

Bible Study # 77
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The Writings Series—Book Two—Psalms 42—72

This evening we are continuing our focus on a survey of the Writings. We are going through the section of the Old Testament Scriptures known as the Writings and, in particular, the book of Psalms. This evening we **are focusing on Book Two of Psalms—Psalms 42—72.**

As we move through this section, we start our focus on Israel's ruin and their problems. At the end of the section, we will then focus in on the Redeemer and the redemption that God will finally give Israel.

We will note that this section of the book of Psalms corresponds with the second book of the Law, Exodus, as well as the second book of the Festival Scrolls, Ruth, which was read at Pentecost. This section of Scripture opens with a lament, much as the book of Exodus opens. The book of Exodus opens with the children of Israel crying out to God in their affliction and their need for deliverance. There is a focus on the helpless condition and the need for God to act as Redeemer and Deliverer. There is a need for God's role. Our need for God is the issue that is addressed in the beginning of the book of Exodus and here in this second section of Psalms because that sets the stage for the recognition of salvation, of redemption. You have to first recognize your need in order to recognize the importance of God's plan, God's promises and the things that God proposes to us.

Psalms 45, which is a part of this section, celebrates a royal marriage and this, in many ways, parallels the story of Ruth. Ruth has parallels because part of the symbolism of Pentecost is tied in with the institution of the Old Covenant and then of the New Covenant. Both covenants were marriage covenants. Pentecost represented the Old Covenant in Mount Sinai—a marriage covenant between God and Israel. The Jews have focused in on that and of the connection between that and the marriage of Israel to the God of the Old Testament. That analogy was given because human marriage is, in reality, a type of the relationship between Christ and the Church.

Psalms 68, which is also found in this section, is traditionally known in orthodox Jewish synagogues as the Pentecost anthem. The Jews

have connected much of the symbolism of this particular Psalm with the revelation at Mount Sinai. The revelation at Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments is understood by Jewish tradition to have been on the first Pentecost that was celebrated.

That fits right in because that was the institution of the Old Covenant, just as the New Covenant was instituted on Pentecost in 31 A.D. with the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. Under the Old Covenant, the law of God was written by the finger of God on tables of stone; under the New Covenant, the law of God is written by the Spirit of God in the tables of our hearts and minds. That's really the fundamental and basic difference between the Old and the New Covenant. It is not that one is based on law and the other is based on grace.

To begin with, God's election (God's calling) of Israel is based on grace. Anytime God delivers benefits to human beings, God's grace is involved because none of us have ever earned or deserved the blessings and benefits that God bestows. That's an important aspect in understanding that the fundamental difference between the covenants has to do with the giving of God's Holy Spirit, and God's Holy Spirit is what makes possible putting the law of God into our hearts and minds.

Other Psalms that we will note in this particular section are Psalm 51 and Psalm 47. Psalm 51 is David's Psalm of repentance. Psalm 47, according to the *Sanseno* Jewish commentary, is a focus on God's universal rulership. Psalm 47 is recited in the synagogue before the sounding of the shofar (the ram's horn) on the Feast of Trumpets—a day when the liturgy dwells on the thought of God's universal sovereignty.

We will start out here in Psalm 42. It certainly ties in very directly in terms of the time of Pentecost because it opens up with a deep thirst.

Psalm 42:1-2, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God...." The focus at the beginning is on a deep thirst.

You can tie this in with what Jesus told the woman at the well in Samaria.

John 4:10, "Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'"

Verse 11, she wanted to know from where this living water came.

Verses 13-14, "Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” He told her that whoever drank of the water that came from Jacob’s well would get thirsty again, but the water that He had to offer was water that would permanently quench thirst. Now, the water that Jesus made reference to was not just a physical drink of water that would quench a physical thirst. He was talking about the Spirit of God and the deep spiritual thirst.

Psalm 42 opens with this recognition of a deep spiritual thirst, a thirst that can only be fulfilled by God, “My soul thirsts for God, the living God....”

One of the things we note here in Psalm 42 is the extent to which David had to deal with many of the feelings that all of us have to contend with at one time or another. David had to deal with depression and discouragement.

Psalm 42:3, “My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, ‘Where is your God?’”

Verses 5-6, “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? [David is verbalizing his feelings.] Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember You....”

Verse 9, “I will say to God my Rock, ‘Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?’” David was discouraged. He was really down. He recognized his need for what only God was the source of or what only God could give. He recognized that what he ultimately needed was God’s Holy Spirit. He needed the quenching of that deep spiritual thirst.

One of the purposes and part of the value of the Psalms is the fact that every gamut of human emotions—from every high to every low, up and down and all the in-betweens—all of these emotions are expressed and verbalized in the Psalms. It’s a good place to go to put into words things that we are feeling and wrestling with and the ways that God’s people are to deal with those feelings. Generally, King David worked through those feelings. He addressed them. He faced and dealt with them. David likened his need for God to a deep intense thirst.

Psalm 43:1, “Vindicate [KJV, “Judge”] me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!” You could certainly parallel this to

the cry right at the beginning of the book of Exodus.

Psalm 44:1-3, “We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what deeds You did in their days, in days of old: How You drove out the nations with Your hand, but them You planted; how You afflicted the peoples and cast them out. For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, nor did their own arm save them; but it was your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, because You favored them.”

Israel didn’t win the Promised Land for themselves. God intervened and gave it to them. This is brought out right here in verse 3.

It’s interesting if you study a little bit of American history. When the early settlers first came to this country, the Pilgrims came to New England. There was a remarkable thing that took place over a period of time. There are two events that took place. First, there were plagues of diseases that swept the American continent, particularly the East Coast, in the 50 years prior to the arrival of the colonial settlement. The Indian population was greatly decimated as a result of this. This occurred even before any of the settlers arrived. There were some major disease epidemics that swept across and greatly lessened the population.

Second, there was a strain of bees that were introduced by the English settlers in New England that mated with the bees here. The Indians called them English hornets. The interesting thing is a really remarkable parallel. These bees migrated about 50 miles west of the colonial settlement. In other words, they were always a little bit ahead in their migration across the continent. It was one of the things that cleared out a great deal of the Indian population in New England. It is a remarkable parallel (Exodus 23:28).

There was a *U. S. News & World Report* article on the subject two or three months ago. I think I may cover some of those things in a sermon at a later time because there are some very remarkable parallels in terms of how God gave the land.

When you study American History, I think one of the things you find is that our forefathers had far more in common with unconverted Jacob than they did with converted Israel. Remember when Jacob was converted, God changed his name to Israel. God made a promise to Jacob that he was going to give him the birthright blessing. But, you remember, Jacob couldn’t wait for God to do it His way. He didn’t see the answer

coming. All he saw was Esau. How was God going to get rid of Esau? Since Jacob didn't see the answer, he assumed the solution was that he needed to do it. And, of course, he did it. And he brought a lot of penalties, problems and complications down on his life as a result. He did it by trickery, fraud and deceit. God let him keep it because it was God's purpose to give it to him. But there were problems that he had in his later life because he didn't wait for God to give it to him. He "jumped the gun" and decided what he needed to do was sort of maneuver and manipulate and get it on his own.

There are some remarkable parallels with American history. God let us keep it because He promised it to Abraham and it was His purpose to give it to us. When you study American history and some of the dealing that we had, you recognize there's a lot of similarity with unconverted Jacob. Our ancestors had a lot more in common with unconverted Jacob than they did with converted Israel. They thought in some of the same ways and that engendered some of the resultant problems in American history.

There are many parallels in the Scriptures. God's purpose stands even when He's working through human beings who go charging off in their own direction. God is able to work it around and bring His purpose to pass, but there are lessons there for us to learn. When God makes us a promise, it's a lot better to wait and let Him do it His way, rather than decide that maybe God has forgotten or maybe He got preoccupied. So we had better jump in, maneuver, manipulate and work it out our own way.

All of us certainly want to have more in common with converted Israel than we do with carnal, unconverted Jacob when it comes to the way we live our lives. If we don't, God may let us fall into the hands of "Uncle Laban," like He did Jacob, to get the point across that this is the way it feels to be dealt with—the way you've dealt with other people. God has ways of getting our attention and letting us realize that lesson.

Psalm 44:3 makes a point for Israel to understand that God gave them the land. It was not a matter that they get full credit. It was not because of their greatness but because God intervened.

Coming down, it talks about God's intervention and the fact that God is our source of help.

Psalm 45 is the Psalm that I mentioned earlier that is a celebration of a royal marriage.

Psalm 45:6-7, you might notice, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." Here is one of the clearest proofs in the Old Testament of the fact that there were two members of the God Family—the Messiah and the One that we know as God the Father. This verse is quoted in Hebrews 1:8-9.

Hebrews 1:4-5, speaking of Jesus Christ, "having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did he ever say: 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You?'"

Verses 8-9, "But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.' You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions."

Paul quotes Psalm 45:6-7 in Hebrews 1:8-9 and says very clearly that this is a reference to Jesus Christ. "Your throne O God is forever" and "God, Your God has anointed You with the oil of gladness." The word "Messiah" in the Hebrew is a word that means "the Anointed One"—the One that has been chosen or anointed by God. The word "Christ" is simply our English form of a Greek word that means exactly the same thing—"the Anointed One." This is the term that is used right here. In fact, the term for "Messiah" is exactly what is used here when it says, "God has anointed You." That is actually the term that is used.

In Psalm 46, we focus in on the fact that through difficulty and through calamities, God is our Protector.

Psalm 46:1-5, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn."

This is talking about the fact that God is our refuge and our strength regardless of the problems that are going to come about, regardless of the calamities, difficulties, adversities, tribulation or tremendous cataclysmic events that are prophesied in the end time. It says God is our refuge and our

strength. We don't need to fear though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried in the midst of the sea. Regardless of the turmoil—all the chaos and all the things that transpire—we don't have to worry and be filled with anxiety because God is the source of our refuge and our protection.

Psalm 47 is a celebration.

Psalm 47:1-2, “Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph! For the Lord Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth.”

Verse 3 talks about Him subduing the people.

Verses 7-8, “For God is the King of all the earth...God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.”

Psalm 48:1, “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain.”

As we go through Psalms 46, 47 and 48, it is very clear that God is going to set up a literal government. It is not just some vague feeling in your heart. It is not flitting off to heaven somewhere.

Psalm 46:7-10, “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the Lord, who has made desolations in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Psalm 47:2, “For the Lord Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth.”

Verses 7-8, “For God is the King of all the earth...God reigns over the nations [heathens]; God sits on His holy throne.”

Psalm 48:1-2, “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.” –Very, very specific statements that all point to the fact of a literal reign by God on the earth from Jerusalem.

Psalm 48:14 is a key verse to focus on and be aware of, “For this is God, our God forever and ever, He will be our guide even to death.” Or it would be best rendered, “even through death.” He is our guide through death. He is our God forever and ever (for eternity) and He will guide us through death.

There are not a lot of references in the Old Testament to the promise of eternal life. There are not a lot of clear direct references. The Sadducees did not accept the doctrine of the

resurrection because they didn't think it was clearly taught in the five books of the law. Jesus told them it certainly was because God calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Matthew 22:31-32; Mark 12:26-27), and He made promises to them that are yet to be fulfilled.

Here is a statement in the Psalms that shows that God is going to be our God forever and ever. Then we would have to live forever and ever. He will guide us through death. He will be the One who brings us through.

Psalm 49:1-2, “Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you inhabitants of the world, both low and high, rich and poor together.”

Verses 6-10, “Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him—for the redemption of their souls is costly, and it shall cease forever—that he should continue to live eternally, and not see the Pit. For he sees that wise men die; likewise the fool and the senseless person perish, and leave their wealth to others.”

The point is that it doesn't matter how much money you have, there's one thing that you will never be able to buy your way out of and that is death. People who have enough money can buy their way out of a lot of things. People have bought their way out of trouble and out of the army. People have bought their way out of a lot of different things and bought their way into some things such as a public office. But none of us possess the power or the wherewithal to redeem our souls from death. There isn't anything we can do to buy ourselves back from the grave or to redeem those that are close to us. People have a desire for self-perpetuation. We desire that.

Verse 11, “Their inner thought is that their houses will continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.”

People stick their name on things and sort of hope that somehow that's going to perpetuate a memory of them. It doesn't really do the trick. Sooner or later somebody else buys it out, changes the name, and then where are they? But there is that sense and that desire for self-perpetuation. We don't like the idea that somehow we are just “snuffed out.” We cease to exist and there isn't any memory or consciousness of us that remains. Our minds rebel at the fact that we just disappear like a blip on the screen and are never around again.

God has set within us a desire for something beyond the life here right now.

Ecclesiastes 3:11, "...He has put eternity in their hearts...." He has given us a sense of time, that sense of the future. He is ultimately the One that is the source of life beyond right now.

Psalm 49:12-15, "Nevertheless man, though in honor, does not remain; he is like the beasts that perish. This is the way of those who are foolish, and of their posterity who approve their sayings. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall be consumed in the grave, far from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me." We can't redeem ourselves, but David understood that God would redeem us.

Verses 16-19, "Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dies he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him. Though while he lives he blesses himself (For men will praise you when you do well for yourself), he shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light."

It is a matter that we don't have the power to perpetuate ourselves, but there is a redemption that God offers.

Psalm 50:1, "The Mighty One, God the Lord, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down."

Verse 14, "Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High." This is an answer to the question God says up a little earlier.

Verses 11-15, "I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

God doesn't need what we have. You don't bribe God. It's not a matter of how many sacrifices you offer. God doesn't need what you have. He doesn't need what I have. God doesn't need anything and if He did, He wouldn't have to borrow it from us.

You see some of these television preachers and you think God is on the verge of a giant liquidation sale. He's going to have to hang a going-out-of-business sign on the Pearly Gates if you don't hurry up and send in a little cash. That's not the case.

What does God want? Does God want or simply need what we have? No. You know what God says He wants? "Offer to God thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High." In other words, keep your word, do what you're supposed to do. Be thankful and appreciative, and then you can call on God when you are in trouble. It's not a matter of "cutting a deal" with God or trying to bribe God by what you give. God says that it's simply a matter of being thankful to Him, being appreciative, recognizing that He's the source of everything and be thankful. Pay your vows unto the Most High. Do what you said you would do. For those of us who have been baptized, what did you say you would do? You said you would surrender your life and your will to God, that you would unconditionally surrender to God and that you wanted Jesus Christ to live His life in you.

In that sense, we made a vow to God. What God wants is for us to simply follow through on what we've said—not to have this sort of pagan idea of sort of appeasing God by giving Him something. God doesn't want what you have. God wants you. He wants me. He wants us—our lives, our hearts, our minds—not just a little bit of what we may happen to have. Everything we have, He gave it to us to begin with. It's all His.

Psalm 51 is David's Psalm of repentance, a very key Psalm.

One point that I think is important to understand and that is basic to repentance is that the natural human response, when confronted with sin, is either denial or blame it on somebody else—sort of "pass the buck." Go back to Genesis and in the first couple of accounts we have tells us that. In Genesis 4, God asked Cain, 'Where is your brother?' Cain said, 'How should I know? Am I my brother's keeper?' Did Cain know where his brother was? Well, of course, he did. His brother was where he left him. He had just knocked him in the head with a club. Cain sought to deny it. His first response was to deny it. He tried to make out like he didn't know anything about it. That's human nature. That's generally what happens.

When a politician gets accused of something, the first thing he does is deny it. If the denial doesn't "wash," then he finds somebody to blame it on. That's not just unique to politicians. You and I probably have done that a time or two.

What did Adam and Eve do? In Genesis 3, God asked Adam, 'Did you eat of the fruit of the tree I told you not to?' That's just a "yes" or "no" question. All you have to do is say "yes" or "no, I didn't." Adam didn't say "yes" and he didn't

say “no.” He said, ‘Well, now, the woman that You gave me, she took of the fruit of the tree and did eat. She gave me some and I kind of took a little bite, also.’ He kind of tagged that onto the end. You know, “pass the buck.” Eve did the same thing. He asked Eve, ‘Is that so?’ She said, ‘Well, the serpent, he beguiled me. I was tricked. It’s not my fault.’

Those are the normal carnal reactions when we are confronted with sin. We try to deny it. We try to make excuses or try to find somebody to blame it on.

If you read Psalm 51, David didn’t do any of those things, and that is the reason he was a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). When you go through what David had to say, there isn’t any mention where David said, ‘Well, God, don’t You think You’re being a little bit hard on me? After all, haven’t other people done something just as bad, and I don’t see where they got into as much trouble as I did. Why am I the one that’s getting all the “chewing out”?’ You haven’t said anything to Bathsheba, and, after all, if she hadn’t been out there on that roof taking a bath, well, this never would have happened.’

Where’s the excuse? David didn’t blame anybody else. He didn’t blame Bathsheba. He didn’t say, ‘It was her husband’s fault. He was a lousy husband. If he hadn’t been the way he was, well, this never would have happened.’ He offered no excuses. He took responsibility, and this is a key because it goes against the grain of human nature.

When we are confronted with sin, our normal response is the response that Adam and Eve had. After all, they are our first parents and they set the pattern. That’s human nature. God doesn’t tell you how everybody responded every time they were confronted with sin, but He tells you how the first people responded because they set a pattern typical of humanity. God wants us to see. He gives us the illustration because He wants us to see that this is the way it looks and this is the way it sounds.

Psalm 51:1-5, but David said, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”

He is not talking about the Catholic doctrine of original sin. This is a poetic expression saying, ‘I am a sinner inside out. I’m a sinner from the beginning—that’s just a part of me.’

Verse 7, he said, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Verses 9-10, “Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” David acknowledged his sin. He recognized that sin is ultimately against God. When we sin, there may have been another person who has been wronged by our sin, but all sin is ultimately against God.

Another thing that we notice about David is that he acknowledged his sin. He faced it and he didn’t offer excuses. But neither did David have the Catholic concept of penance. David threw himself on God’s mercy, but he stood ready to accept God’s forgiveness. Some people go around under this cloud of guilt and kind of beat themselves up. They never go beyond it.

Verses 10-13, David asked God, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.”

David said, “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation.” David didn’t want to just wallow around in some sort of pseudo-guilt for the rest of his life. He acknowledged his sin. He faced it. He went to God to deal with it. He went to God for forgiveness and for deliverance. He asked God to renew within him the joy of His salvation—to go forward.

God does not want penance. He wants repentance. You have to understand that the Catholic doctrine of penance goes back to a pagan concept where you can atone for your own sin through your own suffering. If that’s so, then why did Christ have to come and die? You could be your own savior if that were the case. It’s an important concept to understand. God isn’t interested in your penance. He is interested in your repentance. He is interested in your turning around and going the other direction.

Psalm 52:8-9, “But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. I will praise You forever, because You have done it; and in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good.”

Psalm 53:1, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’....” Anybody who’s come to that conclusion, God says that’s just foolish. Only a fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ It describes this particular process and way of thinking.

Psalm 54:1-2, “Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.”

Verse 4, “Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with those who uphold my life.”

In Psalm 55, David recognized that God is our Deliverer. Notice the context.

Psalm 55:1-6, “Give ear to my prayer, O God, and do not hide Yourself from my supplication. Attend to me, and hear me; I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me, and in wrath they hate me. My heart is severely pained within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me [KJV, margin, “covered me”]. And I said, ‘Oh, that I had wings like a dove! For then I would fly away and be at rest.’”

Have you ever gotten to the point that you wish you could sprout wings and fly away because you were at the end of your rope? David felt like that. “Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me.” David said, ‘It just covered me up. I’m just overwhelmed as a result of fear and turmoil, and I just wish I could sprout wings and fly away from it all.’

Verse 7, “‘Indeed, I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.’” He said, ‘I would get far away from here. If I could sprout wings and fly away like a dove, I would go as far out into the wilderness as I could get.’

Verse 8, “‘I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.’” David said, ‘I would get away from here.’ Since he couldn’t do that, what was he going to do?

Verses 16-17, “As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.” Since sprouting wings wasn’t an alternative, what was he going to do? He said he was going to go to God. He was going to call on God and he knew that the Lord will save him. He was going to draw close to God. He would pray to God in the evening, in the morning and at noon. He was going to pray

and cry aloud. He was going to really beseech God.

Here’s the key and here is a part of how David worked through some of those things.

Verses 22-23, “Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; But I will trust in You.” God is ultimately going to deal with everybody. He says, “Cast your burden on the Lord and He shall sustain you.”

When you are in the kind of condition David is talking about, the key is to turn it over to God. Go to God, draw near to God in prayer and cast your burden on Him. Turn loose of it and give it to Him.

Psalm 121:4 says, “Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” You know, there’s no point for you to stay up all night worrying about something. Since God’s already staying up, you might as well go to sleep. He is going to be up anyway. “He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” God is going to be up all night anyway. You might as well go to bed and get some rest. Give it to Him. Cast your burden upon Him. Sometimes we feel the need because we are afraid He is going to go to sleep. So we had better stay up and worry about it because who’s going to be tending to it? As though, somehow, staying up worrying, fretting and wringing our hands is going to solve it.

I understand it is hard to work through and actually put that into practice. But when you go through some of these Psalms and realize the things that David experienced and had to work through, it can be very helpful to focus in on certain ones like this when you are really bogged down with things.

Psalm 56:1-3, “Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; fighting all day he oppresses me. My enemies would hound me all day, for there are many who fight against me, O Most High. Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.” Have you ever felt like you were surrounded? You are surrounded like Davy Crockett at the Alamo, or something, and you think you are just going to be swallowed up. David didn’t say he wasn’t afraid. He said, “Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.”

Verses 4-6, “In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? All day they twist my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil. They

gather together, they hide, they mark my steps, when they lie in wait for my life.”

They are creeping around and trying to trip us up. They are trying to twist what you say. David understood that. He knew what it was like to have people trying to gang up on him and get him in trouble. Maybe you are going through something like that on the job or have gone through this at one time or another.

David goes through and talks about that.

Verse 9, “When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me.”

Verse 11, “In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

Verse 13, “For You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not delivered my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?” ‘I know that God will be our Deliverer.’

Psalm 57:1, “Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by.” God describes Himself as a place of refuge. He is our source of refuge. It is an allusion to God’s protection for His people in times of trouble, particularly in the time of the Great Tribulation when Christ said we are going to look to God and pray that we will be delivered out of that. If we are close to God, we can be.

In Psalm 58, He talks about how the wicked and various ones are out to get him.

Psalm 59:1-2, “Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; defend me from those who rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloodthirsty men.”

Psalm 60:1, “O God, You have cast us off; You have broken us down; You have been displeased; Oh, restore us again!” He is talking about the correction that God has to give.

Verses 2-4, “You have made the earth tremble; You have broken it; heal its breaches, for it is shaking. You have shown Your people hard things; You have made us drink the wine of confusion. You have given a banner to those who fear You, that it may be displayed because of the truth.”

Verses 6-7, “God has spoken in His holiness: ‘I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem and measure out the Valley of Succoth. Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet for My head; Judah is My lawgiver.’” Here is a specific reference to certain tribes of Israel and certainly to the tribes that are going to stand out as leading nations in the Millennium.

Let’s notice. Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah are specifically singled out. Gilead is a poetic term for Reuben because Reuben dwelt on the east side of the Jordan River in the land of Gilead. So He basically focuses in on the French, the Americans, the British and the Jewish people as being the nations that He is going to work through in a very special way. He is certainly going to work through Israel. He will be using Israel as a tool to deal with all of the Gentile nations. Those four of the great tribes of Israel are going to be the ones that sort of stand out in that way. It’s an allusion to that. The time setting is clearly referring to the time when God is setting up His Kingdom on earth.

Psalm 61:1, “Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer.”

Psalm 62:1-2, “Truly my soul silently waits for God; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.”

Verses 5-6, “My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved.” God is the source of our stability.

Psalm 63:1, “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.” Here is a clear reference to our need for God. It, again, likens our need for God’s Holy Spirit to a thirsty person out in a desert who really craves that water. “You are my God; early will I seek You” alludes to the fact that early in the morning is a good time to focus in on our prayer. So start off in the morning by going to God and really drawing close to God.

Verse 6, “When I remember You on my bed I meditate on You in the night watches.”

The evening is also a time for prayer. But the difference is that in the evening, at the end of the day, it’s a time to think back reflectively on the day. It is time for meditation. It’s a time for contemplation and meditation on the events of the day and going to God for help, for forgiveness and for thanksgiving. It makes a distinction in, let’s say, even the types of prayer. There is one type that is mentioned in the evening and another type mentioned in the morning. Evenings are a good time to meditate and reflect.

We miss out so much in our urban society. Most of us have occasion to be out in the country from time to time; a lot of us grew up in it. One thing always impresses me anew every time I go up to visit my mother. She lives way out in the country

and there aren't any city lights or anything around there. There's not much light and the lights are all turned off by very late at night. The thing that is so impressive is that when I look up at the sky, I find that I have forgotten how many stars there are. If you look up in the sky in Baton Rouge, you see a few stars and think, 'This is a beautiful night with beautiful stars.'

Some of you have been on our father-son /daughter campout out there on the levee of the Atchafalaya River where there aren't any lights around. When the campfire goes down, that's it. If it's a clear night, you look up and it's just incredible. It's like the sky has just exploded with stars. We live in sort of an urban environment or at least semi-urban, and there's so much diffused light around. Even in the perimeters of a semi-urban area, you really don't see the night sky as clearly as you can in a few remote areas. When you do see it, particularly in all of its glory, it just simply puts you in a frame of mind to meditate.

It's the difference between David sitting out in the field watching over the sheep by night, looking up at the sky and being just overwhelmed with the greatness and the magnitude of God, and somebody in our society who, instead of doing that, are propped up in the chair watching television impressed with the greatness and magnitude of man. It's sort of the contrast. I am not saying you shouldn't ever watch a show on television. That's not the point. I am just saying we live in a society where we tend to be removed from that.

God designed the evenings as a time to meditate and contemplate. It's just the natural order of things with all the stars and the way that God designed the evening. He designed it as a time that would be a contemplative time—a time at the close of the day when focusing in on the magnitude of God's greatness and power puts you in a meditative and contemplative frame of mind. I suspect that most of us feel that way when we have opportunity to find ourselves out like that. Most of us don't have that opportunity all that often. It's a wonderful thing to take a walk out at night and look up at the night sky. There's just a special feeling there.

David describes that a little bit here. It's something that we should take advantage of because I think that's one of the reasons why we live in such a faithless age. I really think we do, and I think most of us have to acknowledge that if we think about it.

Luke 18:8, Christ made reference to it, "...when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith

on the earth?" I think one of the reasons is because we live in a society that revolves so much around what man can do. We find ourselves so impressed with man that we lose sight of God. God, somehow, seems far off and unreal, and what man can do seems awfully close and awfully impressive. It's hard for us to have the outlook and the perspective that many of the men and women of an earlier time had. We need to strive to get a perspective that helps us focus in on what's real, what's permanent and what's really important.

Psalm 64:1-3, "Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation; preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked, from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity, who sharpen their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows—bitter words." Have you ever felt like people were sort of whetting their tongue like a sword? I mean they might as well have gotten out the whetstone. They were sharpening up to go after you. Well, David felt like that and he describes it in a very poetic way. It's like they got out the bow and arrow and were shooting bitter words at you.

Verse 10, David went to God realizing, "The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and trust in Him. And all the upright in heart shall glory."

Psalm 65:1, "Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion; and to You the vow shall be performed."

Verse 4, "Blessed is the man *whom You choose*, and cause to approach You, [Here is a reference to the fact that God has to call; God is the One who chooses and enables us to approach Him.] that he may dwell in Your courts..." Again, it's a reference to God's power and His blessing.

Psalm 66:1-2, "Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! Sing out the honor of His name; make His praise glorious."

Verse 4, "All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name."

Verse 7, "He rules by His power forever; His eyes observes the nations..."

Psalm 67:1-2, "God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations."

Psalm 68 is sometimes called the Pentecost anthem. It is traditionally read in the synagogues on Pentecost. Many of the events here are considered as descriptive of the events of Mount Sinai.

Psalm 68:8, "The earth shook; the heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself

was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.” Of course, God thundered the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai that first Pentecost day, and the mountain quaked and shook and the smoke arose (Exodus 19:16-20).

Verses 5-6, one point to notice is, “A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation. God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.”

God views Himself as the special Protector of those who are unable to protect themselves, particularly the fatherless and the widow. There are people who like to make a prey of those who are helpless and defenseless. There are con men that make a special prey of the elderly and things of that sort. There is a special reckoning waiting. I don’t know exactly what, but God says that He considers Himself, in a very special way, as a Father to the fatherless and a judge of the widows.

I don’t want to advise you to take advantage of anybody, but your worst bet is to take advantage of the fatherless and the widow. You shouldn’t pick on anybody, but if you are going to pick on somebody, you had better pick on somebody else because you’re picking on God in a special way. One of the things that God absolutely hates is this cowardly attitude of people who would take advantage of those who are the most helpless and defenseless. That is the most cowardly and contemptible thing; God really hates that sort of attitude and mindset.

He makes a reference that, in one sense, I think is fulfilled, at least in type, in the Church. It’s going to be fulfilled in Tomorrow’s World when Christ returns and you have the survivors of the concentration camps. It says, “God sets the solitary in families....” God places those who remain in families (one here and one there). That’s the way it will be dealt with. God will set in families little children who have survived some of these terrible traumas.

And even today, sometimes people are alone when they come into the Church or they’re the only one in their family that comes into the Church. There is a family relationship in the Church. God, in many ways, sets the solitary in families in the Church today. A lot of you came into the Church and, in some of your cases, you came in and were by yourself. It wasn’t long before other people were taking an interest in you. God put you in a family context.

Verse 18, “You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received

gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell there.”

Hold your place there. Let’s go to Ephesians and you will see that this is quoted and explained.

Ephesians 4:8, “Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.’” What is that talking about? It is talking about Jesus Christ. “He ascended on high.” Well, He ascended to heaven. He was resurrected by the power of God.

“He led captivity captive.” What is the greatest captivity of all? The greatest captivity of all is death and the grave. That’s the captivity that nobody has ever been able to escape.

People have escaped from jail or escaped from exile. Napoleon escaped from the British exile. He got away. He came back and that didn’t last too long. They exiled him again. All kinds of people have escaped from various things, but there is one captivity that nobody has ever escaped from and that’s death. That is the ultimate captivity.

That’s the captivity that Christ triumphed over because He conquered death. He led captivity captive. He triumphed over death when He was resurrected by the power of God.

“And gave gifts unto men” is a reference to the Holy Spirit and to the various manifestations of it—many of which are enumerated in Ephesians 4. It is a reference to the outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit that came on the Day of Pentecost and was the result of Christ ascending on high.

John 16:7, he told the disciples, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him [It] to you.” There was going to be a special thing that would come. This is in the context of Psalm 68, the so-called Pentecost anthem.

Psalm 68:19, “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation!” This is a description of God’s greatness and His power.

Several references in Psalm 69 are prophetic of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 69:4, “Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they are mighty who would destroy me....” This is quoted in John 15:25.

Verse 8, “I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother’s children.” This is quoted in John 7:5.

Verse 9, “Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.” This is quoted in John 2:17.

Verse 19, “You know my reproach, my shame and my dishonor; my adversaries are all before You.” This is referred to in Matthew 27:28-31. All these references are references of Christ.

Verse 20, “Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.” This is referred to in Matthew 26:37-39.

Verse 21, “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” This is a reference to the crucifixion in Matthew 27:34, 48.

Verse 25, “Let their habitation be desolate; let no one dwell in their tents.” This is quoted in Acts 1:20. There is a great deal of the content of Psalm 69 that is quoted in the New Testament as prophetic of Jesus Christ and the thoughts and experiences that He had. A lot of things, if you just read it in the context, call your attention to that.

Psalm 70:1-3, “Make haste, O God, to deliver me! Make haste to help me, O Lord! Let them be ashamed and confounded who seek my life; let them be turned back and confused who desire my hurt. Let them be turned back....” This is a reference to the fact that God is our Deliverer.

Psalm 71:1-2, “In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame. Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline Your ear to me, and save me.” The whole theme of Psalm 71 is trusting God for deliverance.

The psalmist is pictured in his old age as still looking to God for help in the midst of trials.

Verses 17-18, “O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.”

Verses 20-21, “You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, shall revive me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth. You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.” It is a reference to God’s deliverance and trusting for deliverance.

Psalm 72 is the last Psalm in this section.

Psalm 72:1-4, “Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king’s Son. He will judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor.”

As you go through, this is clearly a reference to the Millennium and to Jesus Christ’s reign.

Verses 7-8, “In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”

Verse 11, “Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.” This is clearly a reference to Christ.

Verse 4, but notice, “He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor.”

Verses 12-14, “For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and precious shall be their blood in His sight.” Do you think there isn’t going to be any problems in Tomorrow’s World, in the Millennium? Do you think there won’t ever be anybody who’s poor or needy or anybody that needs to be redeemed from deceit and violence—particularly in the early part of the Millennium?

The point is that when Christ comes back, He’s not just going to snap His fingers and all of a sudden the sun is shining, the birds are singing and everybody’s happy and everybody loves everybody. There are things that are going to have to be dealt with, and there are real problems and real people. Progress will be made, but as long as we are dealing with physical human beings, we are going to be dealing with physical human beings and the mistakes, problems and difficulties that come up. Now, certainly, when Satan isn’t there to stir up trouble, things will be a whole lot better. As generations go by, there should be significant improvement.

Psalm 72, when taken in context, is clearly a reference to the Millennium. It is a reference to the fact that, yes, there is going to be real problems. There are things that need to be dealt with and problems that need to be addressed.

Psalm 72 ends with verses 18-20, “Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.”

Psalm 72 is not the last Psalm written by David in the numerical order of the Psalms. You could look at Psalm 103, for instance, and others that are said to be Psalms of David, but the first 72

Psalms constituted the original canon of the book of Psalms.

King David divided the Levites into 24 divisions [KJV, “courses”] that were to rotate their service in the temple for two weeks a year, plus the Festivals. With 72 Psalms, each division would sing three Psalms—3 x 24 is 72. This would enable the whole book to be rotated through in a year in terms of the liturgy.

Verse 20, I’ll call your attention to, “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.”

Notice in Psalm 73 what it says in little letters under “A Psalm of Asaph.”

Psalm 74, “A Contemplation [Maschil] of Asaph.”

Psalm 75, “A Psalm of Asaph.”

Psalm 76 and Psalm 77, “A Psalm of Asaph.”

Notice that, and then let’s go back to II Chronicles and the time of great revival under King Hezekiah when the temple was refurbished and everything was reordered.

II Chronicles 29:25, “Then he [Hezekiah] stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king’s seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.” He organized them into the 24 divisions that David had established. David organized them into 24 divisions because the Levite population increased and there were too many serving in the tabernacle precinct.

When Moses organized the Levites (the priests, the sons of Aaron) in the wilderness, there weren’t very many. Population increased and it finally got to where you couldn’t get them all into the tabernacle precincts. There were so many of them that you could hardly “stir them with a stick,” if you tried to get them all in there and functioning. They were all getting in each other’s way.

So David organized it. They would all perform the functions of the temple, but they would rotate them through. They organized them into 24 divisions based on family groupings. Everybody served two weeks at a time, and then they were all there for the Festival periods. Twenty-four divisions serving two weeks out of the year makes 48 weeks; then you add in the Festival periods and you finish out the rest of the year.

Hezekiah re-organized that.

Verse 30, “Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.”

It was at the time of King Hezekiah that the Psalms of Asaph were added to the canon. There were other Psalms that existed, but David prepared the first 72 Psalms organized as the book of Psalms that was originally given to the Levites.

Later on, when Hezekiah reorganized things, there were additional Psalms that were added and the book of Psalms was expanded.

Several years ago, we went through a Bible study on the canonization of Scripture and how we came to have the Bible. I call your attention to that since we are here at the end of Psalm 72.

There’s an awful lot packed into the Psalms, and we are just touching on the high points. We can only hit the high points in a Bible study series like this, but I hope that it will be an incentive for you to go back and study it. Look into it and study some of these sections of Scripture more deeply because God has packed so much into this Book, the Bible. God has packed so much in there that is profitable and beneficial for all of us. So let’s take advantage of this. Hopefully this series of Bible studies won’t be a stopping point for your study of God’s Word, but it will simply be a starting point, a jumping off point to explore God’s Word even more deeply.

We will pass out the questions on the next section of the Psalms—Book Three of Psalms—Psalms 73—89. We will cover that next Bible study.