

Bible Lessons



"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People
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Jesus Christ and His Church
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Theme For Third Quarter, 1991

We feel greatly inspired this quarter to set forth a series of lessons from the Book of Psalms. We have selected various psalms which are not especially prophecies of Jesus, although they can all be termed prophetic, because they find their real fulfillment in the New Testament experience of the grace of God. But there are those psalms which are duly recognized as being true prophecies of the Saviour; those particular psalms we will have in a series of lessons at another time. We will not include every psalm in the Book in this series of lessons, but rather those we feel the Lord is inspiring us to study. The Psalms were the Jewish hymnbook. These were sung in their worship, and they possess great spiritual value. They have certainly been a great source of inspiration and comfort to us. May the Lord richly bless this study to one and all.

—Brother Leslie C. Busbee



July 7, 1991

THE HAPPY STATE OF THE GODLY

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

112:1 Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

8 His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.

9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

10 The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

Psalm 1:5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Proverbs 9:12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

Memory Verse: For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. I Tim. 4:8.

Central Thought: God has promised and will fulfill wonderful blessings of peace, prosperity, and success upon the person who will love and obey Him.

Word Definitions: *Scornful:* One who scoffs at godliness and lightly esteems its value. *Meditate:* To muse; study; ponder thoughtfully and carefully. *"His seed shall be mighty":* His children and descendants shall be strong for God and truth because of the righteous influence he has exerted upon them. *"Wealth and riches":* The true riches of faith, love, and holiness. *Gracious:* Kind; merciful; willing to lend a helping hand to others. *"He will guide his affairs with discretion":* He will handle his ministry to others wisely, using his means for the well being of his own and for the benefit of those in need. *For ever:* God will uphold him in all of his adversities and will not permit him to perish. *Dispersed:* Distributed to the poor and needy. *"His horn":* His power, authority, and leadership.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Adam Clarke states that the Vulgate translation of the Scriptures (a translation by Jerome in the 4th century from Greek to Latin) states that the 112th Psalm was composed by the prophets Zechariah and Haggai after the period of the captivity of Judah into Babylon. The first Psalm is generally attributed to David as a preface or introduction to the whole book of Psalms. A psalm is defined as a poem that, being set to music, can be sung in the worship of God. David was the author of many of these psalms, but certainly not all of them. As it is with the main thrust of the text of the Bible, the general message of the Psalms is that of glory to the God of heaven and rejoicing in His blessings upon those who serve Him faithfully. We have joined these two Psalms together in one great expression of the happy state of the godly. Verse 9 in this 112th Psalm is quoted by the apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians. (II Cor. 9:9). He was dwelling on the blessing of giving cheerfully to the cause of God, and applied this Scripture to show the blessedness and the reward of God upon the man who gives to the poor. It is to be noted that both of these psalms speaks of the wicked as well as the righteous, and how that the wicked will suffer and be punished just as the righteous will prosper and be rewarded. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the three areas of life the godly person should avoid?
2. How does each one of these evil influences pose a threat to the well being of a Christian?
3. Besides the negative side of shunning evil paths, what are the positive activities the child of God must partake of?
4. How will a godly man's life affect his children?
5. What kind of riches will a righteous man seek to have?
6. What is the main thing we should desire to be remembered for?
7. Why does evil tidings and threats of enemies not alarm the child of God?
8. What are the real enemies a Christian fights against?

9. Does generosity and kindness to others have anything to do with one's righteousness enduring for ever?
10. What will happen to the wicked and the ungodly?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A person who will live godly and righteously in this world must stem the tide against all evil influences. The ungodly, the sinners, and the scornful each exert pressure and influence against the progress of holiness. We meet these things in the world and the people around us every day. We either accept or reject the counsel the ungodly seek to offer. We must refuse to walk in the pathway of sinners and be in the fear of the Lord all the day long. And the old scorner sitting up there on his stool of ridicule and criticism will have no appeal to the man who is determined to serve God to the end. We have found great delight in feasting upon the Holy Scriptures and their glorious message to us. How good it is for a person to find this wonderful way of living, embracing its discipline early in life! This gives God a chance to begin to construct a happy state that will be more and more richly enjoyed as he grows older. God will lead him in every decision that is to be made. The godly person carefully seeks God's guidance and wisdom. Marriage and the rightful choice of a companion is fully entrusted into the Lord's workings. The home is established upon prayer and godly principles. Little children are born and brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Dark days and adversity come, but God is always there to bring a light of comfort and hope. The godly man is ever open to counsel and learning as to how to live and conduct himself in proper order. Thus his affairs are guided with wisdom from above. This brings spiritual prosperity as well as material blessings and provisions. A godly person is not anxious to be rich, nor does he apply himself in that direction. He is content with what he has and trusts the God who feeds the sparrows and clothes the grass to care for him. He is generous and helpful to others, remembering Jesus' words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Oh, the blessings and the benefits enjoyed by that man or woman who puts God first, who seeks above his or her own welfare the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Psalm 1:1-3 could be considered a beatitude similar to those Jesus taught in Matthew 5. In fact it is a more detailed beatitude, for the Psalmist gives both warning and encouragement. The warning is, don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of the scornful. These three things show the progressive way of sin. Sin's first effect on a young, innocent heart, is to indoctrinate it that sin is desirable. This is taking counsel of the ungodly. Standing in the way of sinners shows an association with the wicked. In this step the heart is not innocent any more. Standing denotes time is being spent dabbling with sin. Sitting shows that full occupancy exists with the wicked and the entrapped soul has acquired the same scornful attitude as other sinners. To be a scorner of righteousness is a very hardened condition, but it is where Satan leads souls who turn from serving God.

The encouragement found in these verses are a real contrast to the warning given. The thoughts of a child of God are constantly, day or night, based on the law of the Lord. His attitude is not that of the scornful, but one which contains the fruits of the spirit.

The saint's happiness is not based on what befalls him in life, for what sustains him is rooted in God's Word just like a tree rooted by a river of water. And what blessing it produces. The reward that goes with this blessing of promise is "and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." This does not necessarily mean financially. We know that everything reproduces of its own kind. The lesson we need to comprehend is that what scorn reproduces is more scorn, making the creator of it very miserable. Righteousness reproduces more righteousness, making the perpetrator very happy and prosperous in what he does.

—Wayne Murphey



July 14, 1991

HELP FROM GOD IN THE TIME OF DISTRESS

Psalm 3:1 Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

2 Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.

3 But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

4 I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me.

6 I will not be afraid often thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.

7 Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

8 Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

4:3 But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

6 There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

Memory Verse: And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. II Tim. 4:18.

Central Thought: In the midst of this wicked and unbelieving world we will meet many sorrows, distresses, and painful sufferings. It is our privilege to look up in faith to our God and

receive from Him personal help and strength that will sustain us in life and peace.

Word Definitions: *Selah*: A suspension or pause, which is evidently used in the psalms to express an extra serious note to pause, consider, mark well, and take heed. And it is a good and worthy exercise for the mind and heart in reading of the Holy Scriptures to pause often and ponder the serious meaning of the message. *"Stand in awe, and sin not"*: The Greek Septuagint rendering of this phrase is, "Be ye angry, and sin not!" This is the rendering that Paul used when he quoted this verse in Ephesians 4:26. *"Commune with your own heart upon your bed"*: The Septuagint reads: "Feel compunction upon your beds for what ye say in your hearts." Compunction is to feel the sharpness and weight of your words in your heart. If everyone would be sensitive to the hurt that the words they are about to speak might bring, there would be many words left unsaid. Be angry, but stand in awe and think seriously in your heart as to how the words you feel tempted to speak in anger will affect your fellow man. How much sorrow and trouble would be avoided if humanity would practice this counsel.

LESSON BACKGROUND

According to the heading, this third psalm was composed by David when he fled from his son Absalom. The fourth psalm was probably composed concerning that same troubled period in David's life. Recorded in II Samuel chapters 15 through 18 we find the account of the rebellion of Absalom and his followers and their ultimate overthrow by the armies of David. David and his faithful followers were forced to flee from Jerusalem and take refuge in regions beyond Jordan where he mustered his forces to meet the coming hordes of Absalom. Absalom, upon the counsel of Hushai, decided to accompany his troops in pursuit of his father and the armies of Israel. It was a terrible, terrible time for David. As David was passing through one of the towns along the way, there came out a man against him, cursing and throwing stones at him. This was Shimei, of the family of Saul, who cursed David, and charged that the Lord was returning upon David's head all the blood

of Saul's house. When Abishai, one of David's strong men, offered to stop Shimel, David forbade him saying, "Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." David was taking the humble side, for his confidence was in God to bring about victory. He was no doubt feeling the weight of this trouble with Absalom as being part of the consequence of his former sin in the affair with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. At any rate, David was clinging to his faith in God, humbly trusting in Him to bring him back to his kingdom. His faith was so sure and strong that he was able to lie down and sleep in the midst of his troubles. This kind of faith is for God's children today in the time of trouble.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Through what avenue do most of our troubles come in life?
2. Does what people say about us carry any weight?
3. Is it important to discern if those who come against us are in an ungodly cause?
4. How can we be assured that the Lord will be our shield and the lifter up of our heads?
5. Is there any real cause for fear if we know God is on our side?
6. Do we need to defend ourselves when we are trusting in God?
7. If we are godly in Christ Jesus, how does God feel about us?
8. Is it good to ponder your words and actions while you are quiet and alone before God?
9. What are some of the sacrifices of righteousness we can offer to God in the times of trouble?
10. How helpless are we when we are in unconscious sleep?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is the inevitable experience of every child of God somewhere along the path of life to fall into adversity and trouble. And almost every time these troubles come by way of

our fellow man. As in the case of David, it could be our own children. It could be your wife or husband, the neighbor across the street, the boss on the job, or it might even come through our brother or sister in the church. They might make harsh and cutting statements about us. Our confidence in God is surely the greatest defense we can have in those kind of troublesome times. A godly person is seeking to please the God that He loves and believes in. The worldly round about are seeking the things that please the flesh and the carnal mind. This creates continual conflict. It is our faith and integrity with God that will make the difference between triumph and being overwhelmed. It is so wonderful when we call upon the name of the Lord in our distresses and experience the help that only God can afford. When we can be still and hear the voice of the Lord speaking to our hearts, the opposing powers of Satan and man fade like mist before the dawn. When a person gets his head down and begins to look at the dark side of life, he is falling into the trap of the Devil. But when we lift up our heads and look beyond the conditions to the faithfulness of our God, then we gather strength and courage to face the battle. We can commune with our own hearts, settle our own needs before God, offer the sacrifices of praise and service to God, and put our trust in Him. Thus will the Lord put gladness in our hearts surpassing all that the world is enjoying, and we can dwell in safety in the face of all that we meet. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God." There are many instances in which this very attitude exists today. If you want to see such thought in action, sometime sit in on a session of your state legislature, or study the arguments made and the bills passed. Most everything done is to solve a problem, and how often is God included as necessary in the solution of the problem? Our society is programed to depend on humanity, and many times their aspirations go no higher.

It is the Christian's duty to take the battle into the enemy's camp by maintaining that it is the fool who "hath said in his heart, There is no God." Psa. 14:1. This is not to be done in a

militant way, but by being a testimony by our lives that God is real and He is our help in time of distress. We need to have such confidence in God that we can be as David when he said, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

"Thou has put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased." It is the farmer who can best appreciate this comparison. For the one who depends on the harvest for his livelihood, there is a real sense of satisfaction, security and joy to see the fields bringing in a good yield. Even in the midst of trouble the Psalmist experienced this same gladness.

A man by the name of Russel Maltby once said, "Jesus promised His disciples three things—that they would be entirely fearless, absurdly happy, and that they would get into trouble." A thought that most everyone has heard, yet is worth considering, is told in the story of the man, who after facing much trouble was asked: "How is the outlook?" To this he answered: "The outlook is dark, but the uplook is wonderful."

—Wayne Murphey

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July 21, 1991

THE LORD ON HIGH CONDESCENDS TO MAN

Psalm 8:1 O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

113:2 Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore.

3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised.

4 The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

5 Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high,

6 Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!

7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

8 That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.

9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.

Memory Verse: Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off. Ps. 138:6.

Central Thought: Although the Lord God Almighty dwells in realms above the heavens, far above our power to comprehend, He has come down to human level as the Son of man in Jesus Christ to save our souls from the depths of sin to fellowship with Him.

Word Definitions: *"O Lord our Lord"*: In most places in the Old Testament where the name "Lord" is given, it is referring to Jehovah, the self-existent One, the Creator, the Father in heaven. The term "our Lord" here refers to sovereign ruler, controller, master, and owner.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The 8th Psalm is generally accepted as the authentic writing of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel. The author of Psalm 113 is unknown, however, Adam Clarke states that this psalm along with Psalms 114 through 118 were sung by the Jews on their most solemn festivals, and particularly at the Passover. It could very well be part of the hymn sung by Jesus and His apostles the night of the Passover feast and the

institution of the Lord's Supper just before they went out. These are beautiful expressions of praise, love, and worship to God, glorifying Him mainly for His condescension to humanity. The 8th Psalm is quoted and referred to different times in the New Testament. Jesus referred to verse 2 in Matthew 11:25 when He thanked God for hiding truth from the wise and prudent and revealing it unto babes. In Matthew 21:16 Jesus expressly quoted this verse when the scribes and priests were sore displeased at the children crying and praising God in the temple. Jesus answered them, "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Verses 4-6 are quoted in Hebrews 2:6-9 as a basis for the writer's words concerning Christ as the Lord and King of the world to come. Paul mentioned the thought of all things being put under Christ's feet in I Corinthians 15:27 and Ephesians 1:22. So we see that this 8th Psalm and the joint testimony in Psalm 113 are prophetic expressions concerning Christ's coming into the world for the salvation of men. And, also, these psalms teach us that the great Almighty God is concerned with every phase of our earthly pilgrimage, even to the gracious favor of a barren woman becoming a joyful mother of children. It is to that lowly heart who senses its own poverty and unworthiness that God extends His loving favor.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. If the glory of God is set above the heavens, what position should His name have in this world?
2. How can the Lord's strength revealed in babes and sucklings silence the enemies of God?
3. Whom did the Psalmist say that the heavens, moon and the stars, were the work of?
4. What numbers could we use to show the comparison between the great God and man?
5. The animal kingdom and nature were put under man's domination. What are the things God wants to put under our feet today?
6. Is the Lord's name worthy to be praised and honored all the day long?

7. What causes God to bow down and behold the things in earth?

8. Why does the Psalmist specify the poor and needy as special objects of God's help and grace?

9. What does God want to do for the poor and needy?

10. Will a barren woman enjoy and appreciate her children more than other mothers who bear children more readily?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Surely the Lord Jehovah is worthy of all our praise and worship. When we consider how great He is, we marvel that He could or would come down to meet us on our level of humanity. And not only does He come down, but He reaches to the lowest and weakest creature to be made manifest in, that is, babes and sucklings. Though we be fully developed men and women, yet we are but babes. Surely the art and crafts of man and his strength mean nothing and contribute nothing to God. He ordains strength in the weak and helpless individual who learns to trust in Him. Jesus, our Saviour, fulfilled all of God's true design for man when He accomplished the plan of salvation and died for the sins of a lost world. God gave Him dominion and put the powers of Satan, sin, and death under His feet. Although death is not yet destroyed, the day is coming when it will be forever destroyed along with all the enemies of Christ. God is so great and so high that it seems impossible that He would even take notice of something so small as a mortal man. It is the love that He possesses in His great loving heart that enables Him to condescend to our human needs. I believe God purposely made man so small in order to magnify the great love in His heart for us. It is hard for us to comprehend the great love of God because of how great He is and how small we are. But He has manifested that love in the gift of His Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for the salvation of our souls. Let us not be forgetful to express our praise and thanks to Him every day, and let us steadfastly believe the love that He has manifested toward us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The comforting thought in our lesson today is the fact that God really does care about us. In I Peter 5:6-7 the apostle wrote

to the Christians, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." It is our duty to keep ourselves humble, realizing our worth before God, and then we can feel His keeping care in our lives.

A Hindu once said to a missionary, "We must not entangle God in human relationships. If he were entangled He would be involved, unhappy, imperfect, and therefore not God." This may be good reasoning concerning someone who is limited, but we have a God who "is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens."

There are several things that give us reason to know that God cares and has respect for us. For one thing, he dared to get involved in our problems. Have you ever depended on someone to help you with something and you got the feeling that they would do it as long as it didn't cost them any time, effort, or above all, reputation? Christ expended all of these for our sake. He left the glories of heaven to spend 33 years in this sin-darkened world. Three of those years were spent in life-draining effort to help the needy. And His reputation was continually sullied by those who were opposed to Him. After this, can we doubt that He cares for us and will condescend to help us even now? We do not serve a spasmodic God, but one who is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb. 13:8.)

—Wayne Murphey



July 28, 1991

A PRAYER OF TRIUMPH AND HOPE

Psalm 17:1 Hear the right, O Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.

2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

5 Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

6 I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.

7 Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.

8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

9 From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.

10 They are enclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

11 They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set eyes bowing down to the earth;

12 Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.

13 Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:

14 From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.

15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.

Memory Verse: For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Heb. 13:14.

Central Thought: The deadly influence of Satan is working against our spiritual life in many who are about us. We must constantly be on our guard, ever praying for God to preserve us in His mercy so that we can be accounted worthy to see His face in peace.

Word Definitions: *Feigned lips:* Deceitful lips. *"My sentence":* My judgment. *"Concerning the works of men":* Works that originate from the carnal disposition of unregenerated man pose a dangerous trap to ensnare the soul. Only as we keep close to God and keep in mind His Word can we escape the downward way. *"Paths of the destroyer":* Destructive ways;

ways of violence void of the love of God. *"The apple of the eye"*: The Hebrew word is "daughter of the eye." As the eye is cherished and protected like a father protects and cherishes his daughter, so we who are children of God seek His protection and care. *"They have compassed us in our steps"*: The proud and worldly have surrounded the way of God's saints with ridicule and condemnation. *"Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword"*: Deliver us by thy sword. *"From men which are thy hand"*: From men by thy hand.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This psalm is the prayer of David, written as the deep expression of his heart. It appears to have been written about the time when Saul was violently pursuing and persecuting David. David had to flee to the wilderness and live like an outlaw, resorting to guerrilla warfare for defense. Saul was thirsty for David's blood and was bent on destroying him. David had done nothing to merit such horrible treatment, but was rather the unworthy victim of one of humanity's worst and most violent passions, jealousy. For several years David was forced to be constantly on the look-out for Saul and be ready to move at a moment's notice to escape his hand. This psalm was written during those dark days. It is a prayer that fits the real children of faith today. We are surrounded by forces in our time which are opposed to faith and trust in God. The people of our generation do not believe in the hereafter that the children of God have their eye on. This prayer should be a real utterance of our hearts because we are faced with elements that are revealed in this psalm. The paths of the destroyer are everywhere. Man has invented and invented and invented until we are in the midst of ground that is enchanted with a power to bewitch and lull us to sleep. People are enclosed in their own fat and luxury. Pride and self exaltation dominate the lives of nearly everyone. Their portion is in this life, and their substance is left to the next generation to squabble over. This psalm is being fulfilled today, and this should be the prayer of our hearts. While men and women around us are confessing that this material world is their only portion, we must keep our eyes on the goal of being accounted worthy to

stand before the Son of man with His likeness on that great judgment day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Are things in our modern society righteous and equal?
2. Is it possible for us to be just and equal in our own hearts?
3. Why is it necessary for us to keep a close guard on our hearts against sin and ungodliness?
4. How can we be kept from the destructive ways of Satan?
5. What are we to pray to be kept from?
6. Is prosperity and wealth an incentive and encouragement to godliness or is it a detriment?
7. Is it possible for us to be drawn away from the true way by people who have their portion in this life?
8. Can a person be given to greed and material gain and at the same time have a hope of heaven in the end?
9. What is the main thing we should be living for?
10. What is going to become of all the material wealth which people are seeking after?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The child of God finds himself in a situation much like David faced as we endeavor to live a Christian life in this present world. We are meeting the pressures of the worldly wise who are blind to the spiritual values which are so real to us. Just look around you very observantly and you will see where people's affections are. Their desires and affections are not on things above. They are wrapped up in their own little private material world. Their physical welfare, their income, their possessions, their security and protection, and their social well-being dominates their concern and interests completely. Oh, they have a vague hope that they will come out all right, and they do not seem to sense any danger of being lost or separated from God forever. This is the society we live in today. The true hope of the gospel is only given to those who believe and obey the gospel. Our eyes are opened to the vanities of this present life. Faded is the charm of this present

world. In the eyes of the spiritual soul enlightened by the Spirit of God the world is not attractive and exciting. It is grievous and repulsive. Our desires are woven around a strong decision to live for Jesus and be accepted of Him. This kind of mind is a foolish fancy to those who have not had Christ revealed to them. The carnal mind is the mind of the general tide of humanity. Strikes, lawsuits, immoral practices, broken marriages and homes, and corruption in leadership, are just a few of the outgrowths of a corrupt society. Let us be strong and hold fast to our faith in what God has promised to the faithful. Let us be on our guard against the evil influences around us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Everyone who has gone through trials involving conflict with others have undoubtedly prayed a similar prayer as that of the Psalmist. His first plea was "Hear the right, O Lord." David was feeling the frustration of having stories told about him that were unfair. His only comfort was in telling the Lord the straight of things. It was not within his power to correct all the gainsaying, in fact, an attempt at this type of action often only makes things worse.

The Psalmist David was feeling the weight of other people's judgment. His cry to God was, "Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal." Everyone likes justice and for an equal balance to be enforced, but the only place that we can rely on it being that way is with God, who sees and knows all things. However, as we would like justice to be done in our behalf, let us be careful to show it to others.

—Wayne Murphey

Grant me, O God, thy merciful protection;
And in protection give me strength, I pray;
And in my strength, O grant me wise discretion;
And in discretion make me ever just;
And with my justice may I mingle love,
And with my love, O God, the love of thee;
And with the love of thee the love of all.

(Author Unknown)



August 4, 1991

THE WORD OF GOD LIKE THE SHINING HEAVENS

Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

Memory Verse: Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings. (Mal. 4:2).

Central Thought: The Word of God shining through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ illuminates the souls of men

in like manner as do the sun, moon, and stars shining upon the earth from their position in the skies.

Word Definitions: *Firmament*: The great expanse of space God placed in the midst of the waters to house the universe. See Genesis 1:6. *"Day unto day"*; *"night unto night"*: The heavens give forth unceasingly by day and by night the knowledge and praise of the gracious Creator who formed them. Man has only to open his eyes and his heart to be taught by their voiceless hosts. *"There is no speech . . . where their voice is not heard"*: The words "there is" and "where" are added words. The raw Hebrew text says: "No speech, and no word; their voice is not heard." The heavens are a silent and voiceless reminder to man of the majesty of God. *"Converting the soul"*: Restoring the soul to fellowship with God. *"Presumptuous sins"*: Sins of pride and hardness of heart through arrogance and self will.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This psalm is generally attributed to David, although it is not known when or on what occasion it was written. But it certainly is a deep and rich exposition of the greatness of God and the majesty of His word and power. I read that in the time of the French Revolution an effort was put forth to influence society to blot out all trace of the teachings about God. One old farmer pointed his finger to the skies and said, "How are you going to get rid of that?" This psalm informs us of the two great means which God uses to convey to man His honor and majesty. The first is the heavens. One upward look on a starlit night at the firmament and its shining worlds fills one with wonder. Our society today is so taken up with earthly care and accomplishment that they seldom venture a look skyward unless it is with thoughts of space travel or satellite beams. And with all the night life under electric lights, the beauties of the heavens are not thought of. But the witness is there if a person will but look at it and survey it with an open mind. The other avenue which God reveals His majesty is through His Word. His Word by the gospel of Jesus is preached unto us. Like the heavens, in His Word God has set a tabernacle for His Son, the Sun of righteousness. And through the gospel Christ

comes to us as the Bridegroom of our souls, rejoicing as a strong man to run the Christian race. Let us be attentive to these two wonderful means which God has chosen to proclaim His majesty and power. Through His precious Word we can understand our errors, discover and purify ourselves from secret faults, overcome and triumph over presumption and pride, and assure our innocence from great transgressions.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How long has it been since you stood and gazed at the heavens and thought of the glory of God?
2. What is the message the heavens speak to us?
3. What are some of the things in our modern society which hinder people from beholding the majesty of the heavens?
4. Do these same things hinder people from beholding God's majesty in His Word?
5. What does the writer liken the sun to?
6. In what way is Christ like the sun?
7. In what way does Christ shine through the gospel?
8. How can one understand his errors?
9. What are the four different types of sin spoken of in this psalm?
10. Why is it so vital that the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be acceptable to God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We have in our lesson two different heavens. One is the natural heaven above us wherein shines the sun, moon, and stars. The other is the spiritual heaven wherein shines Christ and His love and salvation. It is so sad that many people do not look at either heaven; their minds are so earthbound and carnal. They take the sun for granted and give no thought to the majesty of the night. Television and video is their heaven. They draw from its polluted streams the standards for their lives. Oh, if their eyes could only be turned from these vanities to behold the wonders of the real heavens which God has prepared! The beautiful heavens and the blessed Word of God

in the gospel portray the loveliness of Christ. Verse 4 of our lesson declares that "their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Paul, in Romans 10 spoke of those who preached the gospel and how it must be heard, believed, and obeyed. But not everyone believes and not everyone obeys the gospel. But they have all heard. Listen to what he said: "But I say, Have they not all heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Here Paul quotes from this 19th Psalm and applies it to the gospel. The grace of God has been made manifest in the gospel and every person will have a chance to hear. But it is up to the individual as to whether they will believe or obey. Oh, the Word of God will meet every need a person has before God. But one has to be aware of his need. Let us open wide our hearts to the Word of God in the gospel and let it reveal the majesty of God and His holy Son to our hearts forever.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I remember reading where one person poetically stated something to this effect, "God has woven the stars in His tapestry and spread it out like a tent above the inhabitants. The stars are just a few of the jewels on His royal train." Have you ever been out under a starlit night and felt so close to God that it seemed if you could see just a little farther into the heavens you would be able to see God? It is about like the experience that Moses had when he asked to see God. God put him in a rock and covered him with His hand then passed by and let Moses see the back side. Nature is so close to God that it is almost like beholding His backside. The same writer of the above quote also made the allegory that the sun is but a small gem in the crown of God. I am reminded of the story in which a missionary was imparting the gospel to a heathen. The heathen showed the missionary his gods of stone and wood, and then asked the missionary to show him his God. The missionary said he couldn't do that, whereupon the heathen asserted he couldn't worship a god if he couldn't see him. The missionary had a sudden inspiration and took the heathen outside and told him to look at the sun. It was too bright to look

at, and the missionary said, "If you can not look at one of His servants, how do you hope to see Him?"

Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "It takes no brains to be an atheist. Any stupid person can deny the existence of God—a supernatural power, but cannot ignore the marvelous order in which the universe about us moves. The scriptures are true, the heavens are a witness of God that knows no land or language barrier.

—Wayne Murphey

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August 11, 1991

WHOLE-HEARTED LOVE AND DEVOTION TO GOD

Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

4 One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

7 Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

11 Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

13 I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

14 Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

Memory Verse: One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. Ps. 27:4.

Central Thought: There is but one thing that is worthwhile in life and that is to live for the Lord, continually seeking after Him to behold His beauty and to learn of His wonderful ways.

Word Definitions: *"To enquire in his temple":* The Hebrew word for enquire means to inspect; admire; care for; consider. It denotes a deep respect and love for the worship and service of God. *"In his pavilion":* A covert; a place of security and protection. The service of the Lord affords the best protection and shelter a mortal can ever find. *"A plain path":* An even, just, level, and straight way. *"Wait on the Lord":* To expect; tarry patiently and look for.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This psalm is generally attributed to David. Several translations, including the Greek Septuagint, has this title: "A Psalm of David before he was anointed." Adam Clarke states that there is no known authority for this title, and further adds that some commentators believe it is a psalm belonging to the time of the captivity of Judah into Babylon. Whoever wrote this beautiful psalm was certainly anointed and inspired of God. As the Scripture speaks of David being a man after God's own heart, I would say that this psalm surely fits David, and a psalm that would fit one child of God must needs fit every child

of God. It surely does express the love and devotion that we need to have toward God, a love and devotion that He is so worthy of. It is a psalm of deep reverent worship to our loving Creator. It expresses courage, decision, faith, confidence, devotion, earnestness, and steadfast patience. If a person's heart will agree with this psalm he or she will truly be a person after God's own heart. David was a man of war and had many enemies. He fought bravely and valiantly for his God. His warfare is a type of the warfare in which we are engaged as Christian soldiers today. Our warfare is not a carnal warfare, but is a spiritual conflict with the powers of unbelief, darkness, and the forces of sin and evil. We overcome through our faith and pure decision for the Lord Jesus. All that is expressed in this psalm can be the heart-felt experience of every child of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What decision do we need to make above all else in life?
2. How will this enable us to conquer all fear?
3. Could we say that a true Christian has a host of enemies?
4. What was the source of David's confidence in the wars that rose up against him?
5. Is it necessary for a person to make an entire commitment of his life to God and His service?
6. Is it possible for a person's allegiance to be divided between Christ and self?
7. When we give our whole heart to living for Jesus, what can we expect Him to do in the time of trouble?
8. What does the phrase "now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies" mean?
9. Why is it important for our lives to be a plain and even path?
10. What will keep us from fainting in the time of trouble?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

This psalm is a part of the Bible that is especially good and important for young people. We do not know for sure, but it could very well have been written by David when he was a young man. We know he started out living and fighting in the

strength of the Lord when he was a young man. There are many enemies which are going to set themselves against us in the Christian life. I remember that as a young Christian newly starting out for the Lord, Satan threw battle after battle against me. I found that there were many things to meet and overcome. I experienced what was spoken in our lesson today of a host encamping against me. Sometimes it seemed that I was going to go down despite all that I could do. But I always held on to that firm decision I made when I started out. And this psalm was a great help to me. I knew that I had made the decision to go all the way with the Lord. That decision gave me confidence to hold on and to keep my faith in God's goodness to me. I struggled with doubts, fears, and accusations of the Devil. It took me a good while to learn how to cope with these agents of discouragement. But I kept pressing on and the Lord taught me how to fight with faith, trusting in His love. There came a time when God gave me sweeping victory over my foes. Oh, how happy I was and what sacrifices of joy I brought to God, and how I did sing praises to Him! As this psalm says, we must be diligent to seek the Lord's face. We need to seek Him every day. Let us be diligent to let the Lord teach us His way. Let us not faint, but keep believing to see the goodness of the Lord. Let us learn the great and valuable lesson of waiting on the Lord. This psalm is like a recipe to success and happiness in the Christian life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"One thing have I desired of the Lord. . ." What, in point of fact, have we asked of Him? Our life's efforts, or lack of them, provide the answer. The Day of Judgement would be somber enough if it meant the recital, from the entries in the book, of the evidence which our actions provide as to the nature of our heart's deepest longings. Starting from this question, and putting it soberly to ourselves, we can immediately get down to the 'inward parts,' where the realities abide. It is a question that calls for moral candor. It will not do to be content with the replies we give in our sighs; we must face the answers given by our wills and our applied energies. It is startling and painful to have to surmise that our real demand is 'a mess of pottage.'

" 'One thing have I desired of the Lord:' To be numbered

with the God-fearing, to know and to love better whatsoever is lovely and of good report, and to follow on in the effort to know the truth. Apart from these aims life is vanity. Remember the Lord's words about the 'one thing. . . needful' and the 'good part.' " (Luke 10:42). —Taken from writings of J. R. Sclater

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August 18, 1991

**VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE, WORSHIP,
AND PRAISE**

Psalm 28:6 Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7 The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

8 The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

29:1 Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

2 Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

30:4 Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

31:5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

15 My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed be the Lord: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine

eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

23 O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

Memory Verse: For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Ps. 30:5.

Central Thought: We love the Lord for what He is to us, for what He has done for us, for His faithfulness unto us, for His protection, help, care, and the happiness that we experience in partaking of His blessed holiness.

Word Definitions: *Supplications:* Earnest prayer and entreaty. *Worship:* To bow down in reverence, love, respect, and honor. *"My times are in thy hand":* The when, the now, the present moment and the length of my earthly duration—all of this is controlled and governed by the infinite wisdom of the Almighty God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

All four of the psalms from which we have drawn the text for our lesson today are attributed to David, the man whom God testified as being a man after His own heart. David had many wonderful and exciting experiences in his life that no doubt gave occasion for him to write these psalms as a means of expressing his thanks and praise to the Almighty God for His gracious dealings. He was a man who sought God's guidance and counsel, and who was quick to humble himself and confess his sin when God reproved and put judgment on him. Some feel that the 30th Psalm (which title says was a song at the dedication of the house of David) could have been written at the time when David dedicated the threshing floor of Araunah after the grievous plague that fell upon the kingdom when David numbered the people as recorded in II Samuel 24:25. This might be so, but no one knows for sure just what

the real background of these writings was. But we are so glad that we have them recorded and preserved for our comfort and edification today. And it is good for us to also be expressive in the experiences that God allows to come our way, experiences that will teach us more of the fear and goodness of the Lord. All of the texts in our lesson are so good, but there are various of the expressions contained therein that stand out. "My heart trusted in him, and I am helped." "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." This was the utterance of our Saviour in His dying hour. Luke 23:46. "My times are in thy hand." His goodness which He has laid up for those who trust in Him before the sons of men, namely, being hid in His presence from the pride of man and from the strife of tongues, is a valuable treasure to those who love the Lord with all their heart. We should always remember and take heed to the exhortation to "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart." When we survey the goodness which is enjoyed by the children of God, we are made to praise and glorify our gracious God with hearts overflowing with love and worship to Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the things mentioned in our lesson text that we should do concerning the Lord?
2. What are the things mentioned that the Lord does with regard to us?
3. What kind of relationship do these things help to build between us and God?
4. Will the Lord perform His part if we neglect and refuse to do our part?
5. What does it mean to give unto the Lord glory and strength?
6. Why should we be thankful for the Lord's holiness?
7. What course or attitude should we take if for some reason we incur the Lord's anger?
8. How should we feel about life, death, our mortal life and days, and what is going to happen to us?

9. Does the Lord want our ways and method of trusting in God to appear before men?

10. What will the Lord do for us in times of persecution and trouble?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There will be times in one's life when difficulties and storms of adversity will come, thus giving occasion for special supplications and prayer to God. Everyone experiences these days of darkness and trouble. It is part of earthly life. But it is in these kinds of times when the Lord Jehovah shows Himself to be strong and gracious to us. Who can experience the strength of the Lord but those who feel keenly their mortal weakness? The Lord seems to take pleasure in helping the weak. One man told me that the Bible says the Lord helps them who help themselves. I never found a Scripture in the Bible that says that nor even hints it. But I see numbers of places where God helps those who cannot help themselves. Our human strength is weakness. We need a power beyond ourselves if we are to succeed in life and be what we should be. That is why we should be men and women of prayer and faith. Such trust in God stands out before people. It is a wonderful thing to trust in the Lord "before the sons of men." The Lord has a special place of protection and care for us if our trust in Him causes conflicts and problems with others. The pride of man and the strife of tongues is rampant around us today. But are we any better than those of old who were thrown to the lions and burned at the stake because of their faith? Let us be strong and be in that strong and fortified city mentioned in our lesson. The Lord will not forsake those who endure the great straits of holy living for His sake.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Into thine hand I commit my spirit. . ." is the reposeful attitude of David for deliverance from death. The Psalm this is written in does not give us a specific insight into the reason for this prayer, other than that a trap had been set for him, but it would be no small thing to utter such words of weight. In considering these words we cannot help but think of how

Christ expanded on them and added a whole new aspect to them. He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. . ." for deliverance **in** death, not **from** death as the Psalmist used them. His mental, physical and spiritual battles were over and we find Him in calm submission to God. An outstanding significance to Christ's statement is that He added the word "Father," knowing of a certainty where His soul was going. This is the greatest testimony a person can give, and history tells us that such men as Polycarp, Jerome of Prague, and others uttered these very same words in death.

Probably the hardest part in committing our spirit to God while we live is in keeping it committed. We may feel delighted to do so while trouble lurks at our door, but it is a different matter when our sky is bright. The soul that is in God's hands will "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. . ." in all seasons of life.

—Wayne Murphey

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August 25, 1991

MAGNIFYING GOD'S GOODNESS

Psalm 34:1 I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

3 O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all of his troubles.

7 The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

8 O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

9 O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.

10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

12 What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?

13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

16 The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

22 The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

Memory Verse: For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. 1 Pet. 3:12.

Central Thought: It is far better to serve God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin.

Word Definitions: *"Boast in the Lord"*: To shine or make clear; demonstrate; celebrate; make fully known. *"Magnify the Lord"*: Honor; lift up; enlarge upon the goodness of God. *"Fear the Lord"*: Respect; reverence; regard with holy awe and carefulness. *Contrite*: Broken in spirit with grief and repenting for sin.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The title on the 34th psalm says: A Psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. This account is found in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. The name used there was Achish, the Philistine king of Gath. David had gone to Achish to escape from the Israelite king, Saul, who sought to kill him. When the servants of King Achish saw David, they recognized him as one being much set by in Israel, being praised more than Saul. At that, great fear fell on David, and he pretended that he was mad before them. He scrabbled (marked and scribbled) upon the doors, and let his spittle run down upon his beard! Poor David! He was in despair. He was being hunted like a partridge. He had lied to Abimelech, the high priest at Nob just previous to this, saying that he was on business for the king. But God's mercy prevailed against His judgment in David's behalf. He did not forsake him. It was an unwise thing to go to the Philistines for

asylum. When David acted like he did before Achish he was driven out. David felt relieved to get away from there. After that he took refuge in a cave. God was merciful to David. Although in our sight we might judge and condemn David for his actions, yet God graciously forgave him. David was broken down and contrite before the Lord, and was sorry for what he had done. This psalm that he supposedly wrote at this time magnifies the goodness of God. God is still good to the souls of men. He will make a way for us. We do not need to resort to dishonesty and deceit. God has a better way. Verses 12-16 of our lesson are quoted in I Peter 3:10-12. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How does praising and blessing God help to lift us out of trouble?
2. What kind of people are glad to hear about what the Lord has done?
3. Does the Lord save us because we deserve to be saved?
4. Do we have to try the Lord before we can know He is good?
5. How can we taste or perceive that God is really good?
6. What are some of the reasons why it is profitable and good to fear God?
7. If we love life and want to see good days, what are the things we should do?
8. What is God's attitude toward the righteous?
9. What are the wicked in danger of?
10. What kind of person is the Lord nigh to?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When I look back over my life and think in fond memory of all the **many** wonderful blessings I have experienced from living a Christian life and in His service, I can feel and express just what David speaks about in this psalm. He has been so real and so gracious. Many fears, many troubles, many needs we have had in life. But as we called on the Lord for help and deliverance He heard and answered every need. We looked away from people and the vain things of earth and were lightened and lifted up. Bro. Ostis Wilson tells about a time when he lived in Anthony, KS. He came home from work one

evening and found his wife all bent over in pain, suffering from severe stomach trouble. It touched him deeply in his heart. He went over to her and laid his hand on her and prayed for her. She did not get any better. He prayed again, and she still did not get any better. He was about sick himself, so he went into another room and threw himself down on a couch. His wife's trouble really got to be a burden to him. It hurt him deeply in his heart. His wife was in there sick and he could not get any help for her. Suddenly as he lay there with such sorrow and pain in his heart, these words came to him with much comfort and inspiration: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all of his troubles." It stirred him to the very depths of his soul. He got up from that couch and walked into the other room where his wife was and offered the prayer of a poor man, quoting the Scripture that the Lord had given him. God instantly answered prayer, and his wife straightened up and went on into the kitchen and started preparing supper. Oh, how good the Lord is to us! Let us be encouraged to serve Him all the days of our life. Our life will be filled with wonderful blessings.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Today's Psalm is full of praise, thanksgiving and recommendation of the Lord. All of it was so deeply felt that there seems to be no crescendo to the Psalm. One man once said, "I pray on the principle that the wine knocks the cork out of a bottle. There is an inward fermentation, and there must be a vent." There is a blessing to be learned in expressing a grateful heart to God. It could be as one person expressed, "Were there no God, we would be in this glorious world with grateful hearts, and no one to thank."

"The poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." The Christian life will hastily burst the misconception that this means once you are saved God delivers you out of all your troubles and you no longer have any. In fact the Psalmist went on to say, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." When you start listing on one hand the number of problems an unsaved person has, and on the other hand the

number a saved person has, you will be hard pressed to number one over the other. But the desired preference heavily swings to the side of the righteous when you take into account the Lord delivers that person out of his troubles. Time may, to a certain extent, alleviate particular problems the wicked experience, but time is not on the side of the wicked, for inherent sin is a downward road and time will reveal its possessor in an eternally lost condition. Time is on the side of the righteous. During a trial, time will simply mark the drawing near of victory, and ultimately reveal eternal life with the Lord. The righteous do have much to be thankful for and cause to praise God.

—Wayne Murphey

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September 1, 1991

**THE PROMISE OF PEACE AND SAFETY
FOR THE GODLY**

Psalm 37:1 Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.

27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore.

37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

Memory Verse: A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. Ps. 37:16.

Central Thought: Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him. (Eccles. 8:12).

Word Definitions: *Fret:* To be heated up with anger, displeasure, or grief. *"Inherit the earth":* The word "earth" here is more appropriately termed "land." To inherit the land of Caanan was the promise God gave to Abraham and his posterity. It is spiritually fulfilled in a soul possessing the Holy Spirit-filled and sanctified experience in Christ, but it also points to inheriting the world to come and eternal life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This psalm is attributed to David, but, as it is with the main essence of God's Word, it can be applied to numerous other situations which God's people in history have found themselves. This psalm could be the language of the people of Judah in the time of Babylonian captivity when they were longing for their return to Zion. It is the expression of the Spirit of the Lord telling the soul to be patient and endure the present sufferings and abuse of the wicked, in hope of a better day to come. And it surely fits the present time for the saints of God. The wicked in the world about us are prospering, and things are just going along as if they will never stop. The children of

God are faced with peculiar trials and discouragements which tend to weary us and damper our faith. Let us open our hearts to the message of this psalm. Every child of God will come to a place in life of utter trial to faith and patience. Many times the wicked seem to be prevailing and the righteous losing. But that is just on the visible side. God is looking at the spiritual side. That is where He does His calculating. The powers of sin and darkness may seem to be prospering, but there is coming a day that will spell their eternal doom. It is for us to be patient, hold fast to our faith and love for the Lord, and remember that soon the wicked shall not be. In the meantime let us be diligent to let God lead every step of our lives, and delight ourselves in Him. Someday there will be a change made. And it will mean more than all else if we can be found on the right hand of the Lord in that last great day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why should we not be bothered about the prosperity of the wicked?
2. List the things we should do to insure our receiving the blessings of God.
3. Is it easy for us to trust, to commit, and to rest in the Lord?
4. What state of mind will we be in if we allow ourselves to fret about what others are doing?
5. What are some of the steps in life we really need God's guidance in?
6. What will be our condition of life if we faithfully let God have His way?
7. What is a good short recipe for obtaining eternal life as expressed in our lesson?
8. Why is the little that a righteous man has better than the riches of many wicked?
9. What kind of person should we mark and follow?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Our lesson today brings a great promise to us who love the Lord and are determined to let His will be done. No matter what people around us are doing, and regardless of how wicked and evil their lives are, it can still be well with us if we will sincerely

follow the Lord for ourselves. The way people are doing and the attitudes they take may grieve and prey on our minds to a certain extent, but we need not let it hinder our faithfulness to God. We hope in people and yearn for their happiness and welfare, and when they take a course in life that we know will bring them frustration and sorrow we are deeply concerned. But we must be careful that we do not carry our concern too far. Living for God must come from a personal conviction in the individual heart. This takes the Spirit of God working and dealing with the soul. Our being troubled about the way people are doing can enter the chambers of our own heart and destroy our peace. Samuel mourned and wept for Saul all night after the Lord spoke to him that He was sorry that he had made Saul king. (I Sam. 15:11). But later God spoke to Samuel and said, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?" (I Sam. 16:1). Samuel came no more to see Saul. He had to commit him to God. God, many times, bears and bears with the ungodly and allows them to have their own good time. But we know, according to our lesson, that there will come an end to His forbearing. It is for us to draw near to God and diligently seek to do His will always. He will make a way for us. And those who refuse to follow the Lord will reap the harvest of their deeds. We can be sure of that. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity." Have you ever considered the unrealities of evil doers? I have not personally seen the effects of nitrous oxide (laughing gas) on a person, but I have been told of them. It excites merriment in the mind to the point of giddiness. The person to whom it is given may laugh long and loud, but in reality he is no happier or better off, just insensitive to impending danger. We should not covet the laughter of the ungodly or the mirth of the wicked; the sin that causes it is only as a vapor. In this same vein of thought, Solomon said in Eccles. 2:2, "I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?" In this terminology, the Psalmist David posed the question, why should we fret or envy someone because they have taken laughing gas? These people will soon

be gone and the fires of hell will quickly vaporize the mirth of sin and drop them into excruciating reality.

How different it is for the Godly. "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." There are certain things that young people dream of as the good life. This invariably includes a scene of peaceful domesticated life. It involves a wife, or husband, and family, a nice home, car and good job. And this is often what God has mapped out for those who serve Him, and it is attainable if all involved will direct their steps in His way. He can give us a good family, enough money to enjoy life, a place to reside, and mingled through it all the "peace that passeth understanding."

—Wayne Murphey

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September 8, 1991

THE MEASURE OF OUR DAYS AND HOW FRAIL WE ARE

Psalm 39:1 I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,

4 Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

5 Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

6 Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

7 And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.

10 Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah.

12 Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

13 O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

Memory Verse: For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. I Chron. 29:15.

Central Thought: We need to awaken to the fact and keep aware of it, that our days on earth are uncertain and are, at the longest, of very short duration. Therefore it is wise for us to seek God's will to be done during this short earthly journey in preparation for that world to come.

Word Definitions: *"While I was musing":* While I was pondering in my silence. *Handbreadth:* How wide the palm of the hand is in comparison to space. *Disquieted:* In great commotion; tumult; clamor. *Vanity:* Emptiness; transitory; temporary; of no lasting value. *Stroke:* Something God had inflicted upon him. *Sojourner:* One who dwells in a place temporarily; being from a foreign country; just passing through; a pilgrim. *"There is none abiding":* There is no one here permanently; we will all have to take our leave shortly.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The title of this psalm reads: To the chief musician, even to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David. This Jeduthun, mentioned in I Chronicles 16:41 was one of the leaders of music in the temple. It may have been written during the time of sorrow and trouble after David's sin with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, although this is not for sure. At any rate, this psalm is a reminder to us humans that we are vanity, and that we are but strangers and sojourners in this life. The psalm starts out with the writer keeping his mouth, being in silence, and holding his

peace, even from good. It is a wise thing to be still, and wait on God to direct one's words. Many talk too much for their own good. In his sorrow and humiliation, the writer's heart was hot and the fire was burning and stirring his soul. When he did speak, it was much different than what he might have spoken had he not been silent and waited on God. It becomes a prayer entreating God to help him to more keenly sense the vanity of his life and nearness of the impending hand of death, which soon would whisk him out into eternity. Oh, we have seen this psalm fulfilled in many people. We have known some who prospered in financial and temporal things while their soul was dwindling away. But God struck them with affliction and trouble. Their flesh and natural health began to consume away and finally death came and carried them into the great beyond. In their affliction and trouble they sought God and got close to Him. The stroke and the blow from God's hand was a stroke of mercy to them. God works this way with many people. He can cause their beauty to swiftly fade. May it be our prayer that we will gain the strength of salvation and grace to live for God before we go from this life out into that great eternal abode.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it so important to bridle and to control our tongue?
2. Why do we need to know how frail we are?
3. If we could always be aware of how frail we are, how would this affect our daily conversation?
4. If a person would become deeply concerned about the brevity of life and the approach of eternity, what would it stir him to do?
5. What is man at his best state?
6. What are our mortal days compared to in size?
7. Can God strike people with affliction for the sake of awakening their soul?
8. What does God do when He rebukes man for his iniquity?
9. What should be the prayer of every mortal before God?
10. Has God provided a way that we can be ready to die and go to the judgment?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

So many people in our society go from day to day with very little consciousness of their frailty and vanity. They live their life in vain pursuits of pleasure, honor, financial wealth, and carnal security. They don't seem to realize that in their mortal body lurks the seed of their own corruption. They are busy, busy, busy, taken up with cares and demands of the carnal side of life. Young people when they are strong and active think very little about how truly frail they are. But, oh, when affliction or sickness, or some dread disease like cancer surfaces, it makes things show in a different light. I remember when I was a young married man with a lovely wife and two little boys. Oh, I felt so blessed and strong! My situation was so ideal and enjoyable. But, oh, the hand of death visited our little home circle. God took our oldest child at the age of 2 1/2 years. That was the hardest thing I ever went through in my life, but it was the greatest lesson that I had learned. Life took on a different look to me after that. I was made aware of how easily we can be taken from this life. God does that for us human beings in mercy to keep us aware of the frailty of this earthly existence. It helps to remind us that we are but pilgrims and strangers in this world. No more do we reach for the vanities of this world. "The fashion of this world passeth away." We can use the things of earth, but we are always aware of their vanity. Before we take our journey out into the great beyond, it is a wise thing for us to consider where we are going to be in eternity. Oh, we want to recover strength, that is, we want to lay hold of the strength of the Lord so that we can overcome sin and Satan and be triumphant in the living Saviour!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Psalmist David realized his life was so short that there were several things he needed to heed. It would serve us well to do the same, since our days on earth are also but a shadow.

First the Psalmist said he would take heed to his ways. We should make it a practice to often scrutinize our motives, manners and habits. We should not think they are right just because they are our ways, but because they are in accord with the word of God and the life of Christ.

Next, he realized the importance of taking heed to his tongue. The eyes of the world often judge God by the ways and conversation of the Christian. This makes the muzzle of great importance when we are tempted to say things that would bring a reproach to our salvation. ". . . If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man. . . ." James 3:2.

However, we should also be sure that we speak when it is profitable to do so. And we will do this as long as the spirit of God is burning hot within us. We should take heed lest our heart becomes lukewarm and in the end we are spewed out of God's mouth. (Rev. 3:16).

"Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am." We cannot expect God to show us how we will die, or at what age, but by observing how people die, and at what varying ages, and applying these experiences and statistics to ourselves, we can realize exactly how frail we are. —Wayne Murphey

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September 15, 1991

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR GOD'S PRESENCE

Psalm 42:1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

4 When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

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

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8 Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the

daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

43:1 Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

2 Forthou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

3 O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Memory Verse: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Matt. 5:6.

Central Thought: God means nothing to the soul who does not hunger and thirst for Him. We should keep a keen appetite and desire for the spiritual blessings of the Lord. We should pray for them, seek earnestly for them, and enjoy and rejoice in them when they come.

Word Definitions: *Hart:* A stag or male deer. *"My tears, my meat":* I esteem my longing for God more necessary than literal food. *Holyday:* The special feasts the Lord instituted to remind the children of Israel of His blessings. *"The help of his countenance":* The comfort of God's presence and favor. *Hermonites:* The mountains of Hermon in the northern parts of the land of Israel. *"The hill Mizar":* A peak of Lebanon, another mountain range to the north. No matter how far away one might be from the service of God, his heart is yearning to be there. *"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts":* The writer illustrating his trials and sorrows as deep waters and the flowing of powerful streams that are beyond his control and power. *"All thy waves and billows are gone over me":* An

expression of being completely submerged and overwhelmed by the troubles of life wherein the only help and deliverance is God. Jonah made a like statement concerning his experience in the whale's belly. (Jon. 2:3). *"The health of my countenance"*: Fellowship and favor with God makes one's face shine with joy and gladness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Whether this psalm was composed by David or by someone during the captivity in Babylon, it is a song of yearning for the courts of the Lord, and the blessings of God's service. In the title is found the word "Maschil" which means to make wise, to direct wisely, or to give instruction. It is a healthy condition of the soul to have a good appetite for the Lord and His rich spiritual blessings. Sometimes the Lord allows the soul to pass through a dry period when God seems far off and special trials of adversity come. There are times when deep and hard trials are encountered, but it is only to test the faith and cause it to be stronger and more sure. Perhaps peculiar circumstances develop causing one to be separated from the fellowship of other Christians for a time. Or perhaps persecution and hardship come because of our faith. It is a time for us to hold fast to our faith regardless of the adverse conditions, and diligently seek God as never before for His Providence and blessing. Keep thirsting, keep seeking, and keep desiring. God will not fail to satisfy your soul.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is there about the soul of man that causes it to hunger for God?
2. Is there a joy and delight in being in the presence of the Lord?
3. Is there any danger of not hungering for God?
4. What are some of the reasons why some people do not hunger for the Lord?
5. What are we to do if we feel cast down and troubled?
6. What does the Lord command in the daytime?
7. What does the Lord say will be with us in the night?
8. What will lead us and bring us to God's holy hill?

9. Why do we need to go to the altar of God, and how should we go?
10. Does a man's countenance reflect what is in his heart?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When a person gets a taste of the spiritual blessings and the happiness that is found in the service of the Lord, it creates an appetite in his soul for a continuation of the same. There is a rich experience in the fellowship of the Spirit with God and His people that cannot be found in any other relationship on earth. Thus the soul finds pleasure in the Lord, and thus a thirsting is acquired to drink of the river of God's pleasures again and again. And as we grow up in Him and deepen down in His love we find the blessings richer and richer. Oh, how blessed is the person who finds the joy of God and is happy in living for Him. Living out His love and beauty will cause others to have a longing for the same. We should live with the joy of the Lord shining in our lives. There is a story of a young boy who was trying to sell some apples on the train. The run would soon be over and he wanted desperately to get them off of his hands. No one seemed to be interested in an apple right then. So he got an idea. He gave a fellow an apple and told him to go and sit down in the coach among the others and eat that apple like he was enjoying it. So the man went in and sat down among the passengers and started eating the apple. He bit, he crunched, he chewed. In a little while the apple peddler came through the coach and easily sold every apple he had. The sight of the man eating and enjoying the apple caused the others to have a desire for one. Oh, may we hunger and thirst for the Lord's blessings and richly enjoy them when we receive them! It will help to promote the Kingdom of God more than any other thing.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"My soul thirsteth for God. . ." At first glance it may seem rather strange that there would be dissatisfaction in the Christian's life. We know that peace is promised to the Christian and that peace is calm repose and satisfied restfulness. But when we think a little more deeply we understand

that hunger and thirst are signs of health. Many sick die amid plenty because they have no appetite. The same is true of spiritual life. If we become satisfied with our consecration, love and obedience to God, a death will follow. For what restlessness there may be in hungering, there is great joy in eating. So we should view this Christian restlessness as an opportunity to much gratification.

The book, "Handfuls on Purpose" by James Smith, gives an interesting view to the phrase "Deep calleth unto deep." "The deep of man's need calleth unto the deep of God's fulness; and the deep of God's fulness calleth unto the deep of man's need. Between our emptiness and His all-sufficiency there is a great gulf, but, thank God, it is not yet fixed. Deep calleth unto deep. The deep mercy of God needs our emptiness, into which it might pour itself. Man needs God, God needs man. Nothing can fully meet the depth of our need but the depth of His Almighty fulness. Out of His depths hath He cried unto me: Out of my depths have I cried unto Him. (Ps. 130:1). This is the mind and work of the Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth the deep things of God. Then, my soul, 'Launch out into the deep,' and 'dwell deep.' "

—Wayne Murphey

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September 22, 1991

"BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD"

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

7 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

11 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Memory Verse: Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord. (Ps. 4:4-5).

Central Thought: No matter what man may do in his raging folly, God will shield His people. All human strife and devices must be silenced before God can be revealed to the heart of man.

Word Definitions: *"A very present help":* Very much a help, Hebrew. *"And that right early":* At the dawn of the morning. *"The Lord of hosts":* This name is given to Jehovah many times in the Scriptures. It means the Lord of masses, that is people, armies, and throngs going forth to the battle in victory. No matter what numbers seek to prevail over His cause and His people, the Lord is superior in strength and will prevail. *Desolations:* Ruins and the destruction of human endeavor. He brings an end to strife and wars, and works His work in peace. *"Be still, and know":* Still the restless turmoil of your heart, all the worry, fret, strife, and fear. Become silent in faith, trust, and submission. Then, and only then, can you know the reality of God's presence.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The title of this psalm says: To the chief musician for the sons of Korah, a song upon Alamoth. The sons of Korah were probably a group of musicians and singers who, in the return from Babylonian captivity, were leaders in worshipping the Lord in song. The word Alamoth refers to singing maidens.

This is a wonderful psalm sung by the Israelites to celebrate the favor of God to them, but it is also ours today in Christ, the Saviour who has wrought such great victory for us. The same God who was Israel's God is our God today, but even in a greater way because of the gracious gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. The removal of the earth, the carrying away of the mountains into the sea, and the roaring of the waters with the shaking of the mountains can be applied to the upheavals of humanity and its uncertain status in this world. Mankind is always shifting and changing from one thing to another. There is nothing really stable about humanity. There are booms and depressions. There are projects and failures, triumphs and defeats. But we who have learned to trust in God are not moved by any of these changes. Our faith is anchored in His unchanging promises. In the midst of all of these disturbing scenes of turmoil and change, we who love God are comforted, nourished, and sustained by the river that flows from heaven down into our souls. The river of peace, the river of pleasure, and the river of life constantly and unceasingly flows. The city of God here mentioned is His Church, His people saved and washed in the precious blood of His Son. We are made to see the vanity of the works of man, the devices that his restless spirit has produced. We see their desolation and uselessness. All of the airplanes, tanks, guns, ships, rockets, space capsules, and other weapons of war may still be used, but in the hearts of God's people they are of no value. They are just desolate vanities. We have found that by having a meek and quiet spirit we have gained access to the help of God. This is all we want and need.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Name the various ways that we need a refuge in life.**
- 2. Is man and his inventions and accomplishments a safe refuge?**
- 3. Do people trust in these things?**
- 4. Is there any government of man that is entirely safe?**
- 5. What is the source of our happiness?**
- 6. What can God do that will show the vanity of the rage of the heathen and the moving of the kingdoms?**

7. If by uttering His voice God will melt the earth, what will happen to the heathen and their kingdoms?
8. Why does God make desolations and wars to cease?
9. What must we do if we would know God?
10. If God be for us, who can be against us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

One of the greatest benefits of being a child of God is to have Him as our refuge and to experience His ever present help. Oh, how many times God has sent us His gracious help in the time of trouble and need! Experiencing His help has brought a calmness and quietness to our innermost being. It is like a river that is flowing over our souls. It brings gladness and joy to our lives. We are held by the arms of the Almighty God. We have learned to trust in Him for all things. We do not worry any more. We triumph over mental stress and pressure because of the peace of God that rules in our hearts. God helps and answers prayer right on time. He is never too late. But we live in a world that is full of restless commotion and raging waves of strife and turmoil. Once we, too, were caught up in its whirlwind of lust, greed, contention, and evil. As the old saying is, it is "dog eats dog" out there in the "rat race" of the world. Hatred, malice, jealousy, and covetousness are rampant in our times. Before we could experience the help of the Lord, we had to cease from all of this strife and quiet our souls in faith and trust. I remember hearing Bro. Stephenson years ago telling about a time when he was sick in bed and suffering such pain that he could not lie still. He was turning and twisting in mortal agony. Suddenly it came to his mind, "Be still, and know that I am God!" He knew that God had spoken to his heart. He made a special effort to be still, and in a moment every pain left him. Let us remember this in the midst of the duties and labors of life. Let us keep serene and full of faith. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Being still before God does not mean inactivity or uselessness. We are being spun through space while we rest on the

earth. While we rest in an airplane we are rapidly carried through the skies; so while we rest in Christ we grow in grace, and are being filled with His fullness. When we are still, God speaks and things happen and we progress. "Come unto me. . . and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. . ." Matt. 11:28, 29. It is in this stillness of soul that we learn to know God.

Of course the key to this rest is resting in God. Psychology has much to say about the relationship between relaxation and sanity. When the din of living overtaxes the spirit, the mind becomes endangered. Therefore the therapy that is advised is to lay down on a couch and let someone guide you into a restful frame of mind. The rest you derive will be to the same degree that the practitioner is able to convince you that circumstances will work out. Many times he is unable to take an active part in working them out, and therefore finds himself greatly limited in how he can help you. Herein is the difference in the rest God gives. As we get quiet before Him, He has promised to show us what He will do. When Moses told the Israelites to stand still, God showed them He could part the Red Sea. The Psalmist said, "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire." Great hope and confidence is engendered by resting in God.

—Wayne Murphey



September 29, 1991

THE BEAUTY AND HOLINESS OF MOUNT ZION

Psalm 48:1 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

4 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

5 They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.

6 Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.

7 Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.
8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

9 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

10 According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.

11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.

13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

14 For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.

Memory Verse: Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven. (Heb. 12:22-23).

Central Thought: We enter Zion by being born of the Spirit of God, and we rejoice in the blessings of God that we experience in this beautiful city of the Lord.

Word Definitions: *"Beautiful for situation":* The Hebrew text says, "Beautiful on high," which indicates that it was elevated higher than the surrounding area. The Septuagint says, "Well planted on the mountains of Zion." *Zion:* The word is the translation from the Hebrew word "Tsiyon," which means clear; bright; conspicuous. Zion was one of the hills in the city of Jerusalem that David captured from the Jebusites. It was a stronghold, or a fort, and David called it the city of David, evidently making it his home. The name Zion became closely associated with the blessings and presence of God on account of David's closeness with God. It becomes in Holy Scriptures synonymous with the city of God, the Church. *The ships of Tarshish:* Adam Clarke quotes from Calmet (another

commentator) that these ships were the fleet of an army which came to destroy the land of Judea. The Lord sent a storm and wrecked the fleet on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. *"Tell the towers":* Count the towers.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This psalm is believed to have been written after the return of the Israelites from the captivity of Babylon, and perhaps sung at the dedication of the second temple. But to us it is a beautiful psalm of praise to God for the wonderful city that we inhabit as the children of God today spiritually. As our memory verse reveals, Mount Zion is the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, His Church. It is the joy of every soul who is truly born again. What was said of the former Zion is true of the new Jerusalem in a spiritual sense. As you study this psalm, seek to look for the spiritual values contained therein. Think of His lovingkindness within His glorious temple, which is our heart, the habitation of God through the Spirit. "Walk about Mount Zion, the mountain of his holiness." "Mark well her bulwarks [walls], consider her palaces [elevated castles or citadels, which refer to established principles of truth and holiness]; so that ye may tell it to the generation following." We need to get a full and clear vision of the truth in Christ so we can exemplify it to others. For the God who lives in Zion is our God forever, and will be our guide even unto death.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Do people usually praise the worth and merit of their city?
2. What is the real city of a child of God?
3. How can this city be even more real than the literal city where we live?
4. What is in the city of Zion that makes it so wonderful?
5. In your own words, tell what Zion is today.
6. Why is it not hard to keep our minds on the Lord while living in this beautiful city?
7. Could there be things about Zion that we have not learned of yet?

8. How would you explore and walk about Zion?
9. How can we know that Zion refers to the Church of God?
10. What is the main benefit we receive by living in Zion?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are many beautiful and famous cities of the world. Many famous men and women have lived in these cities and made them famous like themselves. But in every city of the world there is a blight. There is trash, filth, pollution, and, worst of all, there is evil and sin abounding. But there is a city that God built and planned that far surpasses any city of this world. Now we all should realize that what makes a city is not its streets, walls, domes, spires, buildings, etc. It is the people who make up the city—the people in their productivity and labor and service. Cities are the fruit of economy and the industry of man. William Jennings Bryan said in his famous Cross of Gold Speech: "Tear down our cities, and leave our farms, and the cities will spring up again as if by magic. But destroy our farms, and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country." The City of God is from the economy of the people of God and their service in the blessings of heaven. God sent it down from heaven, and we are the inhabitants of His city. It is our being faithful as good stewards that the City of God will be what God wants it to be. The Church of God is a body, an organization of men and women who are led by the Spirit of God in their lives. This makes them distinctly different from the world. The holiness of their Saviour lifts them to a higher plane of life than those about them. This psalm illustrates the beauty of Zion. Let us follow the Lord in all things so that this city set on a hill can shine out and be a praise in the earth.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In considering the value of a piece of property there are many aspects of it to examine. One prime consideration is that the land is not in a low-lying area that would flood during much rain. This is never a worry concerning the Church of God, for she is located on top of a mountain where sin can never overflow her. Access to water and other needed utilities

is of great importance. There is a river of peace that flows right through the city of God and is easily accessible to all of its inhabitants. If the piece of property does not have a clear title then much caution should be exercised in the purchasing of it. Mount Zion has been fully purchased by Christ's blood, and no man can gainsay our occupancy when Christ opens the door to us. There are times that city and county ordinances greatly restrict what can be done with property within its boundaries. There is liberty in Christ and His commandments are not grievous. Bad neighbors can make any property undesirable. The Church of God is entirely made up of the redeemed of God who are endeavoring to live the very same quality of life which you are. Many neighborhoods have been known to become run down because of a high crime rate. This is of no concern in God's Church, for there is a defense of bulwarks erected around it. Jesus said that the very gates of hell could not even prevail against it. (Matt. 16:18). After looking at her towers and strolling through her palaces, you too will have to acknowledge that it is beautiful for situation.

—Wayne Murphey

Kingdom of God

The following scriptures should help in understanding that the Kingdom of God has already been established and set up as an active force in the world today and that we do not have to wait until a future time for Christ to reign. He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

"And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee: But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore," Chron. 17:11-14.

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever," Dan. 2:44.

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," (Matt. 16:28).

"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power," Mark 9:1.

From these scriptures we can see that Christ is reigning on his throne over the kingdom now and forever. We are also told when the kingdom of God began.

"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Luke 16:16.

Jesus sovery plainly taught that the kingdom of God was very near, knowing that soon he was to be crucified and to ascend to his heavenly Father thus fully establishing the kingdom of God with the power of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.

"And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel," Mark 1:15.

"And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matt. 3:2.

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand,," Matt. 10:7.

"And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you," Luke 10:9.

"Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on

us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you," Luke 10:11.

"But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." Luke 11:20.

"And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you," Matt. 12:27, 28.

"Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God," Mark 14:25.

As we can see Christ knew his kingdom was soon to be fully established. The scriptures go on to say that even Joseph of Arimathaea was awaiting the kingdom of God.

"Joseph of Arimathaea, and honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus." Mark 15:43.

"(The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God." Luke 23:51.

It is quite conceivable that Joseph did not really understand at that time just when the kingdom would be established because when the Pharisees demanded of Jesus when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20, 21.

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood

cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." I Cor. 15:50.

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." John 18:36.

If the kingdom of God is not of this world, what is it? "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." I Cor. 4:20.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. 14:17.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. . . ." Acts 1:8.

Since the kingdom of God is not of this world, in order to enter in we have to be born again and enter in spiritually and as humble as a little child.

"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." Luke 18:16,17.

"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." II Peter 1:11.

The scriptures tell us we can be translated into His kingdom now thereby beginning our reign with Him in this life because He destroyed the power of Satan enabling us to overcome him also.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Col. 1:12,13.

"I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." I John 2:14.

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:17.

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. 1:5, 6.

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:5, 6.

We can sit in heavenly places now and reign with Him now because heaven was opened through the sacrifice of Christ as our mediator.

"And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts 7-56.

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." I Tim. 2:5.

"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that

which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1:19-23.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. 2:14.

From these scriptures we see that if we are born again and living for God, we have been delivered from the power of darkness and the power of death (the devil) through the death of Christ and have been translated into his kingdom where Christ is reigning now and forever. We do not have wait for a future time to begin our reign. We can begin that reign with Christ now!

—Joyce Hall

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