaken me till I cannot see;
3. They are more than the hairs of my head;
4. My heart fails.

VII. PLEA
11-16

The Psalmist pleads with God;

1. Do not withhold thy mercy from me;
2. Let thy steadfast love and thy faithfulness ever preserve me;
3. Deliver me!
4. Make hast to help me!
5. Let my enemies--
 - (1) Be put to shame and confusion;
 - (2) Be turned back and brought to dishonor;
 - (3) Be appalled because of their shame;
6. May all who seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee;
7. May those who love thy salvation proclaim: Great is the Lord!

VIII. PERSONAL

The Psalmist speaks of himself:

1. I am poor and needy;
2. The Lord takes thought of me;
3. Thou art my help and my deliverer;
4. Do not tarry, O my God!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God is mindful of those who obey His will. He desires and demands an attitude of true, complete, loving obedience. He blesses and blesses again.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. God Is Able.

1. To draw us out of the desolate pit;
2. To take us out of the miry bog;
3. To set our feet on solid rock;
4. To make our steps secure;
5. To give us joy indescribable;
6. To deliver from sin;
7. To protect us from enemies.

II. Blessed Is the MAN:

1. Who makes the Lord his trust;
2. Who does not turn to the proud (those lying, defiant apostates);
3. Who does not turn aside after false gods.

III. Open Ears:

1. Open ears are ears which are anxious to hear and to make the proper response to God's will.
2. Consider how God opened the ears of: Jonah, Balaam, David, Saul of Tarsus.

IV. Let us Speak:

1. Of God's saving help;
2. Of His faithfulness;
3. Of His Salvation;
4. Of His Steadfast love.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. David waited patiently for the Lord. I must learn this great lesson.
The fact that I am in a hurry does not prove that God is in a hurry.
The fact that I am slow, does not prove that God is not in a hurry.
2. If our ears are open to God, then God's ears will open to us. "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And his ears unto their supplication" (1 Pet. 3:12). The Lord said: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" Mt. 13:9). The Lord also said: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (Rev. 2:7).
3. If our attitude is right and our conduct is right, others can see and can be brought to put their trust in God. Cf. Mt. 5:16.
4. We sometimes sing "Count Your many Blessings," but in reality our blessings are more than can be numbered.
5. God does not desire "sacrifice" without the right attitude behind it.
As David and the Lord, we must delight to do God's will. Cf. Heb. 10:5-7.
6. Note carefully that this Psalm is Messianic. Inspiration (Hebrews 10:5-7) quotes verses 6-8, and applies these verses to the sacrifice of the Christ.
7. Let us be anxious to tell the glad news of deliverance.
8. Sometimes we restrain our lips when we should not do so; sometimes we do not restrain our lips when we should do so.
9. We must not be selfish with the gospel of Christ, but hasten to tell it to others.

10. God is concerned about the world, and God is concerned about YOU, and
ME!

11. "I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me."

12. In Psalms 38,39, and 40 we see: (1) acknowledgement of sin, (2) the agony of the guilt-ridden soul, (3) genuine repentance, (4) prayer for forgiveness, (5) patient waiting upon the Lord, (6) prayer for deliverance, (7) deliverance granted, (8) a new life--a new song of praise, (9) deep and abiding gratitude, (10) determination to know and to do God's will.

13. David makes it plain that God wanted him--not his sacrifices. Just so, in New Testament Christianity, God wants us (Cf. Rom. 12:1; 2 Cor. 12:14). When we give ourselves, everything else will be taken care of.

CONFIDENCE IN TIME OF PERIL

IN these verses we have--

I. COMPASSION
1-3

The Psalmist speaks about the compassionate person:

1. Pronouncement--"Blessed is the the person who considers the poor!"
2. Description--what about the compassionate person?
 - (1) The Lord delivers him from trouble;
 - (2) The Lord protects him;
 - (3) The Lord keeps him alive;
 - (4) He is called "blessed" in the land;
 - (5) He is protected from evil;
 - (6) He is sustained upon his sickbed;
 - (7) The Lord gives him healing.

II. CONSPIRATORS
4-9

The Psalmist speaks of those who conspire against him:

1. He prays: "O Lord, be gracious to me";
2. He pleads: "Heal me, for I have sinned against thee";
3. He says: my enemies say--
 - (1) When will he die?
 - (2) When will his name perish?
4. Hypocritical visitors--
 - (1) Utter empty words;
 - (2) Contemplate mischief;
 - (3) Go out and tell what they learn;
5. All who hate me--
 - (1) Whisper about me;
 - (2) Imagine the worst for me;
6. They say:
 - (1) A deadly thing is fastened upon him;
 - (2) He will not recover;

7. Even my bosom friend--in whom I trusted, who ate
of my bread--has lifted up his heel against me.

III. CALL
10

The Psalmist calls upon God:

1. O Lord, be gracious to me;
2. Raise me up;
3. Enable me to requite them!

IV. CONFIDENCE
11-13

The Psalmist expresses his confidence:

1. I know that thou art pleased with me;
2. Because of the following evidence:
 - (1) My enemy has not triumphed over me;
 - (2) Thou hast upheld me because of my integrity;
 - (3) Thou hast set me in thy presence for ever.

NOTE: Verse 13 is a beautiful doxology. Likely, it is not a part of this Psalm, but is the close of the first book, Psalms 1-41.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Even in times of peril we must maintain confidence in God.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. The Compassionate Person Is Blessed of God:

1. The Lord delivers him in the day of trouble;
2. The Lord protects him;
3. The Lord keeps him alive;
4. He is called blessed in the land;
5. He is not given over to his enemies;
6. The Lord sustains him on his sickbed;
7. The Lord heals his infirmities.

II. Evidence of God's Delight in a Person:

1. Enemies are not victorious;
2. He is upheld by God;
3. He is set before the face of God for ever.
4. God said about the Lord: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 17:5).

III. When Enemies Seek Your Harm--

1. They have hearts filled with malice;
2. They will conduct themselves hypocritically;
3. They may appear to be concerned and may utter empty words;
4. In their hearts they will devise mischief;
5. They are anxious to tell what they know (and some things they do not know);
6. They involve themselves in whisper campaigns;
7. They imagine the worst;
8. They may defy even the closest friendship.

NOTE: Consider these points in relationship to the enemies of the
Christ!

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God, because of His very nature, is always concerned about the poor.
God is omni-benevolent.
2. God's people must always be concerned about the poor. Consider: Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27; Acts 20:35; Prov. 19:17; Prov. 28:27. The early church was a compassionate, benevolent church. Study the benevolence in Acts of Apostles. Note Acts 4:32,33.
3. By inspiration, the Psalmist sees (and speaks of) the dastardly deed of Judas. The Lord quotes from this Psalm in Jno. 13:13. Cf. 2 Sam. 15:2; Ps. 55:13.

4. When one is in a position in which he at least seems to be helpless, he soon learns who his friends really are. "What A Friend We Have In Jesus!"

There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus,
None else could heal all our soul's diseases,

No friend like Him is so high and holy,
And yet no friend is so meek and lowly,

There's not an hour that He is not near us,
No night so dark but His love can cheer us.

Jesus knows all about our struggles;
He will guide till the day is done;

There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus,
No, not one! No, not one!

5. Some sicknesses are the result of personal sin. But, not all sicknesses are the consequence of one's personal sins.
6. Enemies were displeased with David, but David knew that God was pleased with him. The right-thinking individual has two major goals in this life: (1) Coming to have God's favor, and (2) maintaining that favor. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:15.

PSALM 42

QUESTIONS AND COUNSEL OF A DESPONDENT SOUL

(Or, The Antidote to Despondency)

Note especially verses 5,6,11, and 43:5.

In these verses we have--

I. LONGINGS
1-3

The Psalmist speaks of longing in the midst of sarcasm.

1. My soul longs for God--as the hart longs for the flowing streams;
2. My soul thirsts for God--for the living God;
3. When shall I come and behold the face of God?
4. Day and night tears have been my food;
5. Men continually say to me: Where is your God?

II. REMEMBRANCE
4

The Psalmist remembers (as he pours out his soul)--

1. How he went with the throng of people;
2. How he led them in procession to the house of God;
3. The glad shouts and the songs of thanksgiving;
4. A multitude keeping festival.

III. QUESTIONS
5a

The Psalmist asks:

1. Why are you cast down, O my soul?
2. Why are you disquieted within me?

IV. COUNSEL
5b

The Psalmist counsels himself:

1. Hope in God;
2. Explanatory reason: for I shall again praise Him--
my help and my God.

V. DESPONDENCY
6-8

The Psalmist speaks again of his despondency:

1. My soul is cast down within me;
2. Therefore, I remember thee from--

2. Continued

- (1) The land of Jordan;
- (2) The ranges of Hermon;
- (3) Mount Mizar;

3. The deep running waters remind me of my troubles;

4. Yet, there is confidence:

- (1) By day the Lord commands His steadfast love;
- (2) By night His song is with me;
- (3) I pray to the God of my life.

VI. QUESTIONS
9,10

The Psalmist questions God with regard to his condition:

- 1. Why hast thou forgotten me?
- 2. Why go I mourning because of the oppression of my enemies?
- 3. Why do my adversaries taunt me while they continually say--Where is your God?

VII. COUNSEL
11

The Psalmist counsels himself:

- 1. Question: Why are you cast down, O My Soul?
- 2. Why are you disquieted within me?
- 3. Counsel: Hope in God!
- 4. Explanatory reason: for I shall praise Him, my help and my God.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: The despondent soul should remember the blessings of former days, and this remembrance should produce courage and hope and confidence with regard to the future. A great lesson from the book of Numbers is: Old Testament Israel was mighty slow to learn that blessings of the past were intended to be assurances with regard to the future.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. The Condition of the Psalmist.

1. He longed for God;
2. His soul thirsted after God;
3. He was concerned about when things would be better;
4. He had shed many tears;
5. He had listened to men say: "Where is your God?"
6. He remembered the good things of former days;
7. His troubles were many;
8. He seemed to be forsaken by God;
9. He was oppressed by his enemies.

NOTE: In spite of this condition, the Psalmist--

1. Knew to whom to go;
2. Fervently prayed to God;
3. Had a wonderful hope;
4. Was confident.

II. These things I Remember.

1. The wonderful trips to the house of God;
2. How I led the procession to the house of God;
3. The glad shouts;
4. The songs of thanksgiving;
5. A multitude keeping festival.

III. When Troubles Come--

1. Seek after God;
2. Remember the former days of joy;
3. Meditate upon things of God;
4. Think about joyful occasions;
5. Have hope in God;

III. Continued.

6. Know that God loves you;

7. Pray to God.

IV. Scoffers ask: Where Is Your God?

The Bible Answers:

1. He is in the creation (Gen. 1:1; 1:26; Ps. 95; Acts 17:22ff);
2. He is the Nature (Cf. Job 26; Acts 14:15-17);
3. He is in the Governmental affairs of men (Cf. Rom. 13);
4. He is in His Word (Cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-13; 2 Tim. 3:16,17);
5. He is in scriptural worship (Cf. Jno. 4:24);
6. He is in His church, His dwelling place (Cf. Eph. 2:21,22);
7. He is in the Christian's life, in His providential care. Cf. Rom. 1:9; Rom. 8:28.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The enemies asked (and men still ask): Where is your God? The Bible answers: My God is EVERYWHERE! Cf. Ps. 139:7-10; Acts 17:27,28.
2. Remembrance of what God has done for us is a mighty source of strength, comfort, hope, and confidence.
3. Because of God's steadfast love, the Psalmist's tears (of verse 3) become the song (of verse 8).
4. When a faithful child of God is engulfed in agony and suffering, the scoffers ask: Where is your God? What has happened? How do you explain this? They fail to understand that " . . . whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6).
5. As a deer longs for, seeks for, and delights in the running streams, so we should long for, seek after, and delight in God--in his Love and in His favor.

6. When tears have become a constant diet, we should hasten--somehow--to feast upon the Word of God. The Lord said: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (Jno. 6:35).
7. Precious memories "flood or souls" when we think upon our services of worship to God--the songs, the prayers, the sermons, the fellowship.
8. One's true happiness comes from being in proper relationship with God.

PSALM 43

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: This is a continuation of Psalm 42 (QUESTIONS AND COUNSEL OF A DESPONDENT SOUL). It is a "passionate prayer for deliverance from enemies and for restoration to the privileges of the sanctuary."

In These verses we have--

I. PRAYER

1

The Psalmist prays:

1. Vindicate me;
2. Defend my cause against ungodly people;
3. Deliver me from deceitful and unjust men.

II. QUESTION

2

The Psalmist asks why he is cast off:

1. Thou art the God in whom I take my refuge;
2. Why hast thou cast me off?
3. Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

III. PLEA

3

The Psalmist pleads for divine direction:

1. Send out thy light and thy truth;
2. Let these lead me;
3. Let these bring me to thy holy hill (Cf. 42:4).

IV. JOY

4

The Psalmist expresses the great joy that will be his:

1. Then I will go to the altar of God;
2. This will be my exceeding joy;
3. I will praise Him with the lyre;
4. He is God, my God.

V. QUESTION

5a

The Psalmist again asks:

1. Why are you cast down, O my Soul?
2. Why are you disquieted within me?

VI. COUNSEL
5b

The Psalmist counsels himself:

1. Hope in God;
2. I shall again praise Him;
3. He is my help and my God.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: This is the picture of the sincere soul longing to worship God, to be in fellowship with God. He prays that God will send to him the light which will produce this worship and this fellowship. It is God's light and God's truth which will produce this worship and this fellowship.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. David's Prayer.

1. Vindicate me;
2. Defend my cause;
3. Deliver me from deceitful and unjust men;
4. Send to me thy light;
5. Send to me thy truth;
6. Bring me to the place of worship;
7. Bring me to thy presence.

II. David's Promises.

1. I will worship.
2. I will rejoice.
3. I will praise thee.

III. God--

1. Is our vindicator;
2. Is our defender;
3. Is our deliverer;

III. Continued.

4. Is our place of refuge;
5. Is the sender of light and truth;
6. Is the one who leads us home;
7. Is the object of our worship;
8. Is the source of our joy;
9. Is the object of our praise;
10. Is the one in whom we hope;
11. Is the one whose fellowship we seek;
12. Is God, my God.

IV. Going Home.

1. There is the fact of the eternal home.
2. In this life we are journeying to the city.
3. We have not made this trip before.
4. We desperately need (we must have) the divine guide, the infallible guide.
5. God guided Old Testament Israel from Egypt to Canaan.
6. God, likewise, provides for us the divine guide: His light, His truth. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. David asked God to defend his cause. Consider: If you should be arrested and should be brought to trial--the charge being that you are a Christian--would there be enough evidence to convict you?
2. We defend God; God defends us. We defend the faith; the faith defends us.
3. God is our protection, our comfort, our security, our peace, our Refuge.
4. If God is my refuge, why should I mourn because of oppression by the enemy?

5. We must be careful always to walk in the light of divine truth. This is the only light which can take us safely home.
6. We should fervently pray that God will send His light--
 - (1) To persons who have lost fellowship with Him;
 - (2) To persons who have never been in fellowship with Him;
 - (3) To those who are faithful and who are in fellowship with Him.
7. Both these beautiful Psalms (42 and 43) counsel: Hope in God! Faith is the substance of things hoped for (Heb. 11:1). We are saved by hope (Rom. 8:24). We have this wonderful hope as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil (Heb. 6:18,19). The Christian must be ready always to give to others who ask, the reason for our blessed hope (1 Pet. 3:15).

Suggested songs: Send the Light; Lead Me Gently Home, Father; We're
Marching to Zion.

AN APPEAL FOR DELIVERANCE FROM DEFEAT

In these verses we have--

I. GOOD
1-8

The Psalmist stresses that God is the source of good things.

1. In retrospect he looks to the past and recounts the great blessings from God to His people. God--
 - (1) Drove out the nations;
 - (2) Planted Israel in Canaan;
 - (3) Set Israel free;
 - (4) Gave Israel victory;
 - (5) Delighted in them.

2. He then considers the present, and proclaims recognition of the fact that God is the source of victory. He stresses that God is--

- (1) King;
- (2) The one who ordained victories for Jacob;
- (3) The one who saves from enemies;
- (4) The one who is deserving of praise and thanks.

II. BAD
9-16

The Psalmist stresses that God is sometimes the source of bad circumstances. He emphasizes the (then) current circumstances, stressing that God's people have been abandoned. They have been--

1. Cast off;
2. Abased;
3. Defeated;
4. Scattered;
5. Sold;
6. Humiliated.

III. REASON
17-22

The Psalmist deals with the question: Why? Why have God's people been cast off? He affirms that it was not because Israel had been unfaithful to God. He says--

1. We have not forgotten thee;
2. We have not been false to thy covenant;
3. We have not turned back;
4. We have not departed from thy way;
5. We have not turned to a strange God;
6. We have not been unfaithful.

IV. PRAYER
23-26

The Psalmist fervently prays for deliverance. He says to God:

1. Rouse thyself!
2. Wake up!
3. Remember us!
4. Help us!
5. Deliver us--for the sake of thy steadfast love.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God, who sends good things into our lives, may also send bad circumstances into our lives, and this for our own good and to His glory. We learn to rejoice even in tribulation (Rom. 5:3).

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. Certain Deeds of God. He--

1. Drove out the nations of Canaan;
2. Planted Israel in the promised land;
3. Afflicted the nations of Canaan;
4. Gave Israel victory.

II. God--

1. Who provides good things,
May provide (or allow) bad circumstances.

II. Continued.

2. Who is the source of victory,
May give defeat;
3. Who delights in His people,
May cast them off;
4. Who can lift us up,
May put us down;
5. Who can give His people favor among the nations,
May cause His people to be held in derision;
6. Who can give us help,
May withhold help from us.

III. What the Cause Was Not. The Psalmist stresses that Israel's condition was not--

1. Their forgetting God;
2. Their being false to His covenant;
3. Their turning back from God's way;
4. Their turning to a strange God.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Without doubt, a key to understanding this Psalm is found in Paul's quoting (in Romans 8:36) verse 22: "Nay, for thy sake we are slain (killed) all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter." In the very pursuit of trying to accomplish God's will, God's servants are often persecuted (and even killed). But, in all these things "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us," and nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God.

2. Fathers should be careful to tell their children about God and His word.

Children need fathers who will tell them about God.

3. God performed great deeds in old days, and He performs great deeds in our day.

In our day, upon the terms of the Gospel of Christ, He even forgives sins!

4. When nations become so wicked they are not fit to exist, God destroys them.

5. A nation's strength is not in its military might, but in its righteousness.

Cf. Psalm 127:1--"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

6. Blessed is the man (and the nation) in whom God delights.

7. Whom God loves, He chastens (Heb. 12:6).

8. Often it is the case that (in His power and providence) our difficult circumstances are for our good. Through our struggles we become stronger, and we are able to accomplish more for God.

9. It is obviously the case that even the righteous are not exempted from suffering and persecution. The Lord stated plainly: "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. 15:20). Paul said, "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

PSALM 45

A PSALM TO THE KING AND HIS BRIDE

In these verses we have--

I. DEDICATION

1

In the dedicatory statement the Psalmist speaks of:

1. His joy;
2. His address;
3. His readiness.

II. MESSAGE

to the King
2-9

The Psalmist speaks of the King:

1. His beauty;
2. His graceful speech;
3. His divine favor;
4. His readiness;
5. His glory and majesty;
6. His obligation to fight for truth and right;
7. His obligation to accomplish marvelous works;
8. The enemies' respect for him;
9. His enduring throne;
10. His justice;
11. His love for righteousness and
12. His hatred for wickedness;
13. His divine appointment;
14. His royal robes;
15. His royal dwelling;
16. His gladness;
17. His ladies of honor;
18. His bride.

III. MESSAGE

to the bride
10-12

The Psalmist speaks to the bride:

1. Urging her to listen;
2. Urging her to forget her people;

III. Continued.

3. Urging her to respect the King;
4. Reminding her of the respect others would have for her.

IV. DESCRIPTION
13-17

The Psalmist describes the bride:

1. Her robes;
2. Her companions;
3. Her escort;
4. On the way to the King;
5. Her descendants;
6. Her fame.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: In view of the beauty, glory, and goodness of the King--let His bride love, honor, and respect Him always. Victory, happiness, and joy belong to the Queen who is faithful to her King.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. Jesus, the Christ. This Psalm is definitely Messianic, according to Hebrews 1.

1. He is the fairest of the sons of men;
2. Never man so spake (Jno. 7:46);
3. He is the one in whom God is well pleased;
4. He is the Great King, mighty in battle (Cf. Rev. 10:11-16);
5. He fights valiantly for the cause of Truth;
6. He is the great conqueror;
7. His throne is for ever and ever;
8. His royal scepter is the scepter of justice;
9. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity;

I. Continued.

10. God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows;

11. He wears the robes befitting the Great King (Cf. Rev. 1:13).

II. The King's Bride. The New Testament church is the Bride of Christ, Eph. 5:

22-33. The Bride--

1. Stands at the right hand of the King;

2. Is beautifully dressed (Cf. Rev. 19:8);

3. Must listen to the voice of the King;

4. Must forget her previous life and be devoted completely to the King;

5. Is the object of the King's affection;

6. Must respect and honor the King;

7. Deserves the respect of all mankind;

8. Must seek to bring joy and happiness to the King;

9. Must have influence in all the earth.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Like the Psalmist, let us be anxious always to praise the King.

2. Let us constantly seek the favor of God;

3. We can be victorious by being united with the victorious King.

4. We must be concerned for the cause of Truth and must defend the right.

5. Like our King, let us love righteousness and hate iniquity.

6. Let us always be anxious to hear the King, and to obey His will.

7. We must do our part to see to it that the Bride's garments are pure and white.

8. We must do our part to see to it that the church is respected, and that its influence is extended throughout the world.

PSALM 46

THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE

In these verses we have--

I. CONFIDENCE

1-3

The Psalmist proclaims: We will not fear.

1. God is our--

(1) Refuge;

(2) Strength;

(3) Help.

2. Therefore, We will not fear, though--

(1) The earth should be removed;

(2) The mountains be carried into the midst
of the sea;

(3) The waters roar and foam;

(4) The mountains tremble with its tumult.

II. EXPLANATION

4-7

The Psalmist explains why there can be such confidence:

1. There is gladness and safety in the city of God;

2. God helps the city;

3. Kingdoms fall, the earth melts; but the Lord of
Hosts is with us yet.

III. EXHORTATIONS

8-10

Exhortations from the Psalmist:

1. Behold the works of the Lord;

2. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth.

Exhortations from God Himself:

1. Be still, and know that I am God;

2. I am exalted among the nations;

3. I am exalted in the earth!

IV. PROCLAMATION

11

The Psalmist proclaims:

1. The Lord of Hosts is with us;

2. The God of Jacob is our refuge.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God is our Refuge--our Safety, our Security. If God is for us, who can be against us?

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. God Is:

1. Our Refuge;
2. Our Strength;
3. Our present help in trouble;
4. The remover and precluder of fear;
5. The one who dwells in the midst of His people;
6. The one who is "with us";
7. The one who does mighty works;
8. One whose existence can be known;
9. One who deserves to be exalted in the earth.

II. No Fear:

1. Knowledge of the fact that God is our Refuge precludes our fear.
2. The man of faith will not fear--
 - (1) Though the earth should be removed;
 - (2) Though the mountains should be carried into the sea;
 - (3) Though the waters should roar and foam;
 - (4) Though the mountains should tremble.
3. "There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear . . . "
(1 Jno. 4:18).

III. The City of God.

1. In New Testament times, is the church of the Living God.
Cf. Heb. 12:22ff.

III. Continued.

2. Has a river whose streams bring joy, as the stream of--

- (1) Prayer;
- (2) Learning;
- (3) Praising;
- (4) Communion;
- (5) Fellowship;
- (6) Serving.

3. Is the very dwelling place of God. Cf. Eph. 2:21,22.

4. Shall not be moved (Cf. Heb. 12:28).

5. God is her Helper.

6. Is protected by the voice of God.

IV. The Works of God.

- 1. He has wrought desolations in the earth;
- 2. He makes wars to cease;
- 3. He breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
- 4. He burns the chariots with fire.

GENERAL LESSONS:

- 1. "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith"
(1 Jno. 5:4).
- 2. "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: what shall man do unto me?"
(Heb. 13:6).
- 3. The Bible is accurate in speaking of mountains in the sea.
Cf. Jonah 2:6.
- 4. The church of our Lord will not be destroyed.
- 5. Enemies of God melt away at the utterance of His voice.
- 6. The God of Old Testament fleshly Israel is the God of the New Testament
Spiritual Israel, the church.

7. Men can know, and are obligated to know, that God is.
8. The Berkeley Version has this note: "This psalm, together with the Wartburg Castle in which the Saxon king protected him against Emperor and Pope, inspired Luther to compose 'A Mighty Fortress.'"

PSALM 47

PRAISE JEHOVAH--SOVEREIGN OF THE EARTH

In the preceding Psalm God has said, "I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!" The present Psalm is directly connected to the thought thus expressed.

In these verses we have--

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I. EXHORTATION
1 | The Psalmist exhorts <u>all peoples</u> to praise Jehovah:

1. Clap your hands;

2. Shout with songs of joy! |
| II. EXPLANATION
2-4 | The Psalmist explains <u>why</u> all peoples should praise God.

1. He is terrible (awe-inspiring);

2. He is a great King over all the earth;

3. He subdued peoples and nations;

4. He chose our heritage for us;

5. He loves us--the pride of Jacob. |
| III. EXHORTATION
5-7 | The Psalmist continues to exhort all to praise God, and to set forth certain reasons:

1. He is victorious;

2. He is our King;

3. He is King of all the earth. |
| IV. EXPLANATION
8,9 | The Psalmist gives further explanation as to why all peoples should praise Jehovah.

1. He reigns over the nations;

2. He sits on His holy throne;

3. The Gentiles also will become the people of God;

4. The rulers of the earth belong to God. |

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God is King of all the earth, and thus reigns in the affairs of all the nations.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD.

1. Is to be praised in songs of joy;
2. Is the "Most High";
3. Is awe-inspiring;
4. Is King over all the earth;
5. Subdued nations and brought them under the feet of Israel;
6. Loves His people;
7. Is the source of victory;
8. Reigns over the Nations;
9. Sits upon His holy throne;
10. Has provided for Gentiles, as well as for Jews;
11. The rulers of the earth belong to Him.

II. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.

1. He is King over all the earth;
2. He reigns over all the nations;
3. He sits on His holy throne;
4. The rulers of the earth belong to Him;
5. Cf. 1 Tim. 6:15,16.

III. PRAISE HIM!

1. Sing praises to God;
2. Sing praises to our King;
3. Sing praises with a Psalm;
4. Cf. Eph. 5:19;
5. Praise Him because of Who He is, What He is, What He has done, is doing, and will do.

IV. OUR HERITAGE.

1. God chose Israel's heritage (v. 4), and God has chosen our heritage.
2. We have the "inheritance" incorruptible, and undefiled, and that
fadeth not away, reserved in heaven (1 Pet. 1:4).
3. Peter speaks of the local church as being God's heritage (1 Pet. 5:3).
4. Christians possess the Holy Spirit as the "earnest" (down payment,
pledge) of our inheritance (Eph. 1:13,14).
5. Children of God are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"
(Rom. 8:17).
6. The word of God is sufficient and powerful to take us to the final
inheritance (Acts 20:32).

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God's people are always anxious to praise Him.
2. The "Pride of Jacob" in New Testament time is the church--which is
the object of divine affection.
3. The Lord is the conquering one. " . . . and out of His mouth proceeded
a sharp two-edged sword . . ." (Rev. 1:16).
4. The Lord overcame, and sat down with the Father in His throne (Rev. 3:21).
5. The Psalmist speaks of the universality of God's plan for man (v. 9).
The gospel of Christ is God's saving power for all men (Rom. 1:16).
6. It is comforting to know that God rules in the affairs of nations.
Often we do not understand, but He does!

PSALM 48

JEHOVAH, THE PROTECTOR OF MOUNT ZION

In these verses we have--

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I. DECLARATION
1 | The Psalmist declares--

1. Great is the Lord;

2. He is to be greatly praised;

3. He is to be greatly praised in the city of our God. |
| II. EXPLANATION
2,3 | The Psalmist explains why God is to be praised--because

1. His holy mountain is beautiful in elevation;

2. His holy mountain is the joy of all the earth;

3. Mt. Zion is the city of the great King!

4. Within the walls of the city there is divine
protection--God protects His city. |
| III. ILLUSTRATION
4-8 | The Psalmist illustrates the fact that God is the
"sure defense" for the Holy City:

1. Kings assembled against the city, but--when they
saw it--they were astonished and fled.

2. God shattered the ships of the enemies.

3. As we have heard, so have we seen.

4. The city of our God is established for ever. |
| IV. CONTEMPLATION
9-11 | The Psalmist speaks of meditation with regard to God
and the Holy City.

1. We have thought of thy steadfast love (God's love
for the City) in the midst of thy temple;

2. Thy praise reaches to the ends of the earth;

3. Thy right hand is filled with victory;

4. Let thy people rejoice. |
| V. INVITATION
12-14 | The Psalmist invites all to consider carefully Mt. Zion,
and stresses a tremendous obligation: |

V. Continued.

1. Walk about Mt. Zion;
2. Go round about her;
3. Number her towers;
4. Go through her citadels;
5. That you may tell the next generation--
 - (1) This is God;
 - (2) This is our God, for ever and ever;
 - (3) He will be our guide for ever.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God is our Refuge--the protector of the Holy City.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. The City of Our God.

1. Is the place where God is the Lord;
2. Is the place where God is greatly to be praised;
3. Is holy to God;
4. Is beautiful in its elevation;
5. Is a source of joy for all the earth;
6. Is the place of protection, security;
7. Is defended by God Himself;
8. When men see it they are astounded (NOTE: Many never see it!);
9. It is established for ever;
10. It is the place of meditation upon the love of God.
11. Is the place where God is praised;
12. Is the means of extending God's influence to the ends of the earth;
13. Is the place filled with victory;
14. Is the place of joy and gladness;
15. Is the place of respect for God's judgments;

I. Continued.

16. All men are invited to inspect her thoroughly;

17. Her blessings are to be made known to all men.

II. Tell the Next Generation!

1. That God IS;

2. That the church of our Lord is the City of God;

3. That God is our God;

4. That He is our God for ever and ever;

5. That He is our guide for ever;

6. Consider: Judges 2:10-14.

III. Citadels of Zion.

1. The watchful providence of God Himself;

2. The vigilance of Christ the King;

3. The sacred Rule Book, the Bible;

4. Elders, in the local congregations;

5. Gospel preachers, faithfully proclaiming the word;

6. Christians—faithfully

(1) Living righteously;

(2) Contending for the faith;

(3) Teaching others the gospel of Christ.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Note the relationship of Psalms 45, 47, and 48—a beautiful trilogy.

We have: (1) God's Presence, (2) His Sovereignty, (3) His Protection.

God is with us; He is our King; He is our Security.

2. The Holy City, in New Testament times, is the church of our Lord (Cf.

Heb. 12:22, 23). In the Holy City, in the Christ, God bestows His wonderful blessings (Cf. Eph. 1:3).

3. Christians are obligated (and privileged) to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3).
4. Enemies of the church often unite in order to oppose the truth.
5. The City of Our God--the Church of our Lord, the Kingdom of the Christ--shall not be destroyed (Cf. Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28).
6. God will be with and God will abundantly bless all those who fight for the city.
7. We must help all men everywhere to be able to identify the city.
8. Verses 12-14 of this beautifully Psalm contain the great Restoration Plea. The Psalmist says: "Walk about Zion; make a circuit around her; count her towers. Notice well her defence--walls; walk through her palaces, so you may tell the next generation. For this God is our God, for ever and ever; He will guide us until death."
9. The older generation has a responsibility to tell the younger generation about God, His Word, His church. The younger generation has a responsibility to listen to the older generation.
10. Kings assembled against the City of God. They passed by together. They saw it, and were amazed. They were dismayed, and hasted away. Morgan observes: "Threatening perils massed against us suddenly waver and pass away smitten by unseen hands, and deliverance is wrought when we have seen nothing but destruction."

PSALM 49

WEALTH VERSUS RIGHTEOUSNESS (The Limits of Wealth)

The Psalmist discusses the limits of wealth, in contrast with the value of righteousness.

In these verses we have--

I. PLEA
1-2 The Psalmist issues a plea to be heard. The plea is addressed to--

1. All peoples;
2. The high and the low;
3. The rich and the poor.

II. PROMISE
3,4 The Psalmist promises that he will give worthwhile instruction:

1. I will speak wisdom;
2. I will set forth understanding;
3. I will set forth the solution to a great problem.

III. PROBLEM
5,6 The Psalmist clearly defines the problems with which he proposes to deal. He asks--why would I be afraid--

1. In times of trouble?
2. When the iniquity of my persecutors surround me?
3. When men of wealth boast of their riches?

IV. PRONOUNCEMENT
7-9 The Psalmist makes a pronouncement with regard to the fact that material wealth cannot prevent the death of its possessor.

1. Truly no man can ransom himself;
2. No man can give to God the price of his life;
3. No man has enough money to purchase exemption from death.

V. CONTRAST
10-15

The Psalmist gives a detailed contrast in relation to wealth and righteousness;

1. Wealth does not prevent the death of its possessor;
2. The wealthy person cannot forever continue in the midst of his material splendor;
3. The unrighteous wealthy are lead by death straight to the grave;
4. But, God will ransom the righteous, v. 15, Cf. v. 7.

VI. EXHORTATION
16

The Psalmist exhorts--Be not afraid:

1. When an unrighteous person becomes rich;
2. When the glory of the house of the unrighteous wealthy increases.

VII. EXPLANATION
17-20

The Psalmist explains the reasons for this exhortation:

1. The wealthy person can take none of his material wealth with him;
2. Thou he counts himself happy while in this life, he will ultimately join those who will never more see the light.
3. Wealth cannot buy exemption from death.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Righteousness is superior to material wealth. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Mt. 6:19,20). "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3:2).

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. The Limits of Wealth.

1. The Psalmist makes an appeal to be heard (verses 1,2).
2. He promises that he will set forth words of wisdom (verses 3,4).
3. He stresses that wealth--
 - (1) Cannot prevent ultimate death;
 - (2) Cannot guarantee the life of the one possessing the wealth.
4. He emphasizes the superiority of righteousness (verses 13-20).
 - (1) God will ransom the soul of the righteous;
 - (2) The ungodly wealthy person is like the beast that perisheth--
his soul will not be ransomed.

II. The Ransom.

1. "Ransom" is the price paid that men might be saved, and that men might come forth from the grave.
2. All accountable persons stand in need of the ransom.
3. No man--regardless of how wealthy--can ransom himself.
4. No man can give to God the price of his life. Cf. Mt. 16:26.
5. But God has provided the ransom. He gave His Son.

III. Foolish Confidence.

1. Note the fact of it.
 2. This is the confidence which grows out of--
 - (1) Wishful thinking;
 - (2) Personal preferences;
 - (3) Consideration given to the wrong guide;
 - (4) Insufficient evidence;
 - (5) Incorrect reasoning.
 3. Note the fate of it--these shall not be ransomed.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. J. Paul Getty, Howard Hughes, and H. L. Hunt could not--with all their wealth--purchase exemption from death or the salvation of their souls.
 2. No man, simply because of his human wisdom, can obtain exemption from death or the salvation of his soul.
 3. Note that there is such a thing as "foolish confidence." Dr. Flew seems to have confidence of this sort, but the Bible says he is a fool.
 4. Men who can be satisfied by material possessions have aimed mighty low.
 5. So far as concerns those who fasten their minds upon accumulating the material, death is their shepherd, and the grave is their home.
 6. Our aim, our goal, must not be the accumulation of material things.
Cf. Heb. 11:24-26; 1 Tim. 6:6-10; Jas. 1:9-11.
 7. We must use our material blessings as a means of laying up heavenly treasures (1 Tim. 6:17-19).
 8. All men, excepting those who happen to be living when the Lord comes, will experience death. Cf. Heb. 9:27.
 9. Life is short; death is certain. Cf. Jas. 4:13-15.
 10. The fact that one claims now to own a piece of land does not mean that he will always own it. Who owned it 100 years ago? 1000 years ago?
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PSALM 50

THE ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE

In these verses we have--

I. SUMMONS
1,2

The Psalmist speaks of a great summons:

1. The source of it--The Mighty One, God the Lord;
2. The extent of it--the whole earth;
3. The time of it--from the rising of the sun to the setting of it;
4. The place of it--out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.

II. COMING
3

The Psalmist speaks of God's coming:

1. He comes, breaking the silence;
2. Before Him is a devouring fire;
3. Round about Him is a mighty tempest.

III. CALL
4

The Psalmist stresses that God calls:

1. He calls to the heavens;
2. He calls to the earth;
3. He calls that He may judge His people.

IV. MESSAGE
5-15

The Psalmist discusses God's message to His people:

God says--

1. Gather to me my faithful ones, for righteous judgment;
2. Listen to what I have to say;
3. I will speak against you;
4. I do not reprove you for the fact of your sacrifices;
5. I will not accept your sacrifices--they are not made for my benefit;
6. The sacrifices which please God are: thanksgiving and faithfulness;

IV. Continued.

7. I will bless those who sacrifice acceptably.

V. MESSAGE
16-21

The Psalmist discusses God's message to the wicked:

God says--

1. You have no right to recite my word;

2. You hate discipline;

3. You refuse to obey my word;

4. You associate with sinners;

5. Your speech is corrupt;

6. You presume upon divine silence;

7. You have an erroneous concept of God;

8. I rebuke you and lay charges against you.

IV. PRESCRIPTION
22,23

God prescribes the acceptable sacrifice. He says:

1. Understand that it is a serious matter to forget God;

2. The acceptable sacrifice is that of--

(1) Thanksgiving, and

(2) Obedience (walking in the right way):

3. To him who offers this kind of sacrifice "I will show the salvation of God."

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: This Psalm emphasizes the importance of one's having the right attitude toward God. Even the authorized act without the right attitude behind it is not acceptable to God. However, the unauthorized act--regardless of attitude behind it--is wrong. Consider: Jno. 4:24; Mt. 19:13; Hos. 6:6.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. The Right Sacrifice.

1. Is made with the right attitude;
2. Is made according to the divine standard;
3. Is offered to God;
4. Is thanksgiving;
5. Is obedience (faithfulness);
6. Is pleasing to God;
7. We are commanded to present our very bodies--ourselves--as living sacrifices to God (Rom. 12:1,2);
8. Will bring God's favor.

II. God's Message to His people.

1. Know that "I am judge";
2. Know that "I am God";
3. Know that "I am your God";
4. Do not presume upon God's silence;
5. Know the importance of the right attitude;
6. Know that "sacrifice" is for the benefit of the worshipper--not for God's benefit (not to satisfy His need);
7. Know that "the world and all that is in it" belong to God;
8. Know the value of thankfulness;
9. Know the importance of obedience.

III. God's Message to the Wicked.

1. You have no right to recite my word;
2. You hate discipline;
3. You put my words behind you;
4. You associate with sinners;
5. You have an evil, deceitful, tongue;
6. You criticize your own brother;

III. Continued.

7. You think that God is like yourself;

8. I will show salvation to the person who--

(1) Is thankful;

(2) Is obedient.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God is the judge of all mankind. He will judge finally by Jesus Christ. Cf. Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jno. 5:27; Acts 17:31.
 2. With regard to matters which displease Him God may "keep silence" for a time. But, He will not always be silent!
 3. God (personally) does not need my contribution--but I need to make it.
 4. In reality, when we are talking about "giving" to God we are speaking accomodatively, "for the world and all that is in it" are His.
 5. It is sin to presume upon God's silence. Whatever we do must be authorized by God's word. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17; Col. 3:17; Heb. 11:6.
 6. The Lord is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him (Heb. 5:8,9).
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PSALM 51

THE WAY HOME

This is, without doubt, a Psalm of David, written after David's tragic sin with Bathsheba, and after the Prophet Nathan had said to David: "Thou art the man." See 2 Samuel 12.

In these verses we have--

I. A PLEA 1-5

The Psalmist's fervent plea includes:

1. That for which he plead--
 - (1) Mercy;
 - (2) Forgiveness;
 - (3) Cleansing;
2. The grounds upon which the plea is made--
 - (1) Acknowledgment (confession) of sin;
 - (2) Recognition of the just judgment of God;
 - (3) Deep consciousness of sin.

II. A PRAYER 6-12

The Psalmist prayed for:

1. Wisdom;
2. Cleansing;
3. Joy and gladness;
4. Spiritual healing;
5. Forgiveness;
6. A clean heart;
7. The right attitude (spirit);
8. God's presence;
9. The Holy Spirit;
10. The joy of salvation.

NOTE: The portrait of the distraught sinner, and--
conversely--the portrait of the righteous person.

III. A PROMISE
13-15

The Psalmist promises, then--

1. I will teach others;
2. I will bring sinners to thee;
3. I will sing praises to thee and about thee.

IV. A PRESCRIPTION
16-19

David sets forth the kind of sacrifice which is acceptable to God. Cf. Ps. 50. He discusses the matter--

1. Negatively--thou has no delight in the fact of sacrifices;
2. Positively--the sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
3. Personally--David says: Forgive me, and I and all Zion will offer right sacrifices.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is possible for the wayward sinner to return home to God. The way of restoration is the way of humility and genuine repentance. Cf. Acts 8:22.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. Note David's Prayer.

1. Have mercy upon me;
2. Blot out my transgressions;
3. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity;
4. Cleanse me from my sins;
5. Purify me with hyssop;
6. Wash me;
7. Cause me to hear joy and gladness;
8. Hide thy face from my sins;

I. Continued.

9. Blot out my iniquities;
10. Create in me a clean heart;
11. Renew a steadfast spirit within me;
12. Cast me not away from thy presence;
13. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;
14. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation;
15. Uphold me with a willing spirit;
16. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness;
17. Open thou my lips;
18. Do good to Zion;
19. Rebuild Thou the walls of Jerusalem.

II. The Distraught Sinner.

1. Has acted foolishly;
2. Is in need of spiritual cleansing;
3. Is filled with sorrow;
4. Is spiritually sick;
5. Is bogged down in sin;
6. Is characterized by a sinful heart;
7. Needs to change his attitude and conduct;
8. Is away from God's presence;
9. Is without the guidance of the Holy Spirit;
10. Is without the joy of salvation.

III. The Righteous Person.

1. Acts according to wisdom;
2. Is spiritually clean;
3. Has joy and gladness;
4. Is spiritually healthy;
5. Has forgiveness;

III. Continued.

6. Has a clean heart--a heart set upon God;
7. Has the right spirit (attitude);
8. Enjoys God's presence;
9. Is guided by the Holy Spirit (through the Word of God);
10. Has the joy of salvation.

IV. God.

1. Is characterized by steadfast love;
2. Is characterized by abundant mercy;
3. Is able to blot out transgressions;
4. Is able to forgive sins;
5. Is the one against whom all sin is committed;
6. Is justified and blameless in His judgment;
7. Desires truth in the inward being;
8. Is able to teach wisdom;
9. Is able to grant joy and gladness;
10. Can create within the individual a new heart;
11. Can take away His presence;
12. Can take away His Holy Spirit;
13. Can restore one to the joy of salvation;
14. Can deliver from the guilt of sin;
15. Has no delight in the mere fact of one's sacrifice;
16. Is pleased with a genuinely penitent heart;
17. Is pleased with right sacrifices;
18. Can rebuild the torn down walls of one's life.

V. The Penitent Soul.

1. Is keenly conscious of God's steadfast love;
2. Is mindful of God's power to forgive;
3. Sincerely desires and pleads for forgiveness;

V. Continued.

4. Confesses his sins;
5. Knows that sin is against God, and God is against sin;
6. Respects the justice of God;
7. Knows that sin is the consequence of one's following the course of foolishness;
8. Wants to be joyful again;
9. Is anxious to be again in God's presence;
10. Longs to be again in position to teach others about God and His will.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Nathan said: "Thou art the man." David said: "I am the man." We must be big enough to confess our sins, and to seek God's forgiveness.
2. Even though sins can be forgiven, the tragic consequences can linger on and on.
3. " . . . but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jno. 1:7).
4. Though we may not understand all the factors involved in a given situation, we can be assured that God will always deal justly.
5. Great and wonderful is the joy that comes when a sinner returns home. There is joy within the penitent soul; there is joy among friends and loved ones; there is joy among the angels (Lk. 15).
6. David knew that he stood guilty of the murder of Uriah. What one does through another he does himself.
7. Let the restored person be anxious to teach others God's will.
8. The sacrifice offered with the right attitude behind it does not please God. Let us be careful to offer "right sacrifices."

BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO MAKES GOD HIS STRENGTH

The Psalmist discusses the "man that made not God his strength," and then contrasts this man with himself--a righteous person."

In these verses we have--

I. DESCRIPTION

1-4

The Psalmist describes his enemy, the wicked tyrant:

1. He addresses the enemy as--

- (1) O Mighty man;
- (2) O deceitful tongue;

2. This wicked tyrant--

- (1) Boasts of mischief against the godly;
- (2) Has a tongue that is like a sharp razor;
- (3) Is a worker of treachery;
- (4) Loves evil more than good;
- (5) Loves lying more than speaking truth;
- (6) Loves words that devour.

II. REACTION

5-7

The Psalmist speaks of reaction to the enemy:

1. The reaction of God--

- (1) He will break you down for ever;
- (2) He will tear you from your tent;
- (3) He will uproot you from the land of the living;

2. The reaction of the righteous--

- (1) These shall see and fear;
- (2) They shall laugh at the enemy;
- (3) They shall say:

A. "See the man who would not make God
his refuge";

B. "See the man who trusted in the abundance
of his riches, and sought refuge in his wealth."

III. SELF
8,9

The Psalmist speaks of himself--as contrasted with
the wicked enemy:

1. I am like a green olive tree in the house of God;
2. I trust in God's steadfast love for ever;
3. I will thank thee for ever;
4. I will proclaim thy name in the presence of
the godly.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Let each one resolve to be a person who makes God his
strength.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. The Wicked Enemy of God's People.

1. Is often a person in power;
2. Boasts of mischief done against the godly;
3. Plots destruction;
4. Has a tongue like a sharp razor;
5. Works treachery;
6. Loves evil more than good;
7. Loves lying more than speaking truth;
8. Loves words that devour;
9. Is deceitful;
10. Shall be destroyed by God;
11. The righteous shall laugh at his destruction;
12. He does not make God his refuge;
13. He trusts in his riches;
14. He seeks refuge in his material wealth.

II. The Righteous Person.

1. Is like a tree—a green olive tree, in the house of God;
2. Trusts in God's steadfast love;
3. Is thankful to God always for His works;
4. Proclaims to others the name of God;
5. Makes God his strength;
6. Trusts in God—not in material wealth;
7. Speaks words of instruction and exhortation;
8. Loves the good;
9. Loves and speaks the truth;
10. Loves words that edify;
11. Is sincere.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Let us be careful to love that which is good.
2. Let us be careful to love the truth, to obey the truth, to speak the truth.
3. Let our words be such as will strengthen, comfort, instruct, edify.
4. The wicked tyrant may succeed in his wicked schemes for a time, but God will deal with him justly.
5. It is our obligation (and sacred privilege) to be concerned about pure speech.
 "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6). "...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Mt. 12:34). "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). "Speak not evil one of another, brethren" (Jas. 4:11).
6. "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" (Eph. 6:10).

THE WICKEDNESS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The Psalmist discusses the wickedness of the people of God. In Rom. 3:9ff Paul stresses that these things were said with regard to those who were under the law.

In these verses we have--

I. CONDITION

1

The Psalmist describes the wicked people:

1. Some are fools, denying the existence of God;
2. They are corrupt;
3. They do abominable iniquity;
4. Not a one does good.

II. CAUSE

2

The Psalmist considers the cause of the wickedness.

He says that God looked down from heaven to see--

1. If there were any who were wise;
2. If there were any who seek after God.

III. CONSEQUENCES

3,4

The Psalmist mentions what God found:

1. They have all fallen away;
2. They are depraved;
3. Not a one does good;
4. They have no understanding;
5. They are self-destructive;
6. They do not call upon God.

IV. CONDEMNATION

5

The Psalmist emphasizes their condemnation:

1. They are in great terror;
2. God will punish the ungodly;
3. They will be put to shame;
4. They are rejected of God.

V. CALL

6

The Psalmist calls out to God:

1. He prays that deliverance for Israel will come out of Zion;
2. He speaks of the restoration of the fortunes of God's people;
3. He speaks of joy and gladness for Jacob and for Israel.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Wickedness among men is the effect when men reject God. God's disfavor abides even upon His people when they turn from Him.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. When Men Hold "There Is No God"--

1. They are fools;
2. They are corrupt in attitude and in conduct;
3. They do abominable iniquity;
4. They do not "do good";
5. They are without wisdom;
6. They have fallen away;
7. They are depraved;
8. They are following a course of destruction;
9. They are not concerned about obedience to God;
10. They are rejected by God.

II. When Men Properly Respect God--

1. They are wise;
2. They are righteous;
3. They do works of righteousness;
4. They are ready unto every good work;
5. They walk in the way of wisdom;

6. They are with God and God is with them;
7. They are upright in heart and in conduct;
8. They are following the cause of salvation;
9. They are determined to be obedient to God;
10. They are acceptable to God.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. This Psalm is very similar to Psalm 14. However, there is in this a very significant lesson. The 14th Psalm was evidently written in David's early life, and the 53rd Psalm in his later life. But, the condition of God's people is the same. No change for the better. This is tragic indeed. Each generation ought to be better than the preceding one. Spurgeon observes: "If our age has advanced from 14 to 53, we shall find the doctrine of this Psalm more evident than in our youth." I suppose he means that the 53 year old man will have a deeper appreciation for the message contained.
 2. When one's attitude toward God is wrong, his conduct will be wrong. When his attitude toward God is right, his conduct will be right.
 3. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7).
 4. We must pray for wisdom (Jas. 1:5), but we must also work for it (2 Tim. 2:15).
 5. In Rom. 3 Paul quotes from this Psalm, and shows that it was written about God's Old Testament people. Paul also shows that the Psalms were a part of the Mosaic law.
-

GOD, THE HELPER OF THE OPPRESSED

In these verses we have--

I. PRAYER
1,2

The Psalmist, in distress, fervently prays:

1. Save me;
2. Vindicate me;
3. Hear me--listen to my words.

II. EXPLANATION
3

The Psalmist explains why he prays: for--

1. Insolent men have risen against me;
2. Ruthless men seek my life;
3. These are men who are not concerned about God.

III. ASSURANCE
4,5

The Psalmist expresses his assurance of God's help:

1. God is my helper;
2. He is the upholder of my life;
3. He will deal with my enemies.

IV. PROMISE
6,7

The Psalmist promises praise and thanksgiving:

1. I will sacrifice to thee a free-will offering;
2. I will give thanks to thy name, for--
 - (1) It is good;
 - (2) Thou hast delivered me from trouble;
 - (3) My eye has seen the victory given.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God is the Helper of the oppressed.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD IS THE ONE--

1. Who saves us;
2. Who vindicates (judges, examines) us;
3. Who hears our prayers;

I. Continued.

4. Who helps us;
5. Who upholds our lives;
6. Who delivers us from our enemies.

II. WICKED MEN--

1. Rise against the righteous;
2. Often seek to destroy the righteous;
3. Have no concern about God;
4. Will be destroyed.

III. THE OPPRESSED SOUL--

1. Looks to God;
2. Prays to God;
3. Has confidence that God will hear;
4. Will experience victory.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Especially, in times of distress we should be anxious to take the matter to God in prayer.
2. When wicked men arise against the righteous it is good to know that God knows and that He cares.
3. Even in times of severe opposition and distress we should never lose confidence. We must know that God can and will deliver us.
4. Especially in view of all that God has done and does for us, we must be anxious to give as we have been prospered.
5. It is right and good for us to be thankful, and to express our thanks to God.
6. God is against the enemies of His people. He is also against His people when they are sinful. God is for His people when they do right. He is for the enemies of His people when His people are sinful, and when the enemies are doing God's work. God used Nebuchadnezzar to punish His people.

PSALM 55

GOD, THE DELIVERER OF THE BETRAYED
(Baffled, Burdened, Believing)

In these verses we have--

I. APPEAL
1,2

The Psalmist appeals to God that he might be heard:

1. Give ear to my prayer;
2. Hide not thyself from my supplication;
3. Attend to me;
4. Answer me.

II. CONDITION
2-5

The Psalmist describes His condition:

1. I am overcome by my trouble;
2. I am distraught by the noise of the enemy;
3. I am oppressed by the wicked;
4. The wicked bring trouble upon me;
5. The wicked cherish enmity against me;
6. My heart is in anguish within me;
7. The terrors of death have fallen upon me;
8. Fear and trembling come upon me;
9. Horror overwhelms me.

III. RESPONSE
6-8

The Psalmist speaks of his response to his condition:

1. I say, "O that I had wings like a dove!"
2. "I would fly away and be at rest";
3. I would wander afar;
4. I would lodge in the wilderness;
5. I would haste to find me a shelter.

IV. PRAYER
9-11

The Psalmist prays that the city might be delivered:

1. Destroy their plans;
2. Confuse their tongues;
3. In the city there is violence and strife;

4. Day and night men go around it on its walls;
5. There are mischief and trouble within the city;
6. In its market place there is ruin, oppression,
and fraud.

V. IDENTIFICATION
12-14

The Psalmist speaks of who the trouble-maker is:

1. He is not--
 - (1) An enemy;
 - (2) An adversary;
2. He is--
 - (1) One his equal;
 - (2) A familiar friend;
 - (3) A companion;
 - (4) One with whom the Psalmist often talked;
 - (5) One with whom the Psalmist often worshipped;
 - (6) One with whom the Psalmist often walked in
fellowship.

VI. PRAYER
15

The Psalmist prays for punishment of the trouble-makers:

1. Let death come upon them;
2. Let them go down to sheol alive;
3. Let them go in terror to their graves.

VII. ASSURANCE
16-19

The Psalmist speaks of assurance that God will give him victory:

1. I call upon God--He will save me;
2. I utter my complaint--He will hear me;
3. He will deliver my soul;
4. God will humble the trouble-makers because--
 - (1) They keep no law;
 - (2) They do not fear God.

VIII. COMPANION
20,21

The Psalmist speaks of his companion, the trouble-maker:

1. He stretched out his hand against his friend;
2. He violated his covenant;
3. He spoke hypocritically.

IX. EXHORTATION
22

The Psalmist speaks words of exhortation:

1. Cast your burden upon the Lord--He will sustain you;
2. He will protect and sustain the righteous.

X. ASSURANCE
23

The Psalmist speaks assuringly of victory over the treacherous one:

1. Thou, O God, will cast them down;
2. Wicked men shall not live out half their days.

XI. PROMISE
23

The Psalmist makes a promise: He says--

"But I will trust in thee."

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Even when former friends, or loved ones become our enemies we must still trust in God, and look to Him for deliverance.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. It Is God who--

1. Hears;
2. Attends;
3. Delivers;
4. Destroys;
5. Confuses;
6. Saves;
8. Sustains;

I. Continued.

8. Protects the righteous;
9. Is the object of our trust.

II. Blessed Assurance.

1. He will save me;
2. He will hear my voice;
3. He will deliver my soul in safety;
4. He will give me victory.

III. The Hypocritical Companion--

1. Was a familiar friend;
2. Was one with whom the Psalmist often talked;
3. Was one with whom the Psalmist walked in fellowship;
4. Violated his covenant;
5. Was characterized by deceitful heart and smooth speech.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. In this Psalm, Morgan sees (1) Fear, verses 1-8; (2) Fury, verses 9-15; and (3) Faith, verses 16-23. Morgan observes: Fear leads to desire for flight; it is faith which gives the courage to stand and fight.
 2. It is our exalted privilege to cast our burdens upon the Lord. Peter says: "...casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).
 3. It is wonderful for us to know that in every difficulty we can look to God for victory.
 4. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart" (Prov. 3:5).
 5. Verses 13 and 14 are prophetic, and speak of the Lord's being betrayed by Judas Iscariot. Cf. Psalm 41:9 and Jno. 13:18.
-

I PUT MY TRUST IN THEE

Note: The thrust of this Psalm is the same as the closing line of the previous one: "But I will trust in Thee."

In these verses we have--

I. PRAYER

1-4

The Psalmist prays:

1. Men trample upon me;
2. All day long foemen oppress me;
3. Many fight against me proudly;
4. When I am afraid, I put my trust in thee;
5. In God, whose word I praise, I trust without a fear;
6. What can flesh do to me?
7. Be gracious to me.

II. PLEA

5-7

The Psalmist pleads:

1. Men seek to injure my cause;
2. Their thoughts are against me for evil;
3. They band themselves against me;
4. They have waited for my life;
5. Recompense them for their crime;
6. In wrath cast them down, O God!

III. ASSURANCE

8,9

The Psalmist speaks of assurance of victory:

1. God knows my tossings;
2. Put thou my tears in thy bottle!
3. They are recorded in thy book;
4. My enemies will be turned back;
5. This I know: God is for me.

IV. AFFIRMATION

10,11

The Psalmist strongly affirms his trust;

1. I praise the word of God;
2. I trust Him without a fear;
3. What can man do to me?

V. PROMISES
12,13

The Psalmist promises:

1. I will perform my vows to God;
2. I will render thank offerings to Him;
3. Thou hast delivered my soul from death;
4. Thou has kept my feet from falling;
5. I will walk before God in the light of life.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is good to trust God even when we have fear. It is better to trust Him so that we will have no fear.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. Troubles Do Come. The fact that one is a child of God does not mean that--

1. He will have no problems;
2. There will be no opposition;
3. There will be no enemies.

II. Let us--

1. Trust God;
2. Praise His word;
3. Be without fear;
4. Be unafraid of what men can do to us;
5. Be faithful to God;
6. Be thankful;
7. Walk before God, in the light of life.

III. MANIFESTATIONS OF TRUST:

1. The absence of fear;
2. Praise for the word of God;
3. Boldness in spite of adversaries;
4. Prayer;
5. Confidence that God will deliver us;

III. Continued.

6. Faithfulness;
7. Thankfulness;
8. Righteous living.

IV. REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING:

1. God's promises (Cf. 2 Pet. 1:4);
2. Assurance that God will deliver;
3. Guidance in the paths of safety.

V. ENEMIES OF GOD'S SERVANTS:

1. They "trample upon me all day long";
2. They are proud to fight against God's servant;
3. All their thoughts are against the righteous;
4. They band themselves together in opposition;
5. They will be destroyed.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. It is right for one to pray for deliverance from troubles, but we must always pray that God's ^{will} will be done. Cf. Mt. 26:39.
2. It is comforting to know that God is mindful of us when we cannot sleep. He carefully records our sorrows. Consider: Job 31:4; Mt. 10:30; Psalm 139:1-4. God told Isaiah to tell Hezekiah: "I have seen thy tears" (II Kings 20:5)..
3. Whatever the problem or the circumstance, the righteous can say: "This I know, that God is for me." And, "If God is for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8:31)?
4. If I trust in God, I will not fear what men can do. Cf. Ps. 118:6; Heb. 13:6; Ps. 23:4; Acts 20:24 (KJV).

PRAISE IN ADVERSITY

In these verses we have--

I. CALL

1

The Psalmist calls upon God in prayer;

1. The prayer--Be merciful to me;

2. The grounds--for

(1) In thee my soul takes refuge;

(2) In the shadow of thy wings I will take refuge

till the storms of destruction pass by;

II. CONFIDENCE

2,3

The Psalmist expresses confidence that God will

answer:

1. I cry to God who fulfils His purpose for me;

2. He will send from heaven and save me;

3. He will defeat those who trample upon me;

4. He will send forth His steadfast love and

faithfulness.

III. CONDITION

4

The Psalmist speaks of his condition:

1. I lie in the midst of lions;

2. They devour the sons of men;

3. Their teeth are spears and arrows;

4. Their tongues are sharp swords.

IV. DOXOLOGY

5

The Psalmist issues a statement of praise:

1. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!

2. Let thy glory be over all the earth!

V. CONDITION

6

The Psalmist again speaks of his condition:

1. They set a net for my steps;

2. My soul was bowed down;

3. They dug a pit in my way;

4. They have fallen into it themselves.

VI. COMMITMENT
7-10

The Psalmist stresses his commitment to God:

1. My heart is "fixed" (KJV) O God;
2. I will sing and make melody;
3. I will awake the dawn!
4. I will give thanks to thee, O Lord;
5. I will praise thee among the nations;
6. For thy steadfast love is great to the heavens;
7. Thy faithfulness is great to the clouds.

VII. DOXOLOGY
11

The Psalmist again issues a statement of praise:

1. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!
2. Let thy glory be over all the earth!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Let the faithful soul--even in the midst of
adversity--keep on praising God for His love and
faithfulness.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD--

1. Is the God of mercy;
2. Is our place of refuge;
3. Is the one to whom we are to take our troubles;
4. Is the one who works for His people;
5. Is the one who delivers the faithful;
6. Is the sender of His steadfast love;
7. His glory is above all the earth;
8. Is the one to be praised.

II. MERCY AND TRUTH.

1. Come from God;
2. Mercy is great--unto the heavens;
3. Truth is great--unto the clouds;

II. Continued.

4. These are involved in God's deliverance of the righteous from the oppressor.

III. THE FAITHFUL.

1. Do have troubles;
2. Take their troubles to God;
3. Place their trust in God;
4. Flee to God for refuge;
5. Know that God is the deliverer;
6. Keep on exalting God and singing His praises.

IV. DAVID IN THE LION'S DEN.

1. Certain ones would swallow him up;
2. David said, "My soul is among the lions";
3. David describes these lions--
 - (1) They are set on fire;
 - (2) Their teeth are spears and arrows;
 - (3) Their tongues are a sharp sword.

V. IN THE LION'S DEN.

1. There was Daniel (Daniel 6);
2. There was David (Ps. 57);
3. There was Paul (2 Tim. 4:16,17).

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. When calamities come, let us be anxious to take the matter to God in prayer.
2. When lions walk about seeking to destroy, let us seek refuge in God.
3. As God delivered Daniel, David, and Paul from the lion's den, just so He will deliver the righteous from the lions that seek to devour.

4. In times of special need, may God help us to have the blessed assurance that was characteristic of David.
5. Those who would ensnare others often fall into their own pit. Consider Haman (Esther 7:10).
6. David's heart was "fixed." He was certain and confident. There was no wavering. "Fixed" is the translation of the Hebrew word kun, which means:

to be prepared, to be established, to be set up. David uses the word again in Psalm 108:1. In Psalm 112:7 the Psalmist speaks of the righteous--that his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. May we, like David, "fix" our hearts--be certain, confident, unwavering, steadfast.
7. Let us always be thankful for the privilege (and obligation) we have to sing praises to God.
8. Let us ever be grateful for God's love and faithfulness.

THERE IS A GOD WHO JUDGES ON EARTH

In these verses we have--

I. PROBLEM

1,2

The Psalmist introduces the problem of wicked rulers:

1. Questions:

(1) Do you decree what is right?

(2) Do you judge the sons of men uprightly?

2. Answer:

(1) Your hearts devise wrongs;

(2) Your hands deal out violence on earth.

II. DESCRIPTION

3-5

The Psalmist describes the wicked persons:

1. They go astray from the womb;

2. They err from the time of their birth, speaking
lies;

3. They are as poisonous as a snake;

4. They are like the deaf adder that stops its ear.

III. PRAYER

6-9

The Psalmist prays that God will deal with the
wicked:

1. O God, break the teeth in their mouths;

2. Tear out the fangs of the young lions (Cf. 57:4);

3. Let them vanish like water that runs away;

4. Let them be trodden down and wither like grass;

5. Let them be like the snail that dissolves into
slime;

6. Let them be like the aborted being;

7. Let them be swept away like fire burning brush.

IV. REACTION

10

The Psalmist speaks of the reaction of the righteous:

1. He will rejoice when he sees divine vengeance
upon the wicked;

2. He will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked.

V. OBSERVATION

11

In consideration of the background discussed, the Psalmist sets forth a lesson to be learned. Men will say--

1. Surely there is a reward for the righteous;
2. Surely there is a God who judges on earth.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: In spite of (1) the wickedness of rulers, and (2) the consequent wickedness among men, the fact remains that there is a God who judges on earth.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. ON WICKED RULERS.

1. They are not properly concerned about what is right.
2. They do not judge uprightly;
3. They devise wrongs;
4. They deal out violence.

II. ON WICKED PERSONS.

1. They learn wickedness in early life;
2. They are not concerned about speaking truth;
3. They are as poison as snakes;
4. They are deaf to all that is right.

III. GOD CAN CAUSE THE WICKED--

1. To be as harmless as a toothless lion;
2. To vanish like water that runs away;
3. To wither like grass that is trodden down;
4. To dissolve like a snail in slime;
5. To be like the still-born child that never sees the sun.

IV. THE RIGHTEOUS:

1. Is confident of God's justice;
2. Knows the value of early education;
3. Prays for the destruction of wickedness;
4. Rejoices when he sees God's vengeance.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Though human rulers ought to be concerned about what is right, it is often the case that they are engaged in devising something that is wrong.
2. Violence on earth is often the consequence of wicked rulers.
3. To fail to learn righteousness is to learn wickedness. Ancient Jews had a proverb which said: He who teaches not his son to work teaches his son to steal.
4. Wickedness can be learned early in life, and righteousness can be learned early in life. We are enjoined by the Scriptures to begin early in teaching our children God's will.
5. God hates wickedness and will punish the wicked person. God loves righteousness and will abundantly reward the righteous person. In judgment, God will render to every man according to his works (2 Cor. 5:10).
6. Wicked rulers contribute mightily to the wickedness of the people.
7. It is right for the righteous to pray for the destruction of wickedness.

PSALM 59

THOU, O GOD, ART MY FORTRESS

This Psalm most naturally divides itself into two sections: verses 1-10, and verses 11-17. Each section deals with the same thought, and each section is made up the same way. Verses 1-10 constitute a fervent prayer for deliverance from bloodthirsty men, and verses 11-17 constitute a fervent prayer for divine wrath upon the enemies. Each section contains: a prayer, the circumstances, and the assurance.

In this Psalm we have--

I. PRAYER
1,2

The Psalmist prays to God--

1. Deliver me from my enemies;
2. Protect me from those who rise up against me;
3. Deliver me from those who work evil;
4. Save me from bloodthirsty men.

II. EXPLANATION
3,4

The Psalmist explains why he thus prays--

1. Fierce men band themselves against me;
2. They lie in wait for my life;
3. They prepare to oppose me, and this for "no fault of mine."

III. PRAYER
5

The Psalmist continues his prayer--

1. Rouse thyself;
2. Come to my help;
3. Come and see;
4. Awake to punish all the nations;
5. Spare none of those who treacherously plot evil.

IV. DESCRIPTION
6,7

The Psalmist describes the attitudes and actions of his enemies--

1. They come back each evening;
2. They come howling like dogs;
3. They come prowling about the city;
4. They bellow with their mouths;
5. They snarl with their lips;
6. They think: "Who will hear us?"

V. ASSURANCE
8-10

The Psalmist speaks of his assurance that God will deliver him from his enemies--

1. Thou, O Lord, dost laugh at them;
2. Thou dost hold the nations in derision;
3. O My Strength, I will sing praises to thee;
4. Thou, O God, art my fortress;
5. God in His steadfast love will meet me;
6. God will give me victory.

VI. PRAYER
11-13

The Psalmist prays for God to deal with these enemies--

1. Don't slay them--let them be a constant reminder;
2. Make them totter by thy power;
3. Bring them down;
4. Let them be trapped in their pride because of--
 - (1) The sin of their mouths;
 - (2) The words of their lips;
 - (3) Their cursings;
 - (4) Their lies;
5. Consume them in wrath;
6. Let men know that "God rules over Jacob to the ends of the earth."

VII. DESCRIPTION
14,15

The Psalmist again describes the enemies:

1. Each evening they come back;
2. They come--
 - (1) Howling like dogs;
 - (2) Prowling the city;
 - (3) Roaming about for food;
 - (4) Growling if they do not get their full.

VIII. PROMISE
16,17

The Psalmist promises that he will continue to praise God, the source of strength and deliverance:

1. I will sing of thy might;
2. I will sing aloud of thy love;
3. Reasons--
 - (1) Thou hast been to me a fortress;
 - (2) Thou hast been to me a refuge in the day of distress;
 - (3) Thou, O God, art my fortress;
 - (4) Thou art the God who shows steadfast love.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God is the fortress of the righteous. He is our strength and our deliverer.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. HOW ENEMIES COME.

1. Howling;
2. Prowling;
3. Roaming;
4. Growling.

II. WICKED NATIONS.

1. God laughs at them.
2. God holds them in derision.
3. God destroys them.

III. GOD IS--

1. Deliverer;
2. Protector;
3. Helper;
4. The God of Spiritual Israel;
5. Strength;
6. To be praised;
7. The God of steadfast love;
8. The giver of victory;
9. Our Shield;
10. The Ruler of all men;
11. A Mighty Fortress.

IV. ENEMIES OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

1. Work against the righteous;
 2. Work evil;
 3. Are bloodthirsty;
 4. Try to entrap the righteous;
 5. Bind themselves together against God's people;
 6. Treacherously plot evil;
 7. Make a lot of noise;
 8. Are laughed at by God;
 9. Will be defeated by God;
 10. Are constant reminders of God's power and providence;
 11. Are full of pride;
 12. Are liars.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. It is not always the case that personal sin is the cause of one's troubles or of his sufferings. Cf. v. 4. Cf. the book of Job.
2. We must be willing to suffer for righteousness' sake (Mt. 5:10-12).
 "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye...but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Pet. 4:14,16).
3. God punishes sinful individuals, and He punishes sinful nations.
4. Note that "fierce men band themselves together" (v. 3). Even the enemies of God's people know the value of unity.
5. Let us always recognize that the God of Glory is our Strength. Moses said: "The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation" (Ex. 15:2). David said, "I love thee, O Lord, my strength" (Ps. 18:1). Paul stresses that "...though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). The older one grows in faithful service to the Lord, the younger he becomes! And, Paul also proclaimed: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Here, the present participle is significant. Literally, Paul says: "I can keep on doing all things in Him who keeps on 'empowering me.'"

PSALM 60

WITH GOD WE SHALL DO VALIANTLY

In these verses we have--

I. ABANDONMENT

1-5

David talks with God about God's having abandoned His people to disaster and defeat. David speaks in particular about the conditions of the people, and prays fervently in their behalf:

1. The condition--

- (1) Rejected;
- (2) Broken (defenseless);
- (3) Subject to divine anger;
- (4) Earthquakes;
- (5) Suffering;
- (6) Stunned;
- (7) Place of refuge (deliverance) provided;
- (8) Without divine leadership (v. 9);
- (9) Without divine presence (v. 10).

2. The prayer--

- (1) Restore us;
- (2) Repair the breaches of the land;
- (3) Give us victory;
- (4) Answer us!
- (5) Grant us help against the foe.

II. APPEAL

6-8

David appeals to God to remember His promises to His people--promises which included victory over enemies:

1. I will divide Shechem;
2. I will portion out the Vale of Succoth;
3. Gilead is mine;

4. Manasseh is mine;
5. Ephraim is my helmet;
6. Judah is my scepter;
7. Moab is my washbasin;
8. Upon Edom I cast my shoe;
9. Over Philistia I shout in triumph.

III. ASSURANCE
9-12

David expresses his assurance that God will be with His people, and that God will lead them to victory:

1. Questions--

- (1) Who will bring me to the fortified city?
- (2) Who will lead me to Edom?

2. Problem--

- (1) Hast thou not rejected us, O God?
- (2) Thou dost not go forth with our armies.

3. Prayer--

- (1) Grant us help against the foe;
- (2) Vain is the help of man!

4. Confidence--

- (1) With God we shall do valiantly;
- (2) It is HE who will tread down our foes.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Our faith in the promises of God compels us to have confidence that He will give the victory. With God we shall do valiantly.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. SIGNIFICANT DECLARATIONS:

1. Vain is the help of man;
2. With God we shall do valiantly;
3. It is God who will tread down our foes.

II. GOD CAN:

1. Restore us;
2. Repair the breaches;
3. Provide protection;
4. Deliver us;
5. Give us victory;
6. Answer us;
7. Keep His promises;
8. Help us against the foe;
9. Enable us to do valiantly;
10. Tread down our foes.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Even when problems abound and the situation seems helpless, we can be assured that God will "set up a banner" to which all who fear Him may rally.
2. In spite of the terrible condition in which the Psalmist found himself he (1) prayed to God, (2) maintained his confidence in God, and (3) expressed to God and to others His confidence in God.
3. The Psalmist stresses the folly of attempting to rely upon human help, and the absolute necessity of relying upon God. Cf. Gideon's three hundred.
4. Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth (Heb. 12:6).
5. He is faithful that promised (Heb. 10:23); God is not slack concerning His promises (2 Pet. 3:9); and what He has promised He is able also to perform (Rom. 4:21).

6. "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).
7. Old Testament history shows that God sometimes--because of the sinfulness of men--refuses to cause the land to be productive. Cf. Lev. 26:19,20; Deut. 28:23,24; Hos. 2:8,9; Joel 1:18-20; Hag. 1:10,11.
8. Even in this life God often punishes the wicked because of wickedness, but this punishment is nothing compared to the eternal punishment which awaits the impenitent. Cf. Mt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:7-10.
9. God has set up a "banner" to which all who fear Him may rally. This banner is: The Christ of Glory, the Church of the Living God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
10. God has spoken in His holiness. He has revealed to man His holiness, and He has revealed to man the sacred plan (the Gospel of Christ) by which a human being can become holy (Cf. 2 Pet. 1:15; Rom. 3:21-28).
11. "Cowards die many times before their death. The Valiant never tastes of death but once."

PSALM 61

THE PRESERVER OF THE KING

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: Delitzsch calls this "Prayer and Thanksgiving of an expelled King, on his way back to his throne." The Psalm likely relates to the time of Absalom's rebellion--a time in which David was away from Jerusalem and the temple.

In these verses we have--

I. PLEA 1-2a

The Psalmist pleads to God that he might be heard:

1. Hear my cry;
2. Listen to my prayer;
3. I call to thee when my heart is faint.

II. PRAYER 2b-4

The Psalmist prays:

1. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I;
2. Let me dwell in thy tent for ever;
3. Oh to be safe under the shelter of thy wings!

III. PROCLAMATION 5.

The Psalmist proclaims the grounds upon which he prays:

1. Thou hast heard my vows;
2. Thou hast given me the heritage of those who fear thy name.

IV. PRAYER 6,7

The Psalmist continues to pray:

1. Prolong the life of the king;
2. May his years endure to all generations;
3. May he be enthroned for ever before God;
4. Bid steadfast love and faithfulness watch over him!

V. PROMISE 8

The Psalmist promises:

1. I will ever sing praises to thy name;
 2. I will pay my vows day after day.
-

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is God who is the preserver of the King.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. Note that for which David prayed:

1. Listen to my prayer;
2. Lead thou me;
3. Let me dwell in thy tent for ever!
4. Grant me the safety under thy wings;
5. Prolong the life of the king;
6. Watch over the king.

II. Note the "I wills" of this Psalm (as in the K. J. reading):

1. I will cry to thee, v. 2;
2. I will abide in thy tabernacle, v. 4;
3. I will trust in the covert of thy wings, v. 4;
4. I will sing praise unto thy name for ever, v. 8.

III. GOD, in this Psalm--

1. Is the one to whom prayer is made;
2. Is the one who hears and answers prayers;
3. Is the source of strength;
4. Is the rock that is higher;
5. Is the refuge;
6. Is the strong tower against the enemy;
7. Is the source of safety and comfort;
8. Is the one who regards faithfulness;
9. Is the one who grants divine blessings;
10. Is the one who prolongs life;
11. Is the one who watches over us;
12. Is the one to whom we should sing praises;
13. Is the one to whom we must be faithful.

IV. THOU--

1. Art my refuge;
2. Art my strong tower against the enemy;
3. Hast heard my vows;
4. Hast given me the heritage of those who fear thy name;
5. Wilt prolong the king's life (KJV).

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. David called to God "from the end of the earth." We should rejoice that wherever we are we can call upon God in prayer.
2. David prayed when his heart was "faint." It is God to whom we look for strength. He is the great renewer of strength. Note carefully Paul's great proclamation in Phil. 4:13--"I can do all things in Him that strengthen me."
3. Jesus is the Rock in a Weary Land. He provides shelter, protection, salvation--every spiritual blessing. But, to have these spiritual blessings one must come to Him.
4. The eternal Rock of Ages is higher than we are. This Rock holds blessings which we are not able to fathom in comprehension.
5. Enemies constantly beat upon the Rock of Refuge, but the Rock stands for ever.
6. The Christ Himself is the solid Rock upon which the church of our Lord shall for ever stand. Cf. Mt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11.
7. Note carefully the beautiful attitude of the Psalmist. He did not say: "Do I have to go to the tabernacle?" He prayed: "Let me dwell in thy tent for ever!"
8. To be safe "under the shelter of His wings" is to be safe indeed.
9. David was a watchman over God's heritage. Elders of the local church are (according to God's plan) watchmen over God's heritage.
10. There is a sacred, eternal, heritage for those who fear the name of God. Only the word of God enables one to lay hold upon this sacred heritage. Cf. Acts 20:32; 2 Pet. 1:3-5.

11. Let us be careful always to pray for the rulers in the world--especially
that they might be properly concerned about God and His will.
12. Let us be careful to keep our promises to God, and ever to sing praises to
His glorious name.

PSALM 62

FOR GOD ALONE MY SOUL WAITS
(Man's Only Hope)

In these verses we have--

I. DEFENSE
1-4

The Psalmist speaks of God--as the certain defense:

1. He affirms his confidence in God (1,2)--
 - (1) He is the one for whom my soul waits in silence;
 - (2) He is the one from whom comes my salvation;
 - (3) He only is my rock;
 - (4) He is my salvation;
 - (5) He is my fortress;
 - (6) He is the one from whom I shall not be moved.

II. REFUGE
5-8

The Psalmist speaks of God--as the certain refuge:

1. He stresses again his confidence in God--
 - (1) For Him my soul waits in silence;
 - (2) He is the source of my hope;
 - (3) He is my rock;
 - (4) He is my salvation;
 - (5) He is my fortress;
 - (6) From Him I shall not be moved;
 - (7) On Him rests my deliverance;
 - (8) On Him rests my honor;
 - (9) He is my mighty rock, my refuge.
2. He exhorts his people to place their trust in God--
 - (1) Trust in Him at all times;
 - (2) Pour out your heart before Him;
 - (3) He is our refuge.

III. POWER
9-12

The Psalmist speaks of God--as the certain power:

1. He refers to futile helps to which men often
turn--

(1) Human help;

(2) Extortion;

(3) Robbery;

(4) Riches.

2. He proclaims that God is the source of--

(1) Power;

(2) Love;

(3) Justice.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God is our defense, our refuge, and our power.

Thus, He is our only hope.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Is the one for whom the soul waits;
2. Is the source of salvation;
3. Is the rock, the fortress;
4. Is the source of hope;
5. Is the deliverer;
6. Is our refuge;
7. Is the one whom we trust;
8. Is the one to whom we pour out our hearts;
9. Is the source of power;
10. Is the one to whom belongs steadfast love;
11. Is the one who deals justly.

II. A PERSONAL POSSESSION: God is--

1. My rock;
2. My fortress;
3. My hope;
4. My salvation;
5. My deliverer;
6. My mighty rock;
7. My refuge.

III. GOD IS THE GOD OF--

1. Power;
2. Love;
3. Justice.

IV. GOD AND MAN'S WORKS:

1. God requires that men work;
"Thou rewardest every man according to his work" (v. 12, Berkeley).
2. God requires that men work that which is good, toward all men, and
espceially toward those of the household of the faith (Gal. 6:10).
3. In final judgment, God will render to every man according to his
works (Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10).

V. ^{GOD} GOD ALONE--

1. For Him alone my soul waits in silence;
2. From Him alone comes my salvation;
3. He alone is my rock and my salvation;
4. He alone is my fortress;
5. He alone is my rock and my salvation;
6. He alone is my deliverer.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. We need to learn to "wait in silence." Sometimes we wait--but impatiently. Sometimes we wait,^{but} not in silence. We need to understand that God does not at all times work according to our schedule or according to our calendar.
2. There are many who cherish falsehood. There are many who bless with their mouth but curse with their heart. All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Rev. 21:8). The word of God commands: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6).
3. When enemies abound, and when circumstances are bad, we can (and we must) still hope in God.
4. "Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him" (v. 8).
5. God does not judge a man according to his wealth, or power, or worldly influence.
6. If God says it once, it is important, and is to be respected. If He says it twice, it must be that He is trying to get our attention.
7. The Psalmist speaks of false helps: (1) men of low estate; (2) men of high estate; (3) extortion; (4) robbery; (5) riches. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1).

PSALM 63

A SOUL'S LONGING FOR GOD

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: It is generally thought that this Psalm was written by David in the Judaeen wilderness, probably ^{while he} ~~which~~ being pursued by Saul. It is considered to be one of the most beautiful of the Psalms. Chrysostom has said that "It is decreed and ordained by the primitive Fathers that no day should pass without the public singing of this Psalm." Morgan refers to it as the consummation of the expression of the two preceding Psalms. Morgan calls it "God, the Perfect Hope of Man." Spurgeon refers to it as "a wilderness hymn."

In these verses we have--

I. LONGING 1,2

The Psalmist, away from the sanctuary, expresses his deep and abiding longing for God:

1. I seek thee (earnestly);
2. My soul thirsts for thee;
3. My flesh faints for thee;
4. I have beheld thy power and thy glory.

II. PROMISES 3,4

The Psalmist makes certain promises to God:

1. My lips will praise thee;
2. I will bless thee as long as I live;
3. I will lift up my hands to thee;
4. I will call on thy name.

III. SATISFACTION 5-8

The Psalmist speaks of his wonderful satisfacion and joy in contemplation of the great blessings which he has experienced from God:

1. When I think of thee and meditate upon thee--
 - (1) My soul is satisfied;
 - (2) My mouth praises thee with joyful lips;
2. For--thou hast been my help;
3. In the shadow of thy wings I sing for joy;

4. My soul clings to thee;
5. Thy right hand upholds me.

IV. VICTORY
9-11

The Psalmist speaks of ultimate victory over his enemies, and of the glorious vidication of the King (himself):

1. The enemy shall go down into the depths of the earth;
2. They shall be given over to the power of the sword;
3. They shall be prey for jackals;
4. The King shall rejoice in God;
5. All who swear by him shall glory;
6. The mouths of liars will be stopped.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Blessed is the person who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, for he shall be satisfied. God is the satisfaction for the hungry and thirsty soul. Real satisfaction is to be had only in God (by being in proper relationship with God). Cf. Mt. 5:6.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD IS THE ONE--

1. Whom we should seek;
2. For whom we should thirst and long;
3. Whom we should praise;
4. Who satisfies us;
5. Whom we should remember;
6. Upon whom we should meditate;
7. Who helps us;
8. In whom we should rejoice;
9. Whom we should follow;

10. Who upholds us;
11. In whom the King should rejoice.

II. THE WICKED:

1. Seek the hurt of the righteous;
2. Shall be destroyed;
3. Shall fall by the sword;
4. Shall be a prey for jackals (foxes);
5. Shall have their mouths stopped.

III. MY SOUL:

1. Should thirst after God (v. 1);
2. Should be satisfied in God (v. 5);
3. Should cling to God (v. 8).

IV. SACRED PRAISE:

1. Is based upon recognition of God's surpassing lovingkindness (v. 3);
2. Often involves the lips (v. 3);
3. Should be life-long (v. 4);
4. Should be joyful (v. 5);
5. Should be an outgrowth of our remembrance of and meditation upon the helpfulness of God (verses 6,7).

V. WE NEED:

1. Water;
2. Food;
3. Divine favor;
4. Happiness;
5. Help;
6. One to whom to cling;
7. To be sustained;
8. Victory.

NOTE: All these blessings (and infinitely more) God provides!

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Morgan mentions that proper relationship with God must be established, and fellowship must be maintained.
2. Truly, the past should be inspiration for the present (and for the future). David remembered the power, the glory, and the blessings of God--and broke forth in praise to Him.
3. We should praise God--even in the midst of trials and difficulties.
4. Being away from our regular place of worship should never keep us from longing after God, or from worshipping Him. Away from the sanctuary, and concerned about worship to God, David wrote a song--this beautiful Psalm.
5. Effective prayer to God will enable us to rejoice and to praise Him.
6. David said: "My soul clings to thee; thy right hand upholds me." Note the clinging and the holding. With regard to divine blessings, there is the human side and the divine side. If we cling to Him, He will hold us up.
7. Nightly meditations upon the blessings from God produce satisfaction, joy, and praise.

GOD JUDGES THE ENEMIES OF THE RIGHTEOUS

In this Psalm we have--

I. PRAYER
1,2

The Psalmist prays for deliverance from the enemies:

1. Hear my voice, O God;
2. Preserve my life from dread of the enemy;
3. Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked;
4. Hide me from the scheming of evildoers.

II. PICTURE
3-6

The Psalmist sets forth the picture of the enemies:

1. They whet their tongues like swords;
2. They aim bitter words like arrows;
3. They shoot from ambush at the blameless;
4. They shoot at the blameless suddenly and without fear;
5. They hold fast to their evil purpose;
6. They talk of laying snares secretly;
7. They say:
 - (1) Who can see us?
 - (2) Who can search out our crimes?
 - (3) We have thought out a cunningly conceived plot--
our thoughts are deep!

III. PROMISE
7-9

The Psalmist sets forth promises as to what God will do,
and the consequences:

1. God will shoot His arrows at them;
2. They will be wounded suddenly;
3. He will bring them to ruin;
4. They will be held in contempt;
5. Then, all men--
 - (1) Will fear;
 - (2) Will tell of what God has wrought;
 - (3) Will ponder what God has done.

IV. PLEA
10

The Psalmist makes a fervent plea to the righteous:

1. Let the righteous rejoice in the Lord;
2. Let the righteous take refuge in Him;
3. Let all the upright in heart glory!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Let the righteous (1) rejoice in the Lord, and (2) take refuge in Him.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. WICKED PERSONS:

1. Fight against the righteous;
2. Are wicked in purpose;
3. Are wicked in thought;
4. Are wicked in heart;
5. Are wicked in speech;
6. Are wicked in conduct;
7. Are self-deceived.

II. WORDS OF THE WICKED:

1. Grow out of wicked hearts;
 2. Are related to wicked thoughts;
 3. Are sharp like swords;
 4. Are bitter like arrows;
 5. Are words of deceit.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. The sins of men--even sinful thoughts--are not hidden from God.
2. Men say: "Who can see Us? Who can search out our crimes?" The Bible teaches: "...and be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23).
3. When wicked people shoot their arrows at the righteous, God will shoot His arrows at the wicked. Jezebel and Ahab (King of Israel) murdered Naboth and took his vineyard. God determined their death. In time of battle, and in God's providence, "...a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness...and he died at even..." (1 Kgs. 22:34,35). God has a mighty big quiver, a big bow, a strong arm, and an accurate arrow.
4. God is concerned with our speech. Cf. Mt. 5:37; Mt. 12:34; Prov. 4:23; Col. 4:6.
5. When men are brought to realize what God has done, they (1) will be astonished, (2) will fear; (3) will tell others, and (3) will ponder what He has done.
6. Let us: (1) rejoice in the Lord, (2) take refuge in Him, and (3) praise Him.
7. Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (Mt. 5:10).

PSALM 65

THE GOD OF HARVEST

In these verses we have--

I. PRAISE

1-4

The Psalmist stresses that it is fitting and right that a grateful people should praise Jehovah:

1. He is worthy of praise;
2. To Him vows are performed;
3. He is the hearer of prayers;
4. To Him all flesh, because of sin, need to come;
5. It is God who forgives, and who thus makes worship possible;
6. Those who draw near and who dwell with Him are blessed and are satisfied.

II. POWER

5-8

The Psalmist stresses God's power in nature:

1. By dread deeds He answers with deliverance;
2. He is the God of salvation;
3. He is the hope of all mankind;
4. He established the mountains;
5. He stills troubled seas and troubled peoples;
6. He makes Himself known to all men.

III. PROVISIONS

9-13

The Psalmist stresses that it is God who provides the wonderful harvest:

1. He waters the earth and enriches it;
2. He is the giver of grain;
3. He gives great bounty at harvest time;
4. He blesses the wilderness, the hills, the meadows, and the valleys.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Let us praise Jehovah because of His power over us and His provisions for us.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. IT IS GOD--

1. To whom praise is due;
2. To whom vows are performed;
3. Who hears our prayers;
4. To whom all flesh need to come;
5. Who forgives sins;
6. Who satisfies our needs;
7. Who provides deliverance;
8. Who is the hope of all mankind;
9. Who by His strength established the mountains;
10. Who calms troubled seas and troubled peoples;
11. Who provides the harvest: the soil, the seed, the rain, the growth, the
 fruition;
12. Who takes care of the pastures, the hills, the meadows, and the valleys.

II. TO THEE, O GOD--

1. Is praise due;
2. Shall vows be performed;
3. Shall all flesh come on account of sins.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. On account of our sins, we must come to God. However, before we can be right before Him and worship Him acceptably, we must receive the forgiveness that can only come from Him--in and through the Christ, and upon the terms of the gospel.
2. In New Testament times the "house" of God is the church of the Living God (1 Tim. 3:15). Because of the wonderful blessings which are provided therein, those in the church are satisfied. Every spiritual blessing is to be had IN CHRIST (Eph. 1:3). SALVATION is IN CHRIST JESUS (II Tim. 2:10).

3. When we contemplate (1) the power of God, and (2) the person of God, and (3) the provisions of God we are compelled to proclaim: HOW GREAT THOU ART!
4. The river of God is full of water. Here is one river which never goes dry! All are invited (and urged) to come and to drink of its waters freely (Rev. 22:17). "There's a fountain free, 'tis for you and me." God provides our every need. "And he that is athirst, let him come."
5. The beautiful first Psalm proclaims that the righteous person is "like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in its season."
6. The harvest, the pastures, the hills, the meadows, the valleys--all bring glory to God. God is the author of nature, and God is the author of the Bible. Both reflect His glory, His power, His divinity.

JEHOVAH, THE OBJECT OF OUR WORSHIP

In these verses we have--

(the universal section, 1-12)

I. EXHORTATION
1-4

The Psalmist exhorts all men to praise God because of His power:

1. Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;
2. Sing the glory of His name;
3. Give to Him glorious praise;
4. Recognize the terribleness (awesomeness) of His deeds (Cf. 65:5);
5. His power is so great that His enemies cringe before Him;
6. All the earth shall worship and praise Thee.

II. INVITATION
5-7

The Psalmist invites all men to come and see what God has done:

1. His deeds among men are awesome;
2. He turned the sea into dry land;
3. Men passed through the river on foot;
4. There we rejoiced in Him;
5. He rules by His might for ever;
6. He keeps watch on the nations;
7. Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.

III. EXALTATION
8-12

The Psalmist exalts God because of what He has done:

1. Bless our God, o peoples;
2. Let the sound of his praise be heard;
3. He has kept us among the living;

4. He has kept our feet secure;
5. He has tested (proved) us and tried us;
6. He has caused us to be afflicted--
 - (1) Men rode over our heads;
 - (2) We went through fire and through water;
7. Yet, thou hast brought us forth to a spacious place--a place of comfort and plenty.

(the personal section, 13-20)

IV. ADORATION
13-15

The Psalmist stresses his adoration for God, and makes a pledge to worship Him:

1. I will come into thy house with burnt offerings;
2. I will pay my vows;
3. I will keep my promises made when I was in trouble;
4. I will worship Thee.

V. ATTESTATION
16-20

The Psalmist sets forth his personal testimony with regard to what God has done for him:

1. Come and listen--I will tell you what God has done for me;
2. I cried aloud to Him;
3. I praised Him with my tongue;
4. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart He would not have heard me--But He DID hear me!
5. He has answered my prayer;
6. Blessed be God because--
 - (1) He has not rejected my prayer;
 - (2) He has not removed His steadfast love from me!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: True worship inherently involves gratitude and praise to God because of what He has done for us.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Is to be praised;
2. Performs awesome deeds;
3. Is great in power;
4. Ought to be worshipped by all men;
5. Rules by His might for ever;
6. Watches the nations;
7. Sustains men with life;
8. Tests us;
9. Afflicts us when we need it;
10. Gives us victory;
11. Is the object of our worship;
12. Is the one to whom we must be faithful;
13. Will listen when we pray, if we pray according to His will;
14. Extends to us His steadfast love.

II. HIS DEEDS:

1. Are awesome;
2. Evidence His power;
3. Cause His enemies to cringe;
4. He turned the sea into dry land;
5. He led men through the river on foot;
6. Cause some men to rejoice.

III. PRAISE HIM!

1. The obligation--

- (1) Make a joyful noise to God;
- (2) Sing the glory of His name;
- (3) Give to Him glorious praise.

2. The grounds--

- (1) His wondrous deeds;
- (2) His mighty power;
- (3) His tremendous works;
- (4) What He does--He rules, He watches, He sustains, He afflicts,
He listens, He loves.

3. How?

- (1) In song;
- (2) In prayer;
- (3) In worship;
- (4) In everyday speech;
- (5) In faithful life.

GENERAL LESSONS:

- 1. It is our solemn obligation and sacred privilege to praise Jehovah.
- 2. Old Testament Israel was obligated to manifest God to the other nations.
Likewise, New Testament Israel, the church of our Lord, is obligated to manifest Him to all men everywhere.
- 3. God does test men and try them as silver is tried.
- 4. God sometimes allows or brings upon His people severe persecution.

5. One basic obligation we have is to be faithful to God.
6. Promises made to God in times of trouble are to be kept.
7. In New Testament times we worship God--not with bulls and goats and incense,
but according to the New Testament teaching.
8. We must be anxious to tell others what God has done for us, and for all men.
9. If I cherish iniquity in my heart God will not hear my prayers.
10. We are thankful to God because He hears our prayers, and extends to us
His steadfast love.

JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF ALL THE NATIONS

In these verses we have--

I. WAY
1-3

The Psalmist prays that God's WAY might be known to all men:

1. He prays--

- (1) May God be gracious to us;
- (2) May God bless us;
- (3) May God make His face to shine upon us;

2. He sets forth the reasons--

- (1) That His way may be known upon the earth;
- (2) That His saving power may be known among all nations;

3. He exhorts--

- (1) Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
- (2) Let all the peoples praise thee!

II. JUDGMENT
4,5

The Psalmist prays that God's JUDGMENT might be known to all nations:

1. He exhorts--

- (1) Let the nations be glad;
- (2) Let the nations sing for joy;

2. He explains--

- (1) For thou dost JUDGE the peoples with equity;
- (2) For thou dost GUIDE the nations upon the earth;

3. He exhorts--

- (1) Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
- (2) Let all the peoples praise thee!

III. BLESSINGS

6,7

The Psalmist proclaims that God has BLESSED us all:

1. The prayer--of verse 1--has been answered;

(1) The earth has yielded its increase;

(2) God, our God, has blessed us;

2. He exhorts: Let all the ends of the earth fear Him!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: Let all the earth praise Jehovah!

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. PRAISE HIM, ALL PEOPLES:

1. The exhortation--

(1) Let the peoples praise thee, O God;

(2) Let all the peoples praise thee;

(3) Let the nations be glad and sing for joy;

(4) Let the peoples praise thee, O God;

(5) Let all the peoples praise thee!

(6) Let all the ends of the earth fear Him!

2. The grounds--

(1) Because of His saving power for all nations;

(2) Because of His judgment with equity;

(3) Because of His guidance of the nations;

(4) Because of His blessings upon the earth.

II. OUR PRAYER:

1. Be gracious to us;

2. Bless us;

3. Make thy face to shine upon us;

4. Let thy way be known to all men;

II. Continued.

5. Help all men to come to know thy saving power;
6. Help all men to come to praise thee;
7. Let all the peoples know that--
 - (1) Thou dost judge with equity;
 - (2) Thou dost guide the nations of the earth.

III. PROPER ORDER:

1. Prayer;
 2. Blessings;
 3. Praise;
 4. Evangelism.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Do we often pray that God will bless us so that we can do a better job in helping all nations to come to know His way and His saving power?
2. The Psalmist makes reference to "thy way." God's way is the ONLY way of salvation. We must know it, obey it, love it, and teach it.
3. Our prayers, our works, our lives--should (must) bring praise to God.
4. There is a sufficiency in the "glad tidings" of the Christ to bring gladness and joy to all men of every nation.
5. It is wonderful to know that God's judgment is just.
6. Blessed is that nation which is determined to let God be its Judge.
7. If we put spiritual matters first in our lives God will meet our material needs.
8. The Psalmist prayed: "Bless us." He closed his poem--his song--saying:
"God has blessed us."

GOD'S MARCH TO ZION

In these verses we have--

I. PRAYER

1-3

The Psalmist prays:

1. Let the wicked--

(1) Be scattered;

(2) Flee before God;

(3) Be driven away;

(4) Perish before God;

2. Let the righteous:

(1) Be joyful;

(2) Exult before God;

(3) Be jubilant with joy.

II. ADMONITION

4

The Psalmist admonishes:

1. Sing to God;

2. Sing praises to His name;

3. Lift up a song to Him who rides upon the clouds;

4. His name is Lord--exult before Him!

III. DESCRIPTION

5,6

The Psalmist describes God:

1. He is the father of the fatherless;

2. He is the protector of the widows;

3. He gives the desolate a home--He sets the solitary
in families (KJV); He makes the lonely to live in
a home (Berkeley);

4. He leads out the prisoners to prosperity;

5. He makes the rebellious to dwell in a parched land.

IV. REVIEW
7-14

The Psalmist reviews God's march in the wilderness before His people:

1. The earth quaked;
2. The heavens poured down rain;
3. Sinai quaked;
4. There was restoration when people languished;
5. There was provision for the needy;
6. There was victory--glorious victory;
7. God gave the Law, and His people went forth
to bear the tidings;
8. There was luxury after horrible wars;
9. The fleeing of the driven kings was like the wind-
swept snow falling on Zalmon.

V. QUESTION
15,16

The Psalmist addresses a question to the Mountains of Bashan:

1. "You are a multi-peaked mountain, you mountain of
Bashan";
2. "Why do you look with envy--
(1) At the mountain which God desired for His abode,
(2) At the mountain where the Lord will dwell
for ever?"

VI. PRONOUNCEMENT
17,18

The Psalmist declares that the Lord came from Sinai into the Holy Place:

1. He came with mighty chariotry;
 2. He led captives;
 3. He received gifts among men.
-

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is God who leads and directs and protects His people;
it is God who gives His people victory.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Gives victory over His enemies;
2. Is to be praised;
3. Rides upon the clouds;
4. Is the Father of the fatherless;
5. Is the protector of the widows;
6. Gives the desolate a home;
7. Is concerned about the prisoners;
8. Can shake mountains and pour down rain;
9. Causes the land to produce--or to fail to produce;
10. Blesses His people;
11. Dwells in Zion (Cf. Heb. 12:22,23);
12. Has innumerable chariots to do His bidding.

II. GOD AND HIS ENEMIES:

1. He can scatter them;
2. He can drive them away;
3. He can cause them to perish.

III. LET THE RIGHTEOUS:

1. Be joyful;
2. Exult before God;
3. Be jubilant with joy;
4. Sing praises to God.

IV. ZION:

1. The envy of Bashan;
2. The place which God selected for His dwelling in Old Testament times;
3. The type of the New Testament church (Cf. Heb. 12:22ff)--God's dwelling place (Cf. Eph. 2:21,22).

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. As wax melts the fire, so God can drive away His enemies.
2. Of all people in the world who ought to be joyful, it is the child of God.
3. It is God's plan for every person--including every child--to have a home, a family.
4. God, in infinite love and compassion, does provide for the needy.
5. God has given the command that His gospel be preached to the whole world.
The great host of those who love Him must be anxious to bear the good tidings.
6. "Women at home" perform a tremendously important work, and deserve to share in the spoils of victory.
7. In Old Testament times God dwelt in Zion, and in New Times God dwells in the church--in His people, His kingdom (Eph. 2:22).

GOD'S MARCH TO ZION (Continued)

By reviewing the past the Psalmist--in verses 1-18--stressed that it is God who leads and directs and protects His people; that it is God who gives victory to His people.

Now, in consideration of the present and the future the Psalmist emphasizes that it is God who gives strength and power to His people, and that through His people God intends to bring all men to praise Him.

In these verses we have--

I. PRAISE
19-23

The Psalmist says, "Blessed be the Lord":

1. Who daily bears us up;
2. Who is the God of our salvation;
3. Who provides escape from death;
4. Who takes vengeance upon His enemies.

II. PROCESSIONS
24-27

The Psalmist describes the processions of God into the Sanctuary:

1. The singers are in front;
2. The musicians are last;
3. There are maidens with timbrels;
4. There is Benjamin in the lead;
5. There are the leaders from the tribes of Judah, Zebulun, and Naphtali.

III. POWER
28-31

The Psalmist asks God to demonstrate His power among the nations:

1. To rebuke the Egyptians;
2. To defeat the powers who are after tribute;
3. To scatter the nations who delight in war;
4. To let Egypt and Ethiopia pay tribute to God.

IV. PRAISE
32-35

The Psalmist summons the kingdoms of the earth to
praise Jehovah:

1. Sing praises to the Lord (Cf. v. 4);
2. To ascribe power to God;
3. To recognize His power and strength;
4. He gives power and strength to His people;
5. Blessed be God!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is God who gives strength and power to His people. It is God's people who--in response to God's blessings--are obligated and privileged to work to bring all men to praise God.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Daily bears us up;
2. Is the God of salvation;
3. Is the God of OUR salvation;
4. To Him belongs escape from death;
5. He will shatter His enemies;
6. Is always concerned about His people;
7. Is the one who returned the twelve tribes to their home land;
8. Is strong and powerful and majestic;
9. Defeats His enemies;
10. Is to be praised by all men and by all nations;
11. Rides in the heavens;
12. Sends forth His mighty voice;
13. Shows His power in the skies;
14. Gives strength and power to His people.

II. THE KING MARCHES TO ZION:

1. In solemn procession;
 2. He leads His people;
 3. The people rejoice exceedingly;
 4. Benjamin is least, but has the privilege of being in the lead;
 5. Intends to get the attention of the nations;
 6. In glorious strength, power, and majesty.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. With His mighty voice, and in marvelous power, strength, and majesty--
the King leads us on to the heavenly Zion.
2. The creation itself--the church of the Living God--shall be delivered from
the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of
God" (Rom. 8:21).
3. If we walk in the light, being governed by His will, He will daily bear us up.
4. God is the source (1) of our daily bearing-up, (2) of our salvation, and (3) of
our escape from death.
5. God promised to take His people out of the Captivity, and to return them to
their home-land. This beautiful Psalm says that He did what He had promised.
God keeps His promises.
6. Because of the greatness of the church of our Lord it deserves to get the
attention of all men of all nations.
7. Let us always be anxious to praise God--because of His majesty, His strength,
and His power.

A FERVENT PRAYER FOR RESCUE

In these verses we have--

I. PLEA
1a

The Psalmist pleads:

Save me, O God!

II. DESCRIPTION
1b-3

The Psalmist describes his condition:

1. The waters have come up to my neck;
2. I sink in deep mire; there is no foothold;
3. I have come into deep waters; the flood
sweeps over me;
4. I am weary with crying;
5. My throat is parched;
6. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.

III. ENEMIES
4,5

The Psalmist discusses his enemies:

1. They are more in number than the hairs of my head;
2. They hate me without a cause;
3. They seek to destroy me;
4. They attack me with lies;
5. They force me to bear burdens which I do not
deserve.

IV. PLEA
6

The Psalmist continues his plea to God:

1. Thou knowest my life;
2. Let me not be an occasion of stumbling to others;
3. Let not those who hope in thee be put to shame
through me.

V. EXPLANATION
7-12

The Psalmist further explains his condition (the reasons for it):

1. For thy sake--
 - (1) I have become a reproach;
 - (2) Shame has covered my face;

- (3) I have become a stronger to my brethren;
2. Zeal for thy house has consumed me;
3. The insults of those who insult thee have fallen on me;
4. I am a reproach and a byword; the talk of those who sit in the gate;
5. The drunkards make songs about me.

VI. PLEA
13-18

The Psalmist continues his fervent plea for rescue:

1. Answer me;
2. Rescue me;
3. Deliver me;
4. Turn to me;
5. Hide not thy face from me;
6. Draw near to me;
7. Redeem me;
8. Set me free from my enemies.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: When troubles come and problems seem to overwhelm us--
let us be careful to take it all to God in prayer.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. ON SUFFERING.

1. No other Psalm more vividly describes intense suffering.
2. This Psalm is prophetic and Messianic, and thus pictures the sufferings of the Savior.
3. The hardest suffering to bear is that--
 - (1) Which was not caused by the one suffering;
 - (2) Which comes because of one's faithfulness to the Lord.

I. Continued.

4. Christians--

- (1) Are not exempt from suffering;
- (2) Christians learn to rejoice in suffering (Cf. Rom. 5:3; Acts 5:41; 1 Pet. 4:12-16);
- (3) We must come to understand the value of suffering (Cf. Ps. 119:67, 71, 75,92).

II. OF MESSIANIC IMPORT:

1. Men hated the Psalmist "without cause." Cf. Jno. 15:25.
2. Zeal for God's house consumed the Psalmist. Cf. Jno. 2:17.
3. The Psalmist took the insults which were directed to God. Cf. Rom. 15:3.

III. GOD:

1. Is the one who can save us;
2. Is the one to whom we pray;
3. Is the one for whom we wait;
4. Knows our lives, including our sins;
5. Is the one upon whom our hope is centered;
6. Is the one for whose sake we must be willing to suffer;
7. Is characterized by steadfast love;
8. Is the one who can rescue, deliver, answer, redeem, draw near, and set free.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. When trials, troubles, and tribulations seem to overwhelm us we should be grateful that we can "take it to the Lord in prayer."
2. "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:10).

3. There is the marvelous hope "set before us: which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the vail..." (Heb. 6:19). This hope will not be put to shame (Rom. 5:5)--it will not meet with disappointment.
4. We must be careful never to be an occasion of reproach upon the church of our Lord. Cf. Rom. 2:24.
5. Zeal for the Father's house--the New Testament church--should consume us.
6. As the Christ took the reproaches which were hurled at God, so we ought to be anxious to take the reproaches which are hurled at God, at the Christ, at the Bible, at the Church.

PRAISE TO GOD FOR ASSURANCE OF DELIVERANCE

In these verses we have--

I. PROBLEM
19-21

The Psalmist describes his situation:

1. Thou knowest--

- (1) My reproach;
- (2) My shame;
- (3) My dishonor;
- (4) My foes;

2. I am--

- (1) Broken hearted because of insults;
- (2) In despair;

3. I looked for--

- (1) Pity--but there was none;
- (2) Comforters--but I found none;
- (3) Food--but they gave me poison;
- (4) Water--but they gave me vinegar.

II. PRAYER
22-28

The Psalmist prays for divine punishment of his enemies:

- 1. Let their own table become a snare;
- 2. Let their sacrificial feasts be a trap;
- 3. Let their eyes be darkened and blinded;
- 4. Let their loins tremble continually;
- 5. Let thy indignation be upon them;
- 6. Let thy burning anger overtake them;
- 7. Let their tents be without inhabitants--

(reason: for they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; they wound him whom thou hast wounded.)

- 8. Let their camp be a desolation;
- 9. Let punishment be theirs;

10. Let them not have acquittal;
11. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living;
12. Let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

III. PLEA
29

The Psalmist issues a fervent plea for deliverance from his situation:

1. I am afflicted;
2. I am in pain;
3. Let thy salvation, O God, set me on high!

IV. PROMISE
30,31

The Psalmist promises:

1. I will praise the name of God with a song;
2. I will magnify Him with thanksgiving;
3. This will please Him more than animal sacrifices.

V. PRAISE
32-36

The Psalmist admonishes that praise be given:

1. Let the oppressed see it;
2. Let the oppressed be glad;
3. Let your hearts revive (You who seek God), for--
 - (1) He hears the needy;
 - (2) He is mindful of His own who are in bonds;
4. Let the heaven and earth and sea praise Him, for--
 - (1) He will save Zion;
 - (2) He will rebuild the cities of Judah;
 - (3) His servants, the children of His servants, and those who love His name, shall--
 - A. Possess it;
 - B. Inherit it;
 - C. Dwell in it.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is God who can deliver from the depths of despair, and who alone can provide the victory. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Blessed are they who overcome. "...thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Knows our situation;
2. Knows our needs;
3. Is concerned about His people;
4. Is able to deliver us;
5. Will hear our prayers;
6. Will give us victory;
7. Will enable us to praise Him.

II. LET US SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF VICTORY:

1. Note the language of defeat--
 - (1) Reproach;
 - (2) Shame;
 - (3) Dishonor;
 - (4) Foes;
 - (5) Broken hearted;
 - (6) Despair;
 - (7) Looked for pity;
 - (8) Poison;
 - (9) Persecuted;
 - (10) Wounded;
 - (11) Afflicted.

II. Continued.

2. Note the language of victory--

- (1) Save me, O God;
- (2) I will praise the name of God;
- (3) I will magnify the name of God;
- (4) I will give thanks;
- (5) I will please God;
- (6) Be glad;
- (7) Let your hearts revive;
- (8) The Lord hears the needy;
- (9) The Lord does not despise His own;
- (10) Praise Him;
- (11) God will save Zion.

III. ZION:

1. God had promised to take His people out of the Babylonian Captivity, and to return them to their home-land.
2. The Psalmist stresses that God would keep His promise:
 - (1) He would lead captivity captive (Ps. 68:17,18);
 - (2) He would march with His people to Zion (Ps. 68);
 - (3) He would rebuild the cities of Judah;
 - (4) His servants would possess it, inherit it, and dwell in it.
3. In New Testament Christianity--by means of the Christ, in the Church, upon the terms of the gospel--God is in process of taking those who love Him out of bondage to sin and to the heavenly Zion!

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God knows our situation, whatever it is, and is concerned about it and about us.
2. May God help us to understand that blessings of the past are intended by God

2. Continued.

to be assurances with regard to the future.

3. Paul speaks of his affliction which befell him in Asia, "...that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life: yea, we ourselves have had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead: who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver: on whom we have set our hope that he will also still deliver us ..." (2 Cor. 1:8-10). Let us be careful to set our hope upon God--who delivers!
4. It is likely the case that God allowed the Psalmist to suffer the things described for the particular benefit of the Psalmist himself. Sometimes we need that which we do not like. Sometimes, in answer to prayer, God gives what we need, rather than that for which we ask.
5. God is able to take us out of the valley of despair, and to set us upon the mountain of joy. He can take a heart that is broken, and fill it with a song of praise. He will help us--but he expects us to do our part.
6. The gospel of Christ can take a person from despair, to joy and thanksgiving. Having become a child of God, the Eunuch of Ethiopia "...went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39)
7. People with broken hearts, who honestly and correctly seek God, will have their hearts revived.
8. God is always concerned about the needy. And, God's people must always be concerned about the needy.
9. God does not despise his own that are in bonds. One of the most beautiful portraits of Paul that we have in the New Testament is found in Eph. 6:20. Paul, "...an ambassador in chains."
10. God will save Zion. It is the kingdom which cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28).
11. In this amazing Psalm, David--who was a Prophet (Acts 2:30)--spoke of the fact that the Jews' rejection of the Christ, His gospel, and His church, would have

the effect of hastening the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. This, Paul stresses in Rom. 11:9ff.

A PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE

In these verses we have--

I. APPEAL

1

The Psalmist makes a fervent appeal to God:

1. Make haste to deliver me;
2. Make haste to help me.

II. ENEMIES

2,3

The Psalmist discusses his enemies:

1. He describes them--
 - (1) They seek after my soul;
 - (2) They desire my hurt;
 - (3) They speak scornfully.
2. He prays--
 - (1) Let them be put to shame;
 - (2) Let them be confounded;
 - (3) Let them be turned backward;
 - (4) Let them be put to confusion;
 - (5) Let them be rewarded according to their shame.

III. RIGHTEOUS

4

The Psalmist speaks of the righteous:

1. He describes them--
 - (1) These are those that seek thee;
 - (2) These are those that love thy salvation.
2. He prays--
 - (1) Let them rejoice;
 - (2) Let them be glad;
 - (3) Let God be magnified.

IV. SELF

5

The Psalmist speaks of himself:

1. He describes himself--
 - (1) I am poor;
 - (2) I am needy;

2. He prays--

- (1) Make haste to help me;
- (2) Make haste to deliver me.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: "Thou art my help and my deliverer" (verse 5).

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

- 1. Is our deliverer;
- 2. Is our help;
- 3. Will deal justly with the persecutors;
- 4. Is the giver of gladness;
- 5. Is great;
- 6. Is especially concerned about--
 - (1) The persecuted;
 - (2) Those who seek Him;
 - (3) The poor and needy;
- 7. Does things according to His own timing.

II. THE PSALMIST'S PLEA:

- 1. Deliver me;
 - 2. Help me;
 - 3. Deal with the enemy;
 - 4. Give me joy and gladness;
 - 5. Help us to recognize thy greatness;
 - 6. Do not tarry.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. God does not always work according to our time schedules. What He does He does in the "fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4), which simply means--the right time, from His viewpoint.
2. We are assured that the judgment of God is righteous, and that God "...will render to every man according to His works" (Rom. 2:6).
3. Those who "seek" shall find (Mt. 7:7), and thus shall rejoice and be glad.
4. Because of Who He is and What He is, and because of what He has done, is doing, and yet shall do--we declare with the Psalmist that "God is Great!"
5. God is Great, but I am poor and needy. Yet the Great God is concerned about even me.
6. "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).
7. With "good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me" (Heb. 13:6).

PSALM 71

A PSALM OF SUNSET

Morgan says: "This is pre-eminently a song of the aged, and like old age it is reminiscent. The singer passes from memory to hope, and from experience to praise."

In these verses we have--

I. REFUGE 1-3

The Psalmist prays for security in God:

1. The address--

- (1) In thee do I take refuge;
- (2) Thou art my rock and my fortress;

2. The petitions--

- (1) Let me never be put to shame;
- (2) Deliver me;
- (3) Rescue me;
- (4) Listen to me;
- (5) Save me;
- (6) Be to me a rock of refuge;
- (7) Be to me a strong fortress.

II. HOPE 4-6

The Psalmist, in continuing prayer, stresses that God is the source and object of his hope and trust:

1. Prayer: Rescue me--

- (1) From the hand of the wicked;
- (2) From the grasp of the unjust and cruel
men;

2. Thou art--

- (1) My hope;
- (2) My trust from my youth;
- (3) The one upon whom I have leaned from
youth.

2. continued.

(4) The one who took me from my mother's womb;

3. Promise--I will praise thee continually.

III. FELLOWSHIP
7-11

The Psalmist fervently prays for continuing fellowship with God:

1. I have been a source of strength to others,
but thou art my strong refuge;

2. My mouth is filled--

(1) With thy praise;

(2) With thy glory--all the day;

3. Do not--

(1) Cast me off in old age;

(2) Forsake me when my strength is gone;

4. My enemies--

(1) Speak concerning me;

(2) Watch my life and consult together;

(3) Say, "God has forsaken him; there is none
to deliver him."

IV. PROMISE
12-16

The Psalmist promises that he will continue in his praise to God:

1. Prayer--

(1) Stay near me;

(2) Make haste to help me;

(3) My accusers--may they

A. Be put to shame;

B. Be consumed;

C. Be covered with scorn and disgrace.

2. I will--

(1) Hope continually;

(2) Praise thee more and more;

2. continued.

- (3) Tell of thy righteous acts;
- (4) Tell of thy salvation all the day;
- (5) Go in the strength of the Lord;
- (6) Praise thy righteousness.

V. TIME
17-19a

The Psalmist is mindful of passing time and prays that he might accomplish more of God's work, for the benefit of coming generations:

1. He looks to--

- (1) The past--from my youth thou hast taught me;
- (2) The present--I still proclaim thy wondrous deeds;
- (3) The future--even to old age and gray hairs continue to be with me;

2. Till I proclaim--

- (1) Thy might to all the generations to come;
- (2) Thy power and righteousness to all descendants (Berkeley).

VI. CONFIDENCE
19b-21

The Psalmist expresses his confidence that God will continue to be with him and to bless him:

1. Thou--

- (1) Who hast done great things;
- (2) Like whom there is no other;
- (3) Who has made me see many sore troubles;

2. Wilt--

- (1) Receive me again from the depths of the earth;
- (2) Bring me up again;

2. continued.

(3) Increase my honor;

(4) Comfort me again.

VII. VICTORY
22-24

The Psalmist promises that he will keep on
praising God for the victory granted:

1. He addresses God--

(1) O My God--

(2) O Holy One of Israel:

2. He promises--

(1) I will praise thee. . .for thy
faithfulness;

(2) I will sing praises to thee;

(3) I will shout for joy;

(4) I will speak all the day long;

3. For--

(1) Thou hast rescued me;

(2) Thy righteous help;

(3) Those who sought to do me hurt have been
put to shame.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It must be our constant prayer (1) that God will help us to be faithful all our days; (2) that God will help us--as long as we live--to teach others His will; and (3) that God will help us to understand that blessings of the past are assurances with regard to the future.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Is the place of refuge;

2. Is the one who delivers;

3. Is the Rock of protection and comfort.

4. Is our Hope;
5. Is to be praised;
6. Is the one whose favor and fellowship we need;
7. Is the one whose nearness we should covet;
8. Is the one about whom we should tell others;
9. Is the performer of righteous acts too numerous to number;
10. Is our teacher of life, in life, and for life;
11. Must be taught to the coming generations;
12. Is the one who revives us.

II. THE PSALMIST'S PRAYER:

1. Let me never be put to shame;
2. Deliver me and rescue me;
3. Listen to me and save me;
4. Be a strong fortress to me;
5. Do not cast me off in my old age;
6. Forsake me not when my strength is spent;
7. Be near me;
8. Hasten to help me.

III. A PSALM OF LIFE:

1. BIRTH (v. 6)--From the time he was old enough to learn anything the Psalmist had learned to lean upon God. From infancy onward we must teach our children about God and His will. Cf. Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:15.
2. YOUTH (verses 5 and 17)--In youth God had taught the Psalmist, and the Psalmist from his youth had made God his hope and his trust.
3. OLD AGE (verses 9 and 18)--The Psalmist still proclaimed God's wondrous deeds. He still had work to do. He wanted to proclaim God's will to coming generations.

Blessed indeed are those:

1. Who are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;
2. Who in youth learn to make God their hope and their trust;
3. Who in old age are (1) still anxious to tell others about God, and
(2) who are properly--meaningfully--concerned about the coming
generations.

IV. GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. In righteousness, God delivers, v. 2;
2. Men must tell others of God's righteousness, v. 15;
3. We must praise Him because of His righteousness, v. 16;
4. His power and righteousness reach the high heavens, v. 19;
5. In righteousness He helps, all the day long, v. 24.

V. I WILL TELL:

1. "My mouth is filled with thy praise, and with thy glory all the
day," v.8;
 2. "My mouth will tell of thy righteous acts, of thy deeds of salvation
all the day....," v. 15;
 3. "I will praise thy righteousness, thine alone," v. 16;
 4. "O God, from my youth thou hast taught me, and I still proclaim thy
wondrous deeds," v. 17;
 5. "O God, do not forsake me, till I proclaim thy might to all the
generations to come," v. 18;
 6. "And my tongue will talk of thy righteous help all the day long,"
v. 24.
-

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. With the Psalmist, let us say: "Thou art my hope," and "I will hope continually."
2. The greatest privilege that we have in this life is that of listening to God, as He teaches us through His word.
3. We must be properly concerned about God and His will throughout our lives--not just in old age.
4. Let us work constantly to get God's message to the present generation, but let us at the same time be properly concerned about the coming generations. What do you want the church to be (or the world to be) in the days of your children and of your grand-children?
5. "The woods are beautiful, dark and deep; but I have promises to keep--
And miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep."
Robert Frost. What beautiful lines!

PSALM 72

THE PRAYER OF A KING

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: The King James Version has as a title for this Psalm, "A Psalm for Solomon." It is contended by some that the correct reading would be: "A Psalm of (or by) Solomon." But, how would "of" or "by" fit in with verse 20? Spurgeon suggests: "...that the spirit and matter of the Psalm are David's, but that he was too near his end to pen the words, or cast them into form; Solomon, therefore, caught his dying father's song, fashioned it into goodly verse, and, without robbing his father, made the Psalm his own. It is, we conjecture, the Prayer of David, but the Psalm of Solomon."

In these verses we have--

I. OWN 1-7

The King prays with regard to his own people:

1. He asks God to give him--

(1) Justice;

(2) Righteousness;

2. He sets forth the reason: that--

(1) He may judge the people with
righteousness;

(2) He may judge the poor with justice;

3. He prays for all his people, that--

(1) There may be prosperity;

(2) There may be righteousness;

4. He prays that he may--

(1) Defend the cause of the poor;

(2) Give deliverance to the needy;

(3) Crush the oppressor;

5. He prays--

- (1) That his kingdom might endure;
- (2) That he might bring wonderful blessings to
his people;
- (3) That his kingdom might be characterized
by--
 - A. Righteousness;
 - B. Peace;
 - C. Endurance.

II. OTHERS
8-14

- The King prays with regard to his kingdom and its
relationship to all nations:

- 1. He prays that he might have dominion--
 - (1) From sea to sea (Cf. Ex. 23:31);
 - (2) From the River to the ends of the earth;
- 2. He prays that his foes--
 - (1) Might bow down before him;
 - (2) Might lick the dust;
- 3. He prays that the other kings--
 - (1) Might render to him tribute;
 - (2) Might bring him gifts;
 - (3) Might fall down before him;
 - (4) Might serve him.
- 4. He sets forth the reasons as to why his king-
dom might thus come to have such influence:
its king--
 - (1) Delivers the needy;
 - (2) Helps the poor;

4. continued.

(3) Has pity on the weak and needy;

(4) Saves the lives of the needy;

(5) Delivers the oppressed from violence;

(6) Values the lives of the people.

III. SELF
15-17

The King prays for himself: that--

1. He might have long life;

2. He might be prosperous;

3. Others might pray for him;

4. He might bring prosperity to all;

5. His name might endure;

6. He might be a blessing to all men.

IV. DOXOLOGY
18-20

The beautiful doxology is not a part of this Psalm, but is the close of BOOK II. Cf. 41:13.

1. Blessed be the Lord--

(1) The God of Israel;

(2) Who alone does wondrous things;

2. Blessed be His glorious name for ever;

3. May His glory fill the whole earth.

Amen and Amen!

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: God is the King of the King. The earthly King--right with God--is a blessing to all men. The Psalm is without doubt Messianic, and speaks prophetically of the Christ Himself, and His reign over His kingdom--the New Testament church.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD:

1. Is KING over the King;

2. Will help the King if the King will let Him help;

I. Continued.

3. Is the source of justice, mercy, and righteousness, prosperity, and protection;
4. Is the giver and sustainer of life;
5. Does wondrous things;
6. His name is glorious.

II. THE KING WHO PLEASES GOD:

1. Is just;
2. Is righteous;
3. Is concerned and compassionate;
4. Defends the cause of the poor;
5. Crushes the oppressor;
6. Is a blessing to his people, and to all nations;
7. Pursues peace;
8. Is respected by other nations;
9. Is loved and respected by his people.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Note again the characteristics of "The King Who Pleases God," and remember that the Lord is our King.
2. God has always retained to Himself the right to govern man. God intends that the earthly ruler be subject to God. If the earthly ruler knows this, and lets God rule through him, the earthly ruler will be a blessing to the people and to the nations. If the earthly ruler does not know this, he will be trouble to the people and to the nations.
3. God's people must be just, righteous, concerned, compassionate. We must be anxious to help the poor and the needy. Cf. Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27.

PSALM 73

MUSINGS ON THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED

Key Words: "end" (of verse 17) and "glory" (of verse 24).

In these verses we have--

I. PROBLEM
1-3

The Psalmist sets forth the problem at hand:

1. He discusses the nature of God: to the pure
in heart--
 - (1) He is good;
 - (2) He is upright;
2. He discusses himself--
 - (1) My feet had almost stumbled;
 - (2) My steps had almost slipped;
 - (3) I was envious of the arrogant--when I saw
the prosperity of the wicked.

II. DESCRIPTION
4-9

The Psalmist describes the wicked:

1. They have no pangs;
2. Their bodies are sound and sleek;
3. They do not have the troubles of other men;
4. They are not stricken like other men;
5. They are characterized by pride and violence;
6. Their eyes swell out with fatness;
7. Their hearts overthrow with follies;
8. They scoff and speak with malice;
9. They threaten oppression;
10. They are blasphemous and haughty.

III. PEOPLE
10-14

The Psalmist considers the response of the people
to the wicked. The people--

1. Praise the wicked;
2. Find no fault in them;

III. Continued.

3. Question the knowledge that God has;
4. Observe the ease and prosperity of the wicked;
5. Question the importance of righteousness;
6. Consider the chastening of the righteous.

IV. END
15-20

The Psalmist contemplates the destiny of the wicked:

1. He explains that he had not "spoken" according to the response of the people. Such would have been wrong.
2. He explains that when he sought how to understand the problem that it seemed to be a wearisome task UNTIL he went to GOD for the ANSWER.
3. He perceived the DESTINY of the wicked.
4. He explains that God--
 - (1) Has set them in slippery places;
 - (2) Makes them fall to ruin;
 - (3) Destroys them in a moment;
5. He states that the wicked are like a dream (their prosperity is but a phantom).

V. GLORY
21-26

The Psalmist contemplates the DESTINY of the righteous:

1. My soul was embittered;
2. I was pricked in heart;
3. I was stupid and ignorant;
4. I was like a beast toward thee;

V. Continued.

5. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; thou dost hold my right hand;
6. Thou dost guide me with thy counsel;
7. Thou wilt receive me to GLORY!
8. Thou art my ALL:
9. Thou art the strength of my heart, my portion for ever.

VI. OBSERVATION
27,28

The Psalmist speaks of the obvious lesson to be learned:

1. The wicked shall perish;
2. It is good to be near to God--
 - (1) I have made Him my refuge;
 - (2) This, that I may tell of all His works.

FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE: It is good to be near to God. He must come first in our lives. The final glory of the righteous is far more valuable than all the prosperity of the wicked.

SPECIAL LESSONS:

I. GOD FIRST.

1. God is good to the upright;
2. God is good to the pure in heart;
3. I have kept my heart clean;
4. I am continually with thee;
5. Thou dost guide me with thy counsel;
6. Thou dost hold my right hand;
7. Thou wilt receive me to glory;
8. There is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee;

9. He is the strength of my heart;
10. It is good to be near to God;
11. I have made Him my refuge.

II. MATERIAL WEALTH:

1. Can bring physical comforts;
2. Often produces sinful pride (arrogance);
3. Often produces strutting (boastful) tongues;
4. Elicits praise from men;
5. Often produces a sense of self-sufficiency (no dependence upon God);
6. Does not guarantee one's ultimate salvation;
7. Can be a great blessing to many when used according to God's will.

III. GOD:

1. Is good to the upright;
2. Is good to the pure in heart;
3. Will help us to understand;
4. Will punish the wealthy wicked;
5. Guides with His counsel;
6. Will take the righteous to glory;
7. Gives us strength;
8. Is the refuge of those who seek Him.

GENERAL LESSONS:

1. Note the sin of envy (verse 3). Envy was one of the sins which crucified the Lord (Cf. Mt. 27:18). Pilate knew that for envy they had delivered Him up.
2. The wicked often seem to be completely happy and without problems.
But, things are not always what they seem.

3. It is right to go to God for the answer to our problems. The answer is there. I can find it in His Book.
4. The wealthy wicked are deceived by riches. The Lord speaks of the "deceitfulness of riches" (Mt. 13:22), and Paul refers to the "uncertainty of riches" (I Tim. 6:17).
5. In the full realization of our own weaknesses, let us be determined to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might."
(Cf. Eph. 6:10).

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