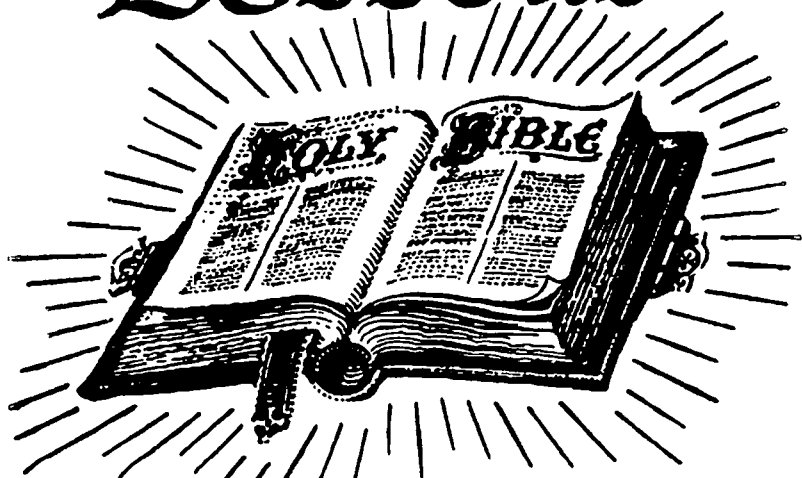


Bible Lessons



**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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Volume 24

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No. 1

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Theme for First Quarter, 1992

Our studies for this quarter will be a continuation of lessons from the Book of Psalms. We will start with Psalm 75 and will study various chapters up through Psalm 139. As I have viewed these psalms under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and prayer, my soul has been overwhelmed at their beauty and great worth. Every living soul needs the truth that is contained in these psalms to be a living reality in their life. May you study these lessons with a prayerful and open heart and mind. Ask God through His Spirit to emblazon its truth upon the tables of your heart. And seek Him for grace to live up to their glorious standard. This is our earnest prayer to God for you.

With Christian love,

—Brother Leslie C. Busbee



JANUARY 5, 1992

THE HORN OF THE RIGHTEOUS, THE HORN OF THE WICKED

Psalm 75:1 Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.

2 When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.

3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:

5 Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.

6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

8 For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the

same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

9 But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

Jeremiah 9:23 Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

I Corinthians 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

MEMORY VERSE: The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Ps. 103:19.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is proven to be folly and vanity for a person to seek to succeed or to promote himself as so many are doing today. It is proven to be the wisest and best thing to draw close to God and humble one's self before Him, and let God give us the success and promotion that He sees best to give.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 1, "For that thy name is near thy wonderful works declare": The Hebrew text says, "For thy name is near, thy wonderful works have been told." The Septuagint Greek says, "We will call upon thy name and declare all thy

wonderful works."

Verse 2, "When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly": The Hebrew and the Septuagint Greek both render this saying thus, "When I shall take the set time, I will judge in uprightness." God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness. (Acts 17:31).

Verse 3, The Hebrew reads: "The earth and all of its inhabitants are melting away; I set firm its pillars." God is maintaining the earth and keeping it going while people are coming and going from this life.

Verse 5, "Lift not up the horn": The term *horn* here refers to any projection of man's power, wisdom, ability, beauty, skill, or influence that sets him above his fellow-man. The wise counsel from God here is, "Do not lift up your horn." Do not promote or put yourself forward. Do not exalt yourself. Learn meekness and humility and the valuable lesson of waiting on God.

Verse 6, The word *promotion* here means to be lifted or raised up on high. He says that promotion comes not from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. The east could refer to man's abilities and achievements. The south could refer to the ease and pleasure of sunny days. The west could mean the reaching forth of man's desire for conquest and riches. From none of these directions comes true promotion.

Verse 7, The Lord is the One who promotes and puts down.

Verse 8, The cup that he speaks of here is the cup of suffering and adversity that God gives to every soul who would find true success and promotion. The cold bitter north winds of sorrow and hard trials are what God uses to bring prosperity and success to His children.

Verse 10, Any one who lifts himself up will be brought low, and he that will humble himself to take the Saviour's cross of humiliation and suffering will find true and triumphant promotion.

Glory: To be bright and clear; to shine; to celebrate. This is the lifting up of the horn, the promotion and success that one can find only in Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The title to this psalm reads: To the chief Musician, Altaschith, A Psalm or Song of Asaph. We have already learned that Asaph was one of the singers in the temple in the time of David, a man upon whom the inspiration of the Holy Spirit rested. There are twelve psalms that go under his name. The word Altaschith emphatically means, "Thou shalt not destroy!" Both the Hebrew and the Septuagint Greek expresses this. How sad that the truth of this psalm, though not destroyed, is not before the multitudes who live contrary to its counsel! We have included the words of wisdom from Jeremiah and Paul in with this lesson. Their counsel goes along with this psalm directly. It is a truth that every person should take diligent heed to, but being willingly ignorant of its message, mankind continues in his weary cycle of lifting up himself and suffering the let-down that never fails to follow.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How does the heart react when the wondrous works of God are beheld?
2. Will a person be very apt to exalt himself when he is aware of the glory and majesty of God?
3. What is happening to the inhabitants of the earth that proves their vanity?
4. Can you think of people you have read about in history who lifted up their horn in their pride and self glory?
5. What was the general outcome of such?
6. Are people seeking promotion and success today?
7. Are most people seeking promotion in the right way?
8. What does God do to show man how useless it is for him to exalt himself?
9. What does the cup in the hand of the Lord mean to the child of God?

10. What is the horn of the righteous made up of?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, how needful is the counsel of our lesson to humanity today as never before! We see everywhere in our society both men and women seeking success and promotion. Big money, popularity, praise of men, selfish gain, carnal security, recognition, rights, and many other accommodations man is striving for. Some succeed for awhile, and many are unsuccessful. But eventually all come to the same common level of the way of all the earth. The Word of God spoken in our lesson is an earnest entreaty to foolish man to not deal foolishly. It is wise counsel that is given to point men and women to the real promotion and success that comes only from the Lord. He is the judge. He is the one who decides who is to be set up and who is to be put down. It is not our foolish striving and efforts that will bring prosperity and success. Look at the strife and turmoil our world is in today. Is it not because of this very thing? Is it not because man is striving in his own pride and self-glory for recognition and vain fulfillment? Look at the civil rights strife. Look at the strikes and violence of labor and its unions. Look at the wars and aggression between nations. It all amounts to the same wretched travail of man wanting to promote himself. And God has spoken through the prophet in this psalm in an effort to curb man from his vain pursuit and to point him to the only sure way of success and promotion. The horns of the wicked shall be cut off. This is a decree that has come to pass in the life of every fool who has sought to promote himself. Though loud and long they talk, and though much they accomplish and do, their horn is eventually subdued. Someone else takes their place and repeats the same ridiculous procedure of folly. Let us get the message that God is giving us in this psalm. Do not seek to promote or exalt yourself. God will exalt you in due time, and what a wonderful blessing it will be to your soul!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

During the most crucial period in the Civil War, when Lee's troops were invading Pennsylvania, a cocksure civilian in Philadelphia telegraphed General Halleck in Washington, offering his services as commander in chief of the Federal forces. He implied he could win the war in a week if he were only given the chance. General Halleck sent him this grim reply: "We already have five times as many generals as we want, but we are greatly in need of private soldiers. Anyone volunteering in that capacity will be very welcome. What do you say?" Even today this is an attitude that is found in all walks of life. Many people have the answers to most any problem, and also think they have the ability through their own capabilities to bring things to a satisfactory solution. This type of self-conceited attitude, and the boasting thereof, God abhors.

Boasting seems a part of man's make-up, and God has provided a cure, not by repressing the instinct, but by giving an avenue in which it can be channeled. Boasting can be legitimate if the right theme is adopted. Our lesson gives us the guidelines for the justified boast. "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me. . ." The apostle Paul said, "But as for me, God forbid that I should glory in anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. 6: 14. In order for "boasting in God" not to be obnoxious to the hearers, there are also some perimeters that should be put on this. Paul could have boasted about his unique conversion, and although he did speak of it, he did not glory in being saved so much as in the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ had so loved him that He gave Himself to the death of the cross for his behalf. We must be enthralled with the glories of the Saviour when we tell of our salvation, for this will take the human part out of our boasting and make it palatable to the hearers. This is also music to the ears of God, and the type that He will lift up.

—Wayne Murphey

JANUARY 12, 1992

REMEMBERING GOD'S WONDERS OF OLD

Psalm 77:1 I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

3 I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

5 I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

6 I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.

10 And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

11 I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

13 Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?

14 Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

15 Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.

17 The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.

18 The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

19 Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

MEMORY VERSE: He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. Ps. 111:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We should continue to call to remembrance what God has done, even though the history of His mighty works reaches back for centuries. God wants us to remember His great works and to be inspired and comforted and assured of His goodness through them.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 2, "*My sore ran in the night, and ceased not*": The Hebrew text renders this phrase thus, "My hand was stretched out in the night, and not grow numb, or grow slack." This evidently refers to the gesture and expression of prayer that the writer exercised in the night in his effort to seek God. *Selah*: We remember that the word *Selah* used often in the Psalms means a suspension or a pause, used to express an extra serious note to pause, consider, mark well, and take heed.

Verse 3, "*I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed*": The Hebrew says, "I meditate, or ponder, and my spirit faints."

Verse 6, The word translated *complained* in verse three is the same word that is translated *commune* in verse six. He says, "I meditate with mine own heart."

Verse 10, "This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High." The words "but I will remember" are added words by the translators. The original Hebrew reads thus, "This is my sickness, the years of the right hand of the Most High." The Septuagint Greek reads, "And I said, Now I have begun; this is the change of the right hand of the Most High." I believe that this is a

direct referral to Christ's ministry at the right hand of God to us in our human weaknesses.

Verse 13, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary": Thy way is holy, or in holiness.

Verse 14, "Thou hast declared thy strength": His saving strength is revealed, or made known. Verses 15 through 20 are referring to God's deliverance of the children of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. His mighty wonders shown in the plagues, and the glorious and miraculous escape of the Israelites through the Red Sea must never be forgotten.

Verse 19, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known." It was no shallow body of water that the Lord opened up and divided in the Red Sea. Modern theology would assert that, but we know what the Scripture says. "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." Ex. 14:22. God still leads us in paths that are far above feeble mortal understanding.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This Psalm has for its title: To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph. Jeduthun was another one of the singers who was contemporary with Asaph. This Psalm is a profound piece of holy literature, filled with anointing, inspiration, and spiritual blessing. The reason why humanity is in such a woeful state today is because they have forgotten and are not aware of the great works of God. This Psalm is a testimony of one who called to remembrance the works of God and His wonders of old, and was greatly helped and encouraged thereby. Let us look and behold, let us remember what God has done in the past as recorded on the pages of The Holy Scriptures. Let us escape the hardness and blindness of our society by seeking God with all of our hearts, and remember all of His wonderful works to the children of men. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it necessary for us today to cry unto the Lord and to seek Him diligently?
2. Does God have a purpose and a reason for bringing us to a place where He seems to have forgotten to be gracious?
3. What are we to do in times when He seems to have shut up His tender mercies?
4. Can you think of some great work that God did of old?
5. What value can there be to us today in remembering such wonders?
6. What condition can a person get in if he or she forgets or is ignorant of what God has done?
7. What was so great about the delivery of God's people through the Red Sea?
8. Name and discuss other great wonders God did for His people of old. Of what value can knowledge of these things be to us today?
9. Can a person be so hardened that these accounts do not stir the heart?
10. Does God still lead His children into situations that call for help beyond human aid?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God had a purpose in working with Israel of old. All of the marvelous wonders we read about in the Bible were put there for our benefit. God wants us to read about them, think and study and meditate about them, and let them be a stimulus for our faith in the times of trouble and need. These things were done for us, and were for our learning way down here in the end of time. They have been recorded in sacred history for our edification. We need to know about them and remember them. The God who did those mighty wonders is still our God today. We are enjoined by the Word of God to meditate, ponder, study, and make diligent search of these things. To not be aware of them is gross and dire ignorance, and to forget them is gross error and

wickedness. Think about the great throng of over a million people huddled before the great body of water of the Red Sea. Hemmed in on all sides with the Egyptian army in full pursuit, their plight was disheartening indeed. But God wanted to show them His power and what He could do. See the pillar of cloud and fire move from before the people of Israel around behind them to protect them from the enemy? Behold Moses as he stretched out his hand over the sea, and imagine the waters dividing, making a path of dry ground right through the midst of the sea clear to the other side. Think what it meant to be in that great host crossing on that path made by the power of Almighty God. Can you visualize the awesome scene of the waters returning and covering all the hosts of the Egyptians and drowning every one of them? Oh, what wonderful deliverance! There will be great and sore needs in our lives today, but let us remember what God has done of old.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"I remembered God, and was troubled." It seems strange that the Psalmist would have been troubled by remembering God. It is probably like the experience of the lady who had an illness, and after she had been treated for the illness she was finally told that only God could help her. She exclaimed, "Has it come to this?" These are all surface thoughts. When the capabilities of God are closely examined, as the Psalmist did later in our lesson, there is much comfort. It has often been said that there are some things we should remember, and some things we should forget. Our happiness, joy, consolation and even our spiritual life, can depend on us having an understanding of how God works. We should strive to sharpen our mental senses in knowing and retaining the many works that God has wrought.

"Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people." God is a spirit, consequently without body parts as we would

know them, so this phrase is a figure of speech. In Bible times people put great significance on the arm. All through the scriptures it is used as an emblem of power. "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Isa. 52:10. The arm made bare is an Eastern figure of speech, as a warrior would throw back his loose robes when he would strike, or as the workman would pull up or tie his loose flowing sleeves in order to do his work. God has done great things for His people, and it should hearten us to know His strong arm will also bear us up, and that same arm will fight our battles. —Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 19, 1992

THE JOY AND BLESSINGS OF GOD'S HOUSE

Psalm 84:1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!

2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.

6 Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

7 They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

9 Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I

had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

12 O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

MEMORY VERSE: Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. Ps. 26:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: One day spent in the favor and will of God is better than a thousand days spent in the pleasures of sin. The lowliest place in God's house is better than the highest place of honour in the world.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 1, Amiable: Lovely, enjoyable, sweet, and dear.

Verse 2, "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God": The words here "crieth out" are translated from the Hebrew word which means to shout for joy. The Septuagint agrees with this for it reads, "My heart and my flesh have exulted in the living God."

Verse 3, "The sparrow, the swallow": If a bird can find a welcome place under the eaves or up on the rafters where she can raise her young, how much more can we find a welcome place in the house of God.

Court: A walled in yard, a safe place protected from danger, the enclosed area surrounding a house.

Verses 5 and 6, The *Hebrew Interlinear* text reads, "Blessed is the man strength to him is in thee; in their hearts are the highways. Passing through the valley of weeping they will make it a fountain; even the early rain covers with blessings." The Septuagint rendering is very beautiful, "Blessed is the man whose help is of thee, O Lord; in his heart he has purposed to go up the valley of weeping,

to the place which he has appointed, for there the lawgiver will grant blessings."

Verse 7, "They go from strength to strength": They become stronger and stronger.

Verse 10, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God": The Hebrew says, "I have chosen to stand at the threshold of the house of my God." The Septuagint puts it this way, "I would rather be an abject in the house of God." An abject is the lowest and least important position one can fill. Paul expressed it as being less than the least of all saints. Eph. 3:8

LESSON BACKGROUND

The author and setting for this Psalm is unknown. But it is a most sublime and inspiring expression of the love and joy the child of God has for the service of the Lord. I was at a camp meeting years ago sitting under the tabernacle one morning reading my Bible. I was reading this very Psalm. I happened to look up and there in the framework of the rafters and joists I saw a sparrow's nest. How it did touch and inspire my heart! What a blessing it is to be saved and to have a place to live in the Church of the living God!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How does a true child of God feel about the service of the Lord?
2. Can you name some of the aspects of God's service that make it so precious?
3. If a person was deprived of being in the worship of the saints of God for a time, would they miss it very much?
4. Can a hungry and thirsty soul for God find a welcome in His house?
5. Why does being a child of God mean so much to us, even more so, as the years go by?
6. How can we make the valley of weeping a well?

7. Why do we desire the Lord to behold us and look upon our face?

8. Make a list of the things enjoyed by the unsaved and a list of the pleasures found in God's house and compare them. Are not the blessings of the Lord much, much better?

9. What is there about the things of the world that make them far inferior to the blessings of God?

10. In what way is God a sun and a shield?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, how sublime and sweet is the life of a Christian! It gets sweeter as the years go by. And it creates memories that linger in the heart and mind with a fragrance that never fades. God lets us go through hard and bitter times of temptation and suffering so as to make the sweet sweeter. The valley of weeping is often encountered. We are deprived of some things in life for a season so as to make them more precious when they are given to us. We are so happy in the Christian way that it just draws praises and expressions of joy from our hearts. There are so many enjoyable and rich experiences that come our way. In services with the saints or around the family circle, the child of God experiences peace and happiness that is not found in the worldly way of life. As we continue in the grace of God and cleave to Him, we become stronger and wiser in the will of God. Many precious lessons are learned that are so valuable to us in finding success and victory in life's responsibilities. One day living for Jesus brings more joy and pleasure than a thousand days lived in sin. It is so much better to live a godly, careful, holy, and pure life. The world derides the plain and simple saint in their modest dress and abstinence from sin. But in comparing the lives of the ungodly with the lives of the saints, the more superior way is clearly seen. A man who is poor and afflicted and has Christ in his soul is far better than the healthy and wealthy man. The prosperity of the worldly is uncertain and short-lived. The

trials of the godly and the sufferings he endures are also short-lived, but his joys and treasures are never to fade away.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Back when Franklin Roosevelt was president, an early morning telephone caller asked the rector of the church where Roosevelt attended if the President was going to be in attendance that day. "I cannot promise," the rector replied. "However, God will be there, and that will be incentive enough for a reasonably large attendance."

"I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." The writer loved the house because of the One who dwelled in it. When he thirsted for the "courts of the Lord," it was because he was thirsting for the "living God." (Psa. 84: 1, 2). It would be idolatry to love the habitation of God rather than God Himself. Perhaps it is good to once in a while take inventory of why we go to church. Some go because they want to be seen filling their pew. There are those who are in love with a certain creed their church teaches. Some go to admire the magnificent structures that are built, and others like the association of society who are at a particular church. The Psalmist went in order to feel close to God.

"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee." It is quite a statement to make about any group of people; that they are blessed. There is a song that says people in Iowa can "stand nose to nose for days and days and never see eye to eye!" This isn't just true of people in Iowa, it is a commentary of the whole human race. If you take a close enough look at any organization you will find wranglings among the members. But in a congregation in which all those assembled are praising God, there will be peace, harmony and each one will be blessed. That is also the congregation that will be attractive for others to attend. Let us make sure that we as individuals go to the house of God for the right reason.

—Wayne Murphey

JANUARY 26, 1992

**THE OUTREACH OF THE
YEARNING SOUL FOR GOD**

Psalm 90:1 Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

13 Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou

hast afflicted us, and years wherein we have seen evil.

16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

17 And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

MEMORY VERSE: So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Ps.90:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Because of sin our mortal days have been shortened, and we will soon take our journey away from this life. It is therefore wisdom for us to make the Lord God our habitation early in life and live the few years we have according to His good pleasure.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 1, "Dwelling place": Abode, home, habitation, retreat.

Verse 3, "Thou turnest man to destruction": The Hebrew says, "Thou turnest man to dust."

Verse 9, "As a tale that is told": The Hebrew says, "as a murmur or a sigh." The Septuagint says, "Our years have spun out their tale as a spider."

Verse 10, "Yet is their strength labour and sorrow": The Hebrew says, "Yet their pride is labour and vanity."

Verse 12, "That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." The Hebrew says, "That we may bring a heart of wisdom." The Septuagint says, "That we be those who are instructed in wisdom in the heart."

Verse 17, "Let the beauty of the Lord be upon us": From the Hebrew we find the word beauty here to mean agreeableness, delight, suitableness, splendor, or grace. The Septuagint says "brightness". "The work of our hands establish thou it": The Septuagint beautifully renders this phrase: "Do thou direct for us the works of our hands."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The title of this Psalm says, The Prayer of Moses the man of God. Adam Clarke informs us that the Chaldee translation has for a title, "A prayer which Moses the prophet of the Lord prayed when the people of Israel had sinned in the wilderness." Clarke further states that all other versions ascribe this Psalm to Moses, but that he did not believe that this Moses was the lawgiver because seventy and eighty years was not the limit of the lives of men in that ancient time, Moses living one hundred and twenty years, and Joshua living one hundred and ten years. Regardless of its source and authorship this Psalm is an outstanding and extremely important chapter in God's Word. It is a psalm that is about every one of us. It would fit Moses of old and us here in our age. It is most sublimely inspiring and wholesome for the spiritual benefit of all. This Psalm needs to be pondered, studied, committed to memory, and lived by every day. It needs to be referred to constantly in our lives. It is true, and if we will assume the attitudes expressed in this Psalm we will find greater success in God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we make the Lord our habitation or dwelling place?
2. Why did God have to turn man back to the dust?
3. How can a thousand years be as one day with the Lord?
4. What is the short duration of our earthly life likened unto?
5. Instead of shortening our days, what could the Lord have done to mankind in His anger?
6. The days of our years are threescore years and ten. Does this mean that we will be assured of seventy years in this life? If not, what does it mean?
7. What kind of attitude toward ourselves and toward God should we take?

8. What verse in our lesson tells us that we should seek God's favor early in life?
9. What should come first, God's work or the work of our hands?
10. How can we be sure that we have the beauty of the Lord upon us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

This Psalm is a prayer that should be a reality in the heart of everyone. We should really seek to make the Lord our dwelling place in life. He is the God and the Creator of life from eternity. He inhabits eternity, the self-existent One. We are His creation, the work of His hands. He originally intended for man to live forever, but because of man's sin and disobedience God took away the eternal life and confined man's existence in this world to just a few years. The prophet mentions seventy and eighty years. But this is no promise or guarantee that we will live that long. It is merely an average figure. Different times I have averaged the ages of people who have died and are recorded in the daily newspaper in our town. It usually averages out around seventy years, sometimes a little more, and other times a little less. Some people live up into their nineties, and others drop way below the seventy-year mark. Man's life therefore is of very short duration. For this cause it is a wise thing for us to seek God early in life and live all our days and years for Him. It is the wisest and best thing for us to do. It is foolish to try to live our scant years of time without Him. We should desire and pray for God's work to appear to us and let it work His divine pleasure in our hearts and lives. And then He can and will put His image of beautiful holiness upon us, and He will direct our labors that they be effectual and beneficial to His cause and to the souls of our fellowmen. Thus we can face the closing of our days in victory and peace and dwell with Him eternally in glory.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...we spend our years as a tale that is told." Psa. 90:9.

"Life is likened to a tale that is told, not read. Those were the days when reading matter was not as common or plentiful as today, consequently there were quite a number of men who were professional story tellers. These were always welcomed in military camps and in towns and villages. The metaphor is a simple yet suggestive one.

"There are long tales and short ones, so there are long lives and there are very short ones. Of course we cannot always measure life by years, as we can measure a story by pages or inches. It is what we put into life that counts. We must look upon life as a measure to be filled and not as a goblet to be drained. It is what we put into our days and into our years that will decide the value of the life lived.

"There are dull tales, and there are very interesting ones, so there are lives that are hum-drum, very sober and unattractive; whereas there are lives full of change and very exciting. Of course tastes differ, and what seems drab and uninteresting to some is considered as quite opposite by others.

"There are bad tales and there are good ones, so there are lives that are really bad, exerting a baneful influence, whereas there are lives that are boons and blessings to all. Only one life to live, and how most of us long to be as useful and helpful as possible.

"How can my life be as a good and beneficial tale? There are three conditions.

"1. Must have the right author. It takes a genius to produce a really great tale, one that will live on and on for generations. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can produce a life that is as a good, useful, and helpful tale. We must be His workmanship. We cannot do this ourselves. We must resign ourselves to His gracious and marvellous creative skill.

"2. Must have the right hero. The quality of the book can be decided, and indeed hangs upon the quality of its

hero. If Christ is the pivot and center of our lives then all is well.

"3. Must have the right object. A book without an object is likely to be a weak and watery one, a very flat and dull one. What is the object of your life? Are you doing everything for the glory of God? Remember the famous snippet from a great catechism: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.' What a great object is this! What kind of a tale is your life telling?"

—Taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*

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FEBRUARY 2, 1992

**SHELTERED UNDER
THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY**

Psalm 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

MEMORY VERSE: How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. Ps. 36:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: A person who sets their love upon God and puts their trust in Him can be assured of His Divine protection from all harm and evil.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 1, "Secret place": The Hebrew word here means a cover; a hiding place; a protection.

Verse 3, "Snare of the fowler": The entanglement of a net". "Noisome pestilence": Evil, ruinous, destructive plague or disease. We must bear in mind that the main fulfillment of these promises is concerning the safety and protection of our souls in a spiritual sense. The Lord will protect us also in other matters, temporally and physically, but He may permit these troubles to come our way, but will safeguard our souls through them.

Verse 4, "Shield and buckler": The Hebrew meaning for these words are quite interesting. The word for *shield* means a prickly, pointed, piercing shield that protects by pricking. Jesus said to Saul who was persecuting Him, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Acts 9:5. The *buckler* was a surrounding guard or shield.

Verse 5, "Terror by night": Dangers hidden and under-cover. "Arrow by day": The bold straight out forces bent for our destruction.

Verse 8, "Only with thine eyes": The destruction of the wicked, though beheld by the godly, will not affect them nor bring any harm or sorrow to them.

Verse 9, "Because thou hast made the Lord thy habitation": The word *habitation* here is the same word as *dwelling place* in Psalm 90:1. It is an abode, a home, a refuge, and a retreat. But we must make the Lord our habitation by a resolute act of our own will. He will force Himself upon no one.

Verse 13, "Adder": Poisonous snake. "Dragon": A sea or land monster, something too big for us, but conquerable by the grace of Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This wonderful Psalm has no title, so the author and setting for composition is to us unknown, but we do know that it was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and is one of the finest poems ever written. It presents a truth that has comforted the hearts of God's children down through the ages. Even Satan was aware of this Psalm as he quoted it to Jesus in his effort to get Jesus to jump off the pinnacle of the temple. It surely pays a person to make the Lord His habitation and to set his love upon Him. This world and present life are full of so many dangerous forces, and without the protection and care of the Almighty a person is bound to become ensnared. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we need the protection and shelter promised in our lesson today?
2. Is it possible that a person can be unaware that he needs the protection of the Lord?
3. What are some of the things we need God's sheltering hand to keep us from?

4. Is this Psalm a promise that we will never have trouble or sorrow in this life?
5. What move must we make in order for the promises in this Psalm to be fulfilled in us?
6. Where is the secret place of the most High?
7. Can we hope to be under the shadow of the Almighty if we fail to remain in that secret place?
8. What is the most important kind of protection we need?
9. Can we plead the promises in this Psalm in times of disease epidemics?
10. Does the fact that Satan used verses 11 and 12 in his temptation to Jesus make them any less true for us today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Surely we need the overshadowing protection of the Almighty God in our lives today! Life is attended with so many dangers and heartaches, woes and calamities. We are in desperate need of a shield and protector. Our Lord Jesus Christ had not been in this world very long as a tiny infant when the forces of evil reached out to destroy Him. God protected Him from Herod's sword. When the angry people of Nazareth sought to push Him off the cliff on which their city rested, Jesus was safe-guarded from their evil purpose. All along the way of His mortal journey Christ was preserved from harm, but God didn't spare Him from the cross, but brought Him safely through it all to victory and life eternal. Many times the Lord has comforted my heart and assured me of His protection in my life, and I can see that it surely has been so. From dangers seen and unseen He guards and keeps us. He will only permit what He sees is best for us. If some woeful and sorrowful thing happens to us we can be assured that God has permitted it for a reason. It is dangerous to live without the protection of the Lord in this world today. We can trust Him to protect us on the highways and as we rise to meet each day in its travels and labors. While we are helpless in unconscious sleep we need Him to watch over us. Fire could break out and storms

could come. Thieves and wicked men are everywhere. We are not safe anywhere without the protection of God and His angels. Let us set our hearts upon Him and make Him our habitation. He is very willing to cover us with His protection and loving care all the way through this life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I read a phrase once, whether it is from a song or someone's writings I don't know, but in speaking of God it said, "in the shadows, keeping watch over His own." According to our observation, many times God's care is done in the shadows. It isn't all that often that we consciously think of God protecting us, yet He is always there. Once the Syrians came against Israel and Elisha's servant was very troubled about it. Elisha prayed that God would open the servant's eyes. God did so, and he saw horses and chariots in all the mountains round about. This is God "in the shadows, keeping watch over His own."

God cares for us so much that He never sleeps. (Psa. 121:1-8). Every right-thinking individual values his life, and there is not a better protection agency than God that can be found. He is very responsible in His job. The fact He doesn't ever sleep on the job indicates His responsibility.

Let me give you another example that God cares for His children. If a person is uncaring of someone else, they cut every link of familiarization possible. This is also what the result of sin does. In a penal system, which to a great extent is an uncaring place, people are given numbers and do not go by names. That is because the system doesn't care about them as individuals. Christ said in John 10:3, ". . . the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." To take the effort of knowing someone by name means you have a care about them. God takes it infinitely further when the scriptures say that even the very hairs of our head are numbered. (Matt. 10:30).

There are many instances in the Bible that could be

cited where God protected those who served Him, and almost without fail it is of people who went through hard times. You may wonder how this could be protection. One of the few times we are given the privilege of knowing what actually went on in heaven concerns the devil coming before God about Job. God's caring protection had built a hedge about Job and the enemy wanted it down. God did not cease caring about Job nor forsake him, but allowed the enemy a few privileges. God cared so much for Job that when the enemy was through He made everything up to him and then some. When going through rough spots, remember God is watching, and He will repay us for all the problems we experience — if not in this life; heaven will be worth it all.

—Wayne Murphey

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FEBRUARY 9, 1992

**WARNINGS AGAINST
DRAWING BACK ON GOD**

Psalm 95:1 O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

Hebrews 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

MEMORY VERSE: Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Heb. 4:1.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God is calling for us to love, worship, and bow down in humble submission before Him that He might work His purpose in our lives and bring us into the sweet soul rest He has planned for us from the beginning.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 3, "Above all gods": All other gods are but the imagination of men's corrupt minds. The true God's reality is far above what vain man can imagine.

Verse 4, "In his hand are the deep places of the earth": The deep mines beneath the surface of the earth from which man draws natural resources such as petroleum, precious metals, and water supply are in His control. "The strength of the hills is his also": The summits of the heights, or, (as the Septuagint puts it) "the heights of the mountains, all these belong to God."

Verse 8, "As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness": The Hebrew says here, "as in Meribah, as in the day of Massah." In Exodus 17:7 we find that after the people had murmured because of not having water and Moses had smote the rock from whence came the miraculous fount of water, he called the name of the place Massah, which means temptation, and Meribah, which means contention or provocation. This was one of the various places where the children of Israel doubted and grieved God which eventually led to their refusal of being admitted into Canaan, inciting the wrath of God to exclude them from the land of their rest.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Although there is no title to this Psalm in the King James Version, several other of the versions, including the Septuagint, attributes this to David. The writer in Hebrews 4:7 in quoting from this Psalm also attributes it to David. The writer in Hebrews (from which we have drawn several verses as a part of our lesson) quotes from this Psalm and applies it directly as a message to us. It is a warning that we do not take the attitude and course the children of Israel took in the days when God, by the hand of Moses, was trying to get them into the land of Canaan. It is a serious message, a warning that we need to give diligent heed to. We do not want to fail to enter into the rest that God through Christ has provided for us. If we draw back and harden our hearts through the deceitfulness of sin, we will miss the full blessings of peace and soul rest God has planned for us from the creation. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it very important to keep an attitude of thanksgiving and praise to God?
2. What other elements do we face in life that can hinder us from praising God?

3. Are we going to be in an attitude of praise and worship to God if we go along with the current of the world around us?
4. From what condition of heart are we to keep away?
5. What are some of the reasons why people harden their hearts and draw back from God's will?
6. Do we ever have a just reason for refusing to do God's will?
7. Can what happened to Israel happen to us?
8. Is it important for us to believe that God is the God as is described in our lesson today?
9. Is it hard to worship and obey God when we understand Him and see Him as He really is?
10. What must we do if we would really be partakers of Christ?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Our lesson today is a universal appeal and call to mankind to worship and serve the true and living God. The writer describes the great God as possessing the earth and having in His hand all of its resources that are so vital to man's survival. Since our life is sustained and nourished by His hand of love, ought we not to pay Him homage and adoration? We should, and we really owe it to God to worship and bow down before Him on a regular basis. But we ought not to do this through constraint or for duty alone. If we will listen to God's Word and the loving appeal that He makes to us, and if we will open our hearts and minds to the truth of His love and goodness, it will not be a forced situation, but rather one of willing love and devotion. Real worship is not forced. It springs freely from the loving and thankful heart. But the warning of our lesson is that, unlike these people of old, we must refuse to draw back from the will of God. We must bow down, that is, submit ourselves from the heart to God. It is not profitable to bow physically if the heart is not bowed. We must bow down in our attitudes and spirit. In bowing we

say, "O gracious God, I yield to thy holy will." We want Him to have His way in our lives. He has the very best at heart for all of us. To draw back from doing His will is to draw back unto destruction. It is to forfeit the blessings of His inheritance to us. Let us not harden our hearts, but rather help and inspire one another with the Spirit of the Lord working in us. We can enter into the sweet rest God ordained from the foundation of the world for our benefit and well being.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

No one should consider themselves above the possibility of drawing back on God. We should make sure that our salvation is complete in every way God intended it to be, and then enjoy our life for God. When we first start our life for God we must build well. Once a farmer hired a man to build a fence for him. When the job was finished the farmer looked it over and reported back to the worker, "On the whole it is pretty good." "On the whole" will not work for a fence, neither does it work in salvation. A fence also needs constant upkeep, as does our salvation.

One indication of drawing back on God is when we no longer enjoy our Christian life. The way to keep the joy is to constantly have victory. When children play games, if one is always losing he soon loses his enthusiasm to play. The Christian has one battle after another, and he also must go from victory to victory.

Our lesson says that the one who draws back has an evil heart of unbelief. That sounds rather strong. Yet if we understand the condition of those who draw back it will help propel us away from that trap. We are also told that the backslider is filled with his own ways. (Prov. 14:14). This may not happen instantly, but it is where the path of one who draws back leads. The backslider is miserable and unhappy. (Jeremiah 2:19). Take Judas as an example. The backslider is worse off than before he was saved. (II Peter 2:20-22). Don't these thoughts make you rejoice that there

is enough grace in the provisions of God that we don't have to draw back in any way? —Wayne Murphey

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FEBRUARY 16, 1992

**THE GREAT MERCY AND BENEFITS
OF THE LORD**

Psalm 103:1 Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

15 As for man, his days are as grass: as flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

19 The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

20 Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

21 Blessye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

22 Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul.

MEMORY VERSE: For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. Ps. 103:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God's mercy and lovingkindness is so great that there is no reason why anyone cannot successfully serve Him and be in His favor.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 1, "Bless the Lord": The Hebrew word for *bless* means to kneel in adoration.

Verse 4, "Destruction": The pit or place of ruin.

Verse 5, "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's": Clarke believes that the writer here mentioning the eagle is referring to the moulting process that most birds go through when they lose their old feathers and grow new ones. The Christian life is one of constant renewal. The outer man perishes, but the inward man is renewed day by day. (II Cor. 4:16).

Verse 9, "He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever": The Hebrew text says, "He not always

will strive, contend, or hold in controversy, nor always guard or be on the defense." The Septuagint agrees thus, "He will not always be angry; neither will he be wrathful forever."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Adam Clarke remarks at the beginning of his comments on this 103rd Psalm: "The inscription in the Hebrew, and in all the Versions, gives this Psalm to David; and yet many of the ancients believed it to refer to the times of the Babylonian captivity, or rather to its conclusion, in which the redeemed Jews gave thanks to God for their restoration. It is a psalm of sweetness and excellence beyond imitation, and contains the most affectionate sentiments of gratitude to God for His mercies; and the most consoling motives to continue to trust God, and be obedient to Him." I readily agree to what he says here, especially to the thought of this Psalm expressing the most consoling motives to continue to trust and be obedient to God. This Psalm shows the great magnitude of the goodness, congeniality, and mercy of our Heavenly Father and erases every excuse or cause for not serving Him. Whoso stubbornly persists in their pride and rebelliousness does so in gross and needless ignorance. As a young Christian I was introduced to this Psalm through a message delivered by Bro. Isaac Chandler, and it was a great means of establishing and balancing my Christian life into victory and joy.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the benefits of God listed in our lesson?
2. Whom are the people God's mercy is toward?
3. Does a person have any reason to be afraid to approach God for help?
4. What does this Psalm reveal to be the true sentiment of God toward humanity?

5. What does the comparison of His mercy as being as high as the heaven is above the earth suggest?
6. If a person manifests the goodness and mercy of God in his family, will his children be inclined to want to serve God also?
7. Will a person during the course of his Christian life ever get to the place where he will cease to need God's mercy and begin to merit God's help and favor?
8. How can we bless the Lord?
9. Do you believe this Psalm is true?
10. What message does it bring to you personally?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

This Psalm expresses the true sentiments and feelings of God Almighty for us, His creation and offspring. He is a merciful and kind loving God. He is not quick to condemn and punish. He is very patient and gentle, and is easily entreated. He is like a kind and loving affectionate father for his family, loving, providing, sheltering, helping, comforting, and ever present. There is no just cause or reason for not wanting to serve Him. Satan blinds the minds of the unsaved and keeps them from wanting to serve God. He keeps them from knowing and understanding scriptural passages like this 103rd Psalm. If they could but catch a beam of light from the truth in this Psalm it could change their whole concept of God. Young Christians should study and seek to understand the message of this Psalm. It is a true statement that no man can ever find a balanced and happy experience and relationship with God until he learns to trust God for His mercy. As long as we are struggling and striving to be right and to do right with the thought that we are doing so to merit His favor, we will never have a victorious life. It is not our striving that gets the job done. There are many unsaved souls who are kept out of the Kingdom of God because they feel in their heart they can not live up to the standard they believe God requires of them. All they can see is the strictness, and what they will

have to do and have to give up, and what kind of life they will have to live. Satan does not allow them to look at God's mercy and goodness. Oh, that they would open their hearts to this as well as other psalms in the Bible! It would transform their lives. Thank the Lord for eyes to see and ears to hear what the Lord has spoken in His Word!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Among the gods of sixteenth century China are some that are ugly and grotesque. But those artisans of the Ming dynasty created at least one image that has a lesson for today—a woman's figure finely molded with twenty four outstretched hands and open arms. She was the goddess of mercy. God's mercy surpasses this, for it goes beyond human imagination. Our lesson tells us "...the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. ..." Let your mind dwell on that and see how much you can comprehend.

"...forget not all his benefits." This is an admonition to us to remember what God has done for others in the past, but it is also inspiring to remember that many of His benefits are with Him and He will continue to distribute them until the end of time. God has never kept back anything that would benefit mankind. He even gave to the world the closest thing to Him in His son.

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Iniquities refer to acts, and diseases refer to the consequence of the act. That is not to say that if you are sick it is because you have committed a sin, but the sin of Adam had such far reaching consequences that we suffer from it today. Although we must suffer this inherited consequence, we have the privilege of having our iniquities cleansed and stopping any further aftermath through our acts.

"...who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." This is a crown all people should want, more than even the royal crown of England. Sad to behold, not many

seem interested. God's crown of lovingkindness and tender mercy is a very comfortable and satisfying crown to wear. It's beauty never tarnishes, but grows brighter as time goes by. It is unlike the crown of thorns that the sinner wears, which makes him restless and the recipient of many sorrows.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." Psa. 36:5. The writer, James Smith, in commenting on this verse said, "Being in the heavens, His mercy is high enough to overtop all altitudes of human guilt."

—Wayne Murphey

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Notice: If your subscription expired with this quarter, please send your renewal at once. It is necessary that your subscription for the second quarter of 1992 be in this office by March 1.

FEBRUARY 23, 1992

**THE GLORY AND MAJESTY OF GOD
MANIFEST IN NATURE—PART 1**

Psalm 104:1 Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

2 Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

5 Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

15 And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

16 The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

17 Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.

18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

MEMORY VERSE: By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. Ps. 33 6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The earth and the heavens are filled with wonderful evidence of the gracious God who fashioned and formed it all.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 1, "Majesty": Magnificence and splendor.

Verse 3, "Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters": God is everywhere and fills the earth, the sea, and the sky. In the middle of the ocean several miles deep, His presence is there. In the great storm of rain and lightning, He is there. This verse declares that the lofty clouds and the raging winds are beneath His control.

Verse 4: "Who makes his angels spirits": In Hebrews 1:7 the writer quotes this and goes on to explain that the angels are ministering spirits sent forth by God to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. "His ministers a flame of fire": These are his preachers and workers who are filled with the Holy Spirit to preach the Word and feed the souls of men.

Verse 5, "That it should not be removed for ever": The Hebrew says, "It shall not shake, or slip, or fall for ever and ever." On account of sin the Scriptures declare that the present earth will be destroyed and will pass away. But there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (II Peter 3:13). This new eternal earth will fulfill this statement in our lesson.

Verse 8, "They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys": The waters stood above the mountains, but at God's word they receded down from the heights through the valleys into the ocean bed, never to cover the earth as they once did.

Verse 14, "Herb for the service of man": Herb here refers to any vegetable or edible plant that grows from the ground.

Verse 15, "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man": Juices from grapes and other fruits were intended to be enjoyed by man for refreshing drinks and nourishment, regardless of how sinful man has abused them.

Verse 18, "Conies": Small rabbit-like creatures who made their home in rocky areas.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This Psalm has no title or heading, but most of the versions, including the Septuagint, attribute it to David. It is a Psalm of praise and worship to God for His wonders in creation. Adam Clarke stated, "The works of God, which are the subject of this Psalm, particularly show the grandeur and majesty of God. The strongest proofs of the being of God, for the common understanding, are derived from the works of creation, their magnitude, variety, number, economy, and use."

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible for us to go about life and take no notice of the majesty of God manifest in nature?
2. How many times has God covered the earth with the deep?
3. What caused the waters to recede or go down from above the mountains?
4. Where would we be today if there were no springs or pure water?
5. Why is rain such an important blessing?

6. How many vegetables can you name that God causes to grow?
7. What kind of fruit do we have?
8. What kinds of oils can man make use of?
9. What is the sap taken from trees good for?
10. What is bread made from?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How beautiful and wonderful are the works of God shown in creation all around us! Look at the sky with the clouds and beautiful blue shade of color. I have noticed when I am out in the country away from the obstructions of man's works that sometimes there are great masses of clouds that stretch from one end of the sky to the other, just like a curtain. It is so grand and magnificent. Think about the vast rolling billows of the ocean. From one angle of the globe it looks like our earth is nearly all water. Just think of those far away places where there is nothing but water for hundreds of miles in every direction. These are places that you and I would not want to be without some form of transportation that would assure us of getting to land before too long. But the Spirit of God is in those far off places too. He needs no boat to convey Him across the miles. The dry land extends from the water only by God's decree. At His voice the mountains rose and the valleys sunk. The waters went down into the ocean bed, and they are still going down in rivers and streams and creeks and ditches. In our town of Enid, OK, there are several drainage ditches that cut across through the residential and business areas. One of these ditches runs right by our house and in a heavy downpour of rain it is a torrent of water. These ditches unite in the south part of town to form what is called Skeleton Creek which empties into the Cimarron River a few miles north of Guthrie, OK. The Cimarron flows into the Arkansas River, and the Arkansas flows into the Mississippi River, which flows to the Gulf of Mexico. This

is just one of many waterways of the world, all of which were organized and directed by the loving hand of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Down through the ages there have always been men who denied the existence of God. The Psalmist said, 'The fool has said in his heart there is no God.' Surely it must be a very blind person who would deny the existence of God. Just one sincere look upon the things that we see around us should convince anyone of God's existence. The world standing in all of its grandeur, is a most emphatic assertion of the Being of God. Every flower is a denial of atheism. Every star is evidence of a supreme Being. The sun that rises in all of its glory is evidence of a God. The life in the seed that is planted came from no source but God. The huge tree that we look at came from the seed. What a mighty God we serve! How our souls are blessed as we look at the life all around us! When we think of the fact that every leaf is different, every grain of sand different, every finger print is different, and every blade of grass is different, it is hard for our minds to comprehend the greatness of God. As we look out upon the beautiful sky, and think of its vastness and see the myriad stars that go on even beyond our sight, we only have to stop and think how utterly great must be the Author of the vast solar system!"

—Marie Miles (Written in 1981)



MARCH 1, 1992

THE GLORY AND MAJESTY OF GOD MANIFEST IN NATURE—PART 2

Psalm 104:19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

24 O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

25 So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

28 That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth

31 The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

33 I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Ps. 104:33.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: As we behold the beauties and wonders of the realm of nature, it causes worship and praise to spring forth from our hearts to our Heavenly Father who in wisdom created it all.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 19, "The sun knoweth his going down": Oh, the glorious sun that shines unerringly on its daily course across the heavens! This is figurative language. The sun is constantly rising and going down as the earth spins around in its light. As it rises on one land and populace it is going down on another. The sun stays on its course, guided and sustained by the loving Hand that placed it there in the beginning. The God who put it there knows its rising and going down.

Verse 23, "Man goeth forth to his work": God has planned that man should work in the day and the animal kingdom seek for their food at night. Thus they avoid interference with each other. The general plan of God for man is that he work while it is day. Our modern world does not follow that plan altogether, but very few people work at night who do not feel the strain and unhandiness thereof.

Verse 26, "Leviathan": Any of the large animals that inhabit the seas, such as the whale. These along with all the other innumerable creatures in the sea must have food. God so graciously and wisely makes provision for them.

Verses 29 and 30, "Thou hidest thy face; thou sendest forth thy spirit": These verses show that God sustains, takes, and gives the life that all of His creatures have. It is also a foresight of the great resurrection that God will bring to pass at the last day.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we had the first part of this 104th Psalm. We had thought first of condensing it and covering it in one lesson. But we could not see any verse we dared to omit. They are all so good and beautiful. So we made two lessons from it, but we hope we can all still view these two lessons as one grand and precious study. And we certainly want to echo the Psalmist's expressions of love and worship to God as we behold the things here mentioned. Let us join with the writer in a purpose to sing praise

to the Lord as long as we live . Let us pray for God's mercy and conviction upon the lost that they turn from their sinful ways ere the 35th verse be fulfilled and they perish from the earth.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the moon have to do with the cycle of months?
2. When has God planned for man to do his work?
3. Whose activity is planned for the night hours?
4. What Scripture gives indication that the writer of this psalm was not far from the sea, perhaps in sight of it?
5. Who ordained the feeding systems of nature?
6. What is the condition of nature when God smiles upon it and opens His hand to it?
7. What happens when God hides His face?
8. What happens when God sends forth His Spirit?
9. In view of all of these wonderful blessings, what should we want to do to show our love and worship to Him who created it all?
10. What would be the only reason the writer would want sinners to be consumed and the wicked to be no more?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, how we need to have an eye to see the glory and majesty of God in all the beautiful world around us! We know it is scarred by sin and the abuse of mankind, but there is still enough of the beauty of God shining through that we can see it if we will but have an eye single to the Lord. Let your mind picture each scene here shown. Think of the glorious sun that faithfully lights our day. Observe the moon and its cycle and changes from night to night. These luminaries are not there by chance; they didn't just happen to be. They were placed there by a kind and loving God who did so for the convenience and benefit of His people. Behold nature and the activity of its creatures. As

darkness spreads her mantle over creation, we can visualize the fox, the coyote, the skunk, the armadillo, the raccoon, the opossum, and many, many more creatures creeping forth in search of some food that God has waiting for them there. Have you ever been in a residential area in the early morning before sun-up? I have. Oh, how still everything is. But as the day comes on and the light gets brighter, you begin to see and hear activity. Doors begin to open, car engines begin to roar, and man comes forth to meet the day. The writer of this Psalm saw the glory of God in this. And we can see the glory of God in it, too. There is the ocean with all of its life. I have been blessed to visit certain zoos and aquariums that show what it is like under the waters of the seas. Putting these things all together, we see one grand exposition of the wisdom and power of Almighty God. It causes us to love Him more and makes us want to know more about Him. How privileged we are to have our being and see all of these wonderful things!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"My meditation of him shall be sweet. . ." Meditating on the glory and majesty of God is very important. Many times this is the inspiration of the soul, and every child of God desires to live an inspired life. One writer wrote on the subject of mediation, "By meditation I can converse with God, solace myself on the bosom of my saviour, bathe myself in the rivers of divine pleasure, tread the paths of my rest, and view the mansions of eternity."

Some people visualize those who mediate as melancholy. The Psalmist David, who wrote these words, found it made him joyful and glad of heart. It is not being lazy to meditate. There is a difference between daydreaming and meditating. Everyone needs to put their heart and spirit in neutral at times and refresh it with thoughts of God's greatness.

"My meditation of him shall be sweet. . ." I am glad that there is something in this world that is sweet to think

about. There isn't a whole lot in life that meets this criteria. It may be interesting to read the newspapers and find out what is happening in our world, but a large percentage of it are things you would just as soon forget about. Most news is not something positive and wholesome that makes you rejoice in pondering on it. If God made the heavens and earth, then looked at it and said it is good, I know we will also come to the same conclusion. If you want to be blessed in your soul more often, look at and think upon His creation frequently.

—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 8, 1992

**GOD'S WONDERFUL WORKS
TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN**

Psalm 107:1 O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

6 Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

17 Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

18 Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.

19 Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.

20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

24 These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

28 Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

42 The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

43 Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Ps. 107:8, 15, 21, 31.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God has manifested His greatness and goodness through answering the needs of people who have called upon Him in various distresses and times of trouble.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 4, "Asolitary way": A desert way, far from the aid and help of man.

Verse 27, "They . . . are at their wit's end": The Hebrew says, "All their wisdom is swallowed up."

LESSON BACKGROUND

This 107th Psalm has no title, and the author is unknown. But it is a most beautiful and colorful psalm. It is also an exciting one because it portrays the trouble people get in

because of their rebellious ventures against their Maker. Their plight of sorrow and hardship encountered on the road of iniquity is very colorfully drawn here. And then the gracious deliverance of the Lord is enlarged upon. Each time (as verses 6, 13, 19, and 28 show) they cry unto the Lord, He has mercy upon them and delivers them from all their distresses. Being lost, being in woeful captivity, being in hunger and affliction, being in raging storms at sea, and other dangerous times and places of peril caused these people to call upon the Lord for mercy and help. Many people in their pride and ease scorn the idea of God, but in the time of trouble you see them reaching for the Unseen Hand. It is God's way to bring people to Himself. He sends adversity and trouble and when they cry unto Him, He hears their prayers and undertakes for them. How wonderful and gracious our God is! In our last two lessons we see the glory of God revealed in nature. In this lesson we see the glory of God revealed in His sweet deliverance to those in need.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. This is a Psalm that could very well be added to. Do you have any experiences of God's deliverances to tell?
2. What usually brings on man's woes and troubles?
3. What should a person do in times of trouble?
4. What should we do when we hear of God's mercy and help to others?
5. Why is God so willing to hear and answer prayer when people call upon Him sincerely?
6. Is man apt to call upon God as long as his wisdom is working well?
7. What do experiences such as we have in our lesson today do for a person?
8. When a person sees how merciful and good the Lord is, what will they want to do?
9. If a person will be wise and observe these things, what will they be able to do?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Lord is good all the time and to every one, but it is when we get in a real need and find God gracious to answer

prayer that He becomes endeared to our hearts. Of all the troubles that man ever gets in, the worst is that of sin and its woeful bondage. The lost and undone condition of a poor sinner is the worst trouble one can be in. A person can be lost in a physical or geographical sense and not be distressed if they are in fellowship with God. A person can be in prison or starvation or lost at sea, but His salvation and joy in Christ will sustain him. But to be lost and in the prison house of sin and tossed on the waves of damnation and despair is trouble of the worst kind. Our lesson speaks several times about the soul. "Their soul fainted in them." "Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat." "Their soul is melted because of trouble." And then, "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." The soul is the most important thing. Many people have sought God for mercy and help in some kind of physical danger or situation that threatened their physical life, and at the same time have very little if any regard to the woeful plight of their soul, and God has been gracious to undertake and help those people in their need. But when all returns to normal, these people cease to call upon the Lord and they settle back into their rut. Oh, let us be wise and consider these things! Let us seek for the salvation of our precious soul to be delivered out of the prison house of sin and its lost and undone condition. Then we can really know how real and gracious God is and we can find that desired haven, the city of habitation and safety in the fellowship of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A communist or socialist form of Government is the most ideal form of government on paper. However, it has its drawbacks in that it does not consider the will of the people. Therefore, in practicality a democracy works the best. It may appear impossible at first thought, but God's mode of ruling man includes the best of these two systems. A Sunday school teacher, after reading the story of the good Samaritan asked her class what they learned from it. One little boy responded, "I have learned that when I get into trouble someone should help me out." This is a socialistic mind frame, yet it is how God works. People get in trouble, just as the Psalmist described

people on a ship at sea; they call on God and He helps them. If people find no help in trouble it is not a fault of God's government, but because either they didn't ask or because when they did ask they did not do so with the intention of paying their vows. The other aspect of God's government is that He leaves man with a free will. We serve Him because we love Him. Although being devoted to Him is by far the best way of life, He does not bring anyone into servitude through bondage. In being a part of His kingdom there is great liberty. God really deserves more credit than He gets. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" —Wayne Murphey



MARCH 15, 1992

**FERVENT LOVE AND DEVOTION TO GOD
FOR ALL OF HIS BENEFITS**

Psalms 116:1 I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

6 The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

9 I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

11 I said in my haste, All men are liars.

12 What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?

13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

14 I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

16 O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.

18 I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.

19 In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. Ps. 116:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord has been so merciful and has done so much for us that we want to love Him, praise Him, and faithfully serve Him all the days of our life.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 1, "Supplications": Entreaties; earnest prayers.

Verse 3, "The pains of hell": The Hebrew says, "The straits of the grave." He is referring to the close hard places and privations experienced in his spiritual desert apart from God.

Verse 5, "Gracious is the Lord": The Lord bends and stoops in kindness and mercy to me, so inferior and weak.

Verse 8, The Hebrew says, "For thou hast rescued my soul from death, my eye from tears, and my foot from stumbling."

Verse 9, "I will walk before the Lord": The Septuagint says, "I shall be well pleasing before the Lord."

Verse 11, "I said in my haste": Various words are used by the different translations here, but the Hebrew sums it all by its expression, "in my alarm." The general sense of the text is this: When I got my eyes off of the Lord and started looking at people, I became so disgusted, grieved, and alarmed, that I

said that all men are liars. Although falsehood and deceit are diffused throughout the human race, it is best that we not give in to our feelings of indignation and make such rash statements. It is wise for us to keep such feelings to ourselves, and keep our eyes on the Lord and let our speech be always seasoned with grace.

Verse 13, "I will take the cup of salvation": I will lift up (Hebrew) the cup of the Lord's deliverance before Him and praise Him for it, and I will continue to call upon his name.

Verses 14 and 18, "Vows": Promises. Notice the things in this Psalm he has already promised to do.

Verse 15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints": We usually take this text to mean that when one of his saints dies, it is a precious thing to God, for He takes them to Himself. That is a good thought and the tenor of the Scriptures will agree to that. But the real sense of the text in its setting is this, "His saints and their welfare mean so much to the Lord that He will not permit them to be overtaken by death." "Precious shall their blood be in His sight." (Ps. 72:14).

LESSON BACKGROUND

The author of this beloved Psalm is unknown, but it fits every true child of God who really loves and serves Him. This is a most sublime and expressive utterance of the love of God's servant for Him. Personally, it is one of my favorites. The apostle Paul quotes from this psalm in II Corinthians 4:13, calling it the spirit of faith.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is so wonderful about the Lord hearing and answering our prayers?
2. When a person gets a taste of the blessing of the Lord, what is his desire concerning it?
3. Is it wrong for us to love our own soul and see to it that it gets the best of care?
4. What made the Psalmist tell his soul to return unto its rest?
5. What had the Lord done for his soul?

6. With the benefits of the Lord do we need to be afraid to walk before Him?

7. Are you afraid to testify of something that you really believe with all your heart?

8. What do we owe to the Lord more than anything else for all He has done?

9. With the bountiful grace of God do we need to be always afraid that we are going to lose out with Him?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is but one way to successfully and satisfactorily serve God, and that is through love. That is the only kind of relationship that God will accept with man. We fear God because He is so great and mighty and His wrath is terrible, but trying to serve Him from that standpoint alone will never bring satisfying joy to the soul. God deals with us through love and kindness. He manifests His goodness and His gracious feeling toward us; He wants us to know that He truly cares for us and wants to help us. All of His dealings are gauged by this tender compassionate feeling for us in our low state. He loves for us to call upon Him, and He yearns to show Himself mighty in our behalf. He wants us to feel comfortable with Him. He does not want us going around in a strain, worrying about our relationship with Him. He wants our souls to rest in His love. A man who truly loves his wife does not want her to be anxious or fearful about his care for her. So God wants us to trust Him and be at rest in Him. And we who experience His gracious help desire to be His own until the end of life's journey. God's joy does not dull or diminish. He knows how to remain the object of our hearts. His wise dealings in keeping us on a plane of humility and simplicity makes us marvel. Even when we get out of order and make statements of rashness and lack of wisdom, He still deals with us in pity and kindness. Truly we have no excuse for not serving such a kind and wonderful God. Let us be as this Psalmist: loving the Lord, serving Him, calling upon His name, and keeping our pledges and promises to Him as long as we live.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Psalmist outlines an impressive list of benefits he had received from God. God had inclined His ear to him (verse 2), dealt bountifully with him (verse 7), delivered him from death (verse 8), and had given him freedom from bondage. (verse 16). I don't know of any way these kinds of benefits could be expanded.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" This was a personal question with the author of this Psalm, yet by taking note of his answers we can better understand how he came by the benefits of God.

"I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord." The sacrifice of thanksgiving may not seem like a very costly gift, but it is a personal one and that is what God delights in. In receiving temporal gifts from friends, it isn't necessarily the price that was paid for it that creates its worth, but the amount of personal thought that was involved in the giving. To call upon the name of the Lord seems like taking more from God rather than rendering something to Him. Yet we understand that it is pleasing to God to be our benefactor.

A writing from the eighteenth century, by Jean Grou, gives an insight into what true devotion to God is. "We are not devout just because we are able to reason well about the things of God, nor because we have grand ideas or fine imaginations about spiritual matters, nor because we are sometimes affected by tears. Devotion is not a thing which passes, which comes and goes, as it were, but it is something habitual, fixed, permanent, which extends over every instant of life and regulates all our conduct." —Wayne Murphey



MARCH 22, 1992

FERVENT LOVE AND HIGH ESTEEM FOR GOD'S LAW

Psalm 119:1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

- 3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.
5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!
6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.
7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.
9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.
10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.
11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.
24 Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counselors.
33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.
34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.
45 And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.
52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord; and have comforted myself.
59 I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
63 I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.
72 The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.
89 For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.
97 O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.
105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.
165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

MEMORY VERSE: Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. Ps. 119:111.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To love God and His gracious law with all of our hearts is a safeguard from the influence and snares of the Devil. To disregard or be ignorant of God's law renders us an easy prey to evil and destruction.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

From Adam Clarke we have very good and clear definitions of the various terms used in our lesson referring to God's law. We will list them here:

LAW: To direct, guide, teach, make straight, or even, point forward. The law guides us in the way of righteousness, makes our paths straight, shows what is even and right, and points us onward to peace, truth, and happiness. It is even our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified through faith; and by it is the knowledge of sin.

STATUTES: To mark, trace out, describe, and ordain. They mark out our way, describe the line of conduct we are to pursue, and order or ordain what we are to observe.

PRECEPTS: To take notice or care of a thing, to attend, have respect to, to appoint, to visit. They take notice of our way, have respect to our life and conversation, superintend, overlook, and visit us in all the concerns and duties of life.

COMMANDMENTS: To command, order, ordain. They show us what we should do and not do, and exact or demand our obedience.

TESTIMONIES: To bear witness of things beyond and farther along. These are the rites and ceremonies of the law; because they point out matters beyond themselves, being types and shadows of the good things that were to come.

JUDGMENTS: To judge, determine, regulate, order, and discern. They show judgment concerning our words and works; show the rules by which they should be regulated; and cause us to discern what is right and wrong, and decide accordingly.

TRUTH: To make steady, constant, to settle, trust, believe. The law that is established, steady, confirmed, and ordered in

all things, and sure; which should be believed on the authority of God, and trusted to as an infallible testimony from Him who cannot lie or deceive.

WORD: To discourse, utter one's sentiments, speak consecutively and intelligibly. Any prophecy or communication from heaven, as well as the whole body of Divine revelation, is called the Word of the Lord.

WAY: To proceed, go on, walk, or tread. The way in which God goes in order to instruct and save man; the way in which man must tread in order to be safe, holy, and happy.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is generally believed that this 119th Psalm was inspired of the Lord to David. It is a wonderful expression of the love and respect God's law is worthy of from us. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of life follows a man who loves and obeys God's law?
2. Can a person truly love God and at the same time disregard His Word?
3. How can a man cleanse his way?
4. Is it possible for a person to wander from God's commandments?
5. Why should we hide God's Word in our hearts, and what does it mean to do so?
6. How can we behold wondrous things out of God's law?
7. Why is it better to incline our hearts to God's testimonies and not to the love of money?
8. Why did the writer turn his feet unto the Lord's testimonies after he had thought on his ways?
9. What entrance does God's Word seek to gain?
10. What description can you give of a person who loves and obeys God's Word?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

One of the attributes that David had that brought him so much mercy and favor from God was the love and respect he had for God's law. The Lord has not changed in His feelings about it. He still has special favor for the man or woman, boy

or girl, who loves His Word and seeks to live by it. Before a person can actually live by the Word, he must have a love and deep reverence for it. Before one can have a love and respect for it, they must consider and view the laws of God in their composition and value. Small children need to be educated and taught the Scriptures in such a way as to show the value and benefit therefrom. As they grow up, the laws and statutes of the Lord will be before them and will help keep them from the influence of Satan and the world. Every child of God needs to cultivate in their hearts the same holy sentiments of love and respect for God's Word that is expressed in this 119th Psalm. You cannot live a successful and happy Christian life unless you do. When we behold the wondrous Word of God and what it contains, it fills our hearts and minds with interest and desire to make it a vital part of our life. We will want to hide His words in our hearts, cherish them and always call them to mind. We will meditate and ponder over their meaning and pray for grace to live accordingly. As we seek Him earnestly, the Lord will open our spiritual eyes to see things in the Word that we never saw before. Freedom, joy, gladness, peace, confidence, hope, wisdom, and sureness will shine from our hearts and lives as we faithfully seek to go the way of His precious Word.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

An unquestionable light is in it, adapted and suitable for every age. No modern light can equal it. It is—

"1. A reading lamp. A lamp for reading the mind and thoughts of God, and also for reading our own hearts.

"2. A heating lamp. An incandescent glow that burns like a fire in the bones. (Jer. 20:9).

"3. A traveller's lamp. A lamp for my feet, and a light for my path. It is equally useful in every country and clime.

"4. A miner's lamp, suitable for the deepest pit of sin, and the darkest places of work and service. Proof against the black damp of the evil heart.

"5. A safety lamp. Can be used in the most dangerous places. It is not only a safety, but a saving lamp.

"6. A lighthouse lamp. It stands aloft and its beams shine

out over the dark waters of a needy world. To neglect its warnings is to suffer shipwreck. It is a divine search light flashing out in the darkness of this sin-shadowed earth.

"7. A night lamp, gentle enough to shine with its mellow flame in the sick-chamber, bringing heaven's light into the weary heart, and brightening the pale face, with the eternal hope that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

—Taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*



MARCH 29, 1992

**THE LORD'S KNOWLEDGE, CARE,
AND CONCERN ABOUT US**

Psalm 139:1 O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

MEMORY VERSE: I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. Ps. 139:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God planned and knew all about us before we were born, watching over and guiding our formation when we were being shaped in the womb, and seeks to guide our souls to happiness and eternal life.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Verse 3, "Thou compassed my path and my lying down": Thou dost winnow, fan, ventilate, or sift my path, and the place where I make my bed.

Verse 5, "Thou hast beset me behind and before": The Hebrew reads: "Thou hast closed me in behind [at my back or in the past] and in front [before and in the future]."

Verse 13, "Thou hast possessed my reins": Thou didst oversee the formation of me from the moment of conception. "Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb": The Hebrew says, "Thou hast woven me in my mother's womb."

Verse 14, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made": The Hebrew says, "I am wonderful with fearful things." Adam

Clarke remarks, "The texture of the human body is the most complicated and curious that can be conceived. It is, indeed, wonderfully made; and it is withal so exquisite nice and delicate, that the slightest accident may impair or destroy in a moment some of those parts essentially necessary to the continuance of life; therefore we are fearfully made. And God has done so to show us our frailty, and feel the necessity of depending on the all-wise care and providence of God."

Verse 15, "My substance": My bones.

Verse 16, "My substance": My embryo, or state in the womb before birth. "In thy book all my members were written": "All those members lay open before God's eyes; they were discerned by Him as clearly as if the plan of them had been drawn in a book, even to the least figuration of the body of the child in the womb."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The title to this 139th Psalm says, To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. Although most of the versions generally agree with the Hebrew, Adam Clarke has very serious doubts that it is a composition of David. He notes that there are several Chaldaic expressions, that is, methods of speech and expression that are the character of the Chaldeans in Babylon. He cannot feel that these would be the expressions of David. But despite the doubts and the disagreements on who is the author, we know that this Psalm is a blessed part of the Word of God, and is very important for us today. It has some frank and candid statements concerning the embryo state in the womb and God's jurisdiction thereof. It brings assurance of the life principle in the unborn state of the child, a knowledge that is being overlooked and rejected in this evil time when murder of babies in the womb is legalized and justified.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it a common knowledge among mankind today of how much God has to do with them?
2. If a person could but comprehend how much God thinks about them as our lesson declares, would it help them to want to live for Him?

3. Why do people not know how much God thinks about them and how He feels about them?
4. Why would a person ever want to get away from God's presence?
5. Does this Psalm make it clear that the unborn child is more than just a bunch of cells and blood vessels?
6. How much is God involved in the formation of a child?
7. If God saw us and had sweet thoughts about us before we were conceived, how much more does He have thoughts about us now?
8. If He cared for us back then, does He care more for us now?
9. Why does God want to search us?
10. What is meant by "the way everlasting"?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Our lesson today points out a truth that is hard for us humans to comprehend. And that is how much God thinks and feels about us. Satan would have us suppose that God is not concerned with us vile human beings and that we are beyond the scope of His notice and care. But this Psalm declares the truth of how God feels about us. And let us be aware that this Psalm is a part of the eternal Word of God, the Holy Scriptures that were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Read each verse with an open mind and a prayer for God to reveal it to your heart. God knows us; He searches us; He's watching us; He is caring for us—before us and behind us, above us and beneath us. He knows our thoughts, and the words that are about to spring from our mouth. Not only does He know these things, but He is watching and taking a keen notice of it all. Wherever we go, God is near at hand. If we would find a place far from society and mankind in the uttermost part of the sea, there God will be. We cannot get away from Him and we ought not to try to get away from Him. We can never get geographically at a distance from Him, but we can be far away from Him in our hearts. We should want to draw near to the Lord in spirit. Let us seek to have the attitudes that He can blend with. He ordered our being and entrance into this world. The function of conception and birth are the jurisdiction of the Almighty God, and woe to the person who abuses or trifles with

it. Our society has lowered itself in depths of shame unequalled before in the loose morals and illicit relationships that have spawned legalized abortion. God Almighty is taking note of it, and His judgments are going to be severe upon those who engage in such ungodly activity. Thank God for the truth and the way everlasting.

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In view of God's wealth of knowledge, the Psalmist expressed several desires. It would be well for us to note them and see if our spiritual yearnings coincide.

"Search me, O God." This isn't a request that we could ask of very many people because we would be afraid the searcher would not deal justly in what he discovered. God is one who we can open all things to, knowing that what He finds will be rightly judged. This is a request that must precede salvation.

"... know my heart." In this phrase there is a longing for fellowship. "Search me" begins a relationship, and "know my heart" is the continual fellowship of that bond. After all, who wouldn't want to be a part of one whose knowledge is so much greater than ours?

"... try me, and know my thoughts." Here is a condition for serving God. A length of time with God will mold our thinking so that we can be of profit to others. This is contrary to the thinking of the world. Sinners contrive ways of thwarting others. I heard of a man who lived in an underprivileged part of the country who finally had a telephone installed just so he could hang up on people. Christians ask God to mold their thoughts so that they can help others.

"... lead me in the way everlasting." God's wealth of knowledge as we have need of it is for the asking. Compliance is the key to hearing His voice. I have been quite impressed with the story of the lumber jack who went out into the forest to cut trees. He told his dog to guard his lunch box. A forest fire swept through the forest and afterwards the dog's body was found still by the lunch box. The lumber jack weepingly said, "I always knew I had to be careful what I told my dog to do." We can put infinite trust in our God, for He will lead us into the way everlasting.

—Wayne Murphey

