

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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Volume 33

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Jesus Christ and His Church**
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For this series of Bible Lessons we are joyfully presenting precious truths from various Psalms. These Psalms have spiritual blessings that are for us in the Christian life today. These are experiences and applications of God's goodness and power that were a reality to the writers thereof. And they can be a reality to us in the Christian life today. We pray God that this series of lessons from the Psalms will be a great spiritual uplift and feast for the souls of all who partake of them.

—Leslie C. Busbee



APRIL 1, 2001

GOD, THE DEFENDER OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Psalm 4:1 Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

Psalm 5:3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto thee, and will look up.

4 For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

7 But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: *and* in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

8 Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

10 Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for thy have rebelled against thee.

11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as *with* a shield.

Psalm 6:8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; ~~for~~ the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.

Psalm 7:8 The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity *that is* in me.

9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just; for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

MEMORY VERSE: The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. II Peter 2:9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The wrath of God is against all ungodliness of men and He is determined to punish and destroy all who persist in doing iniquity, but His mercy and goodness is promised to all who follow after righteousness and put their whole trust in Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 4:1), "*God of my righteousness*": The righteousness that David possessed was that which was of faith, the author and Giver of which was the Almighty God. "*Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress*": The Hebrew says, "In distress you gave room to me."

(Psalm 5:3), "*Direct my prayer unto thee*": The words "my prayer" are added words and not in the original text. The word "direct" in the Hebrew means to "set in a row, that is, to arrange or put in order. Our attitudes, desires, intentions and purposes must be in order before God for our prayers to be effective. "*Look up*": To lean forward and peer into the distance upward toward heaven with expectancy.

(Psalm 5:5), "*Thou hatest all workers of iniquity*": This means that all workers of iniquity are offensive, displeasing, odious and disgusting to God.

(Psalm 5:6), "*Leasing*": Falsehood, lies and deceit.

(Psalm 5:8), "*Make thy way straight before my face*": The

way of the working and operation of the Spirit of God is straight and even.

(Psalm 5:10), "*Destroy thou them*": The Hebrew says, "Hold them guilty."

(Psalm 5:12), "*Favour*": The Hebrew says, "delight." This is the manifestation of God's good pleasure and help. This delight that God has in those who love His name and put their trust in Him will surround and protect them from all harm and danger.

(Psalm 6:8), "*Weeping*": This is lamentation, bewailing, bemoaning and continual weeping. This is no small inconvenience or embarrassment. This is sorrow and sadness and heaviness of heart that lingers and weighs down the spirit.

(Psalm 7:8), "*The Lord shall judge the people*": The Hebrew says, "Jehovah shall rule the people." This indicates sovereignty as well as judging and pronouncing sentence. God actually controls and governs the affairs of men. We who love and obey God's Word desire His rulership and are not afraid for Him to pass judgment on us.

(Psalm 7:9), "*God trieth the hearts and reins*": God tests, examines and makes full proof of the hearts and minds of men.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we will consider God's love for righteousness and His hatred for sin and evil. We have chosen several passages from the Psalms, chapters 4 through 7, all of which are attributed to David. These were probably all written concerning the great peril that David suffered in his persecutions from King Saul. In these writings is revealed the anger and wrath of God against the ungodly and the care and favour that He has for the righteous. Saul hated David for no just reason or cause. It was his own pride and jealousy that caused him to hunt and seek for David's life. David was a man after God's own heart. David had found favor with God and had been designated as the next king of Israel. Saul was determined to keep David from taking his throne. Thus the great conflict between the righteous and the unrighteous ensued, to be repeated in many people's lives through the years and even today. We find that daily prayer and supplication coupled with

faithfulness and obedience to God will enable the godly to triumph over all things. The ungodly will fail and perish in the end, but the Lord will deliver the godly out of all their temptations and preserve them unto His heavenly kingdom.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What can the righteous do in the midst of tribulation?
2. What is God's attitude toward sin and the sinner?
3. What is God's attitude toward the righteous?
4. What is going to happen to the ungodly?
5. What can the righteous look forward to?
6. Why do we need God to make His way straight before us?
7. What will God do for us if we trust Him and love Him?
8. What should our attitude be toward our persecutors?
9. Why should we not seek to take vengeance on others?
10. What benefits can the righteous enjoy on God's side?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

For the righteous and godly soul who seeks to please his God there is much tribulation and sorrow to suffer in this wicked world. This sorrow comes mainly through the ill treatment that he suffers from certain of his fellow creatures who are opposed to his faith and efforts to please God. But to those who are righteous and faithful is given a privilege to seek God and pray unto Him. God has given us the freedom and invitation to come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16.) Prayer in the morning is so beneficial and vital. We must learn to pray aright, to arrange and order our hearts to right attitudes and thoughts that we can present to the Lord in our prayers that will be acceptable unto Him. God hates sin. He is angry and displeased with the ways and thoughts of men that are contrary to His holy Word. Those who refuse to acknowledge and forsake their sins are sure to perish in the end, and be sentenced to eternal damnation. We who will serve God and receive His help and favour must part with the company and fellowship of the ungodly. We can be kind, cordial, friendly and

helpful to people, but we must not be intimate to the point of partaking of their ways. The righteous are called to live lives of holy conversation and manners. They are to be praying people and to exercise all care, caution and conscientious efforts to please God and obey His commandments. They are to keep themselves unspotted from the world, its lusts and pride. God will give us grace if we will be willing to take up our cross and follow Jesus in His holy way. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Psalmist David put perfect trust in God to defend him and give him an enjoyable life. He had the utmost confidence that God would deliver him from all trouble.

I like the attitude David expressed in Psalm 4:7. It contrasts the life of the righteous with that of the evil doer. "Thou has put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." David's gladness came from a deep-seated peace in knowing that God would take care of Him, while the wicked man's gladness came from being happy about the perishable and "in season" things of this life.

One writer made the comment that "happiness depends upon the 'haps.' The old English word 'hap' means a chance." Perhaps this is why so many people in the world are unhappy. Their chances of finding happiness seem to be stacked against them. With the Christian, even if everything in this life goes to pieces, it does not take away his gladness because God is not going to go to pieces. God is always there, just the same, and the soul can rest in Him.

Although David was a fugitive from a bitter and powerful king, and though there were times when he felt the need to pour out his heart to God, still he was able to rest it all in God's hands and say, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep:..." Psalm 4:8.

—Wayne Murphey



APRIL 8, 2001

HOPE IN GOD AND THE HELP OF HIS COUNTENANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song *shall be* with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God. Psalm 42:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Regardless of the adversities we meet in the Christian life, we must not allow our hearts to be cast down in discouragement or despair but rather cling steadfastly to our hope in God for the salvation of His presence and power.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 42:1), "*Hart*": The male, stag deer. The hind, which is mentioned in other places, is the female deer. Here we draw a comparison of a noble stag longing and searching for the channels of water to a loving soul longing and yearning for the embrace of his God.

(Psalm 42:2), "*When shall I come and appear before God*": He is longing for the worship service and the gathering together of God's people to sing, to pray to God, and to hear His law go forth.

(Psalm 42:3), "*My tears have been my meat*": This is an expression similar to Psalm 102:9: "For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping." It is an expression to describe one's grief and anguish in their ridicule and persecution. "*Where is thy God*": The writer is in a situation where he is deprived of being in the public worship of God. He is among unbelievers, people who are content with the lusts of the flesh and are void of the Spirit of God. They do not see God because they are taken up with things that are seen in outward shape only.

(Psalm 42:4), "*I pour out my soul*": I spill my life, my breath, my vitality. I lay it on the line and count it not dear unto myself. I am separated from my beloved, and nothing is as dear to my heart as to be reunited with the worship of my God. All the vain attractions of the worldly minded have no appeal to me. I want God's spiritual water of life for my soul and nothing else. "*Holyday*": The feasts and special times ordained for the worship and memorials of God's blessings upon His people, as the passover, and feast of tabernacles.

(Psalm 42:5), *"Disquieted"*: The Hebrew says, "making a loud sound or be in great commotion or tumult, to moan or clamor. It is to be at unrest, disturbed, anxious, fearful and upset. It is the great warfare of the child of God to ward off these timorous feelings and maintain a steady faith and hope in the all-wise Providence of our God. *"The help of his countenance"*: The Hebrew says, "the salvation of His face." The light of the Lord's countenance drives away all fear and unrest from the soul.

(Psalm 42:7), *"Deep calleth unto deep"*: There are various ways of translating this saying and applying it to us. The depths of our sorrowing hearts cries out to the depths of God's help and compassions. The depths of our adversities receives divine inspirations from the depths of His knowledge and understanding. *"All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me"*: In Jonah 2:3 the prophet said this from the depths of the sea in the whale's belly. It is the time when we are submerged in sorrow, suffering and adversity. It is a baptism that God brings us to for to test our character and our faith in Him. Our Lord and Saviour went through it and His saints through the ages have experienced it in fellowship with Him. Joseph was blessed with many blessings, among whom were "the blessings of the deep that lieth under." (Gen. 49:25.) Consider the depths of suffering and abuse that billowed over him! This is how God works with us. And the sooner we can be reconciled and accept such trials and sufferings as Providential benefits the happier we will be and the sooner we will be delivered.

(Psalm 42:8), The Hebrew says, "By day Jehovah will command (appoint, charge, or order) His lovingkindness, and in the night His song shall be with me, a prayer to the God of my life." God has wisely arranged the passing of mortal days to be with day and also with night. He even arranged that the moon go through the various changes of brightness and darkness. So it is with our Christian life. God wisely sends the seasons of bright shining and also the times when darkness falls. It is good to have times when all is bright and pleasant, but prepare yourself for the night and "the days of darkness; for they shall be many." Eccl. 11:8. But there is a song that will come in the night. (Psalm 43:5.) *"The health of my counte-*

nance": The Hebrew says, "the salvations of my face." Before this in 42:5 he spoke of the salvation of God's face. Now it is the salvation of our face, of our bearing and what others see in us. We sometimes suffer disgrace, reproach and scandal. But God is the health of our countenance and if we will be true to Him through these times of humiliation, He will bring us out into a wealthy place to His glory.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will consider these two Psalms that express so sweetly the relationship that we can have with our God. First, we have the thought of thirsting for God, longing to be in His presence and His service. It is vital for us to keep a good thirst for the Spirit of the Lord and His inward blessings of inspiration and communion with God. We will have opposition and adversity in life. David met it in his life as have so many other children of God down through the ages. The surrounding discouragements will have a tendency to cloud our souls and trouble us. But we must maintain a steady faith and confidence in God. Sometimes the waves and the billows will sweep over our souls. In those times we must be observant of God's special visitations and spiritual blessings. They will be there in abundance along with our troubles and trials. As our lesson portrays, God is the God of our life. He reigns supreme over every opposing power of the devil. He will bring us through if we will cling to our hope and faith in Him. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What things in life will keep us from thirsting for God?
2. Why is it so vital for us to worship with His people?
3. Why do some people fail to see God like a saint does?
4. Name some who suffered things contained in our lesson?
5. Why is it good to communicate with our own soul?
6. What should we say to our soul in the time of trouble?
7. What should we do when we feel submerged in sorrow?
8. What will God's light and truth lead us to?
9. How will God's countenance help us?
10. What can God do for the health of our countenance?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is vital for us to keep a good appetite and thirst for the spiritual blessings of communion with God and to be in His service in worship with His people. We are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is. (Hebrews 10:25.) If we keep our appetites keen for God, we will be able to reach Him in prayer regardless of the opposition we may encounter. Trouble and adversity is part of God's discipline with us. It is His way of bringing us to glory and immortality. Before we can wear the crown we must faithfully bear the cross. How needful it is for us to address our souls and command submission to God and raise our hopes in the times of distress and discouragement! We must literally talk to our own heart and bring ourselves in line. Take command and let your knowledge of God's good pleasure drive the foreign thoughts from your mind and heart. Despair is a killer, but hope is a killer of despair. Faith overmasters fear and doubts. But we must initiate faith if we are going to profit thereby. We do not have to be doubters, we can be shouters! Oh, let us look up with a steadfast hope. We can see God's countenance shining through the clouds, and our faith will rise over all the turmoil and despair. Let us remember that it is in the night of sorrow and adversity that the sweetest songs are born. We are going to experience the waves and billows rolling over us. But let us not allow our hearts to be disquieted or cast down. Hope, hope, hope in God. Fight the good fight of faith that will overcome this world of doubt and gloom. Join the ranks of that great army that will stand before the throne of the Lamb, who came up out of great tribulation. (Rev. 7:14.) Will that not be a great day when we meet the author of these Psalms and all who have had like experiences in the course of time?

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts:..."
Psa. 42:7.

The Psalmist David mentions two deeps, each calling to the other. By the description used in Psalm 42:7, it seems

probable that King David had observed a waterspout. If so, he knew how a deep dark cloud, with the voice of a whirlwind, would call unto the rolling sea and create a tornadic funnel. In a waterspout, is the cloud delivering water to the sea, or is the sea feeding water to the cloud? David simply defined it as one deep calling to the other.

Man's soul is a great deep. As a spiritual and immortal being, there is within him fathomless depths of need which cannot be quenched by the physical elements of life alone. There is a need which only God can supply.

God is a great deep. His thoughts are deep. (Psa. 92:5.) His wisdom and knowledge are deep. (Rom. 11:33-36.) His love is deep. (Eph. 3:18-19.)

The depth of our soul's need calls unto the depth of God's fullness, and the fullness of God calls unto the deep of man's soul.

When we feel an intense yearning of spirit, we have the privilege of lifting that longing up to God. In our communion with Him, we may feel that "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me," but the end result will be a sweet experience in which "the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me."

—Wayne Murphey



APRIL 15, 2001

**OUR EVER PRESENT, ALL KNOWING,
ALL GRACIOUS GOD**

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 compassest 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?

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: marvelous 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 imperfect; 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.

MEMORY VERSE: Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Our God knew all about us and what we would be like before we ever came into being. He designed us and created us. He knows everything about us, and goes before us, working and arranging life's path for our good, and He also comes behind us, following up our journeyings with His wise Providence.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 139:2), "*My downsitting and mine uprising*": Every action, emotion, feeling, coming or going, pleasure or pain, is fully known and understood by our all wise heavenly Father.

(Psalm 139:3), "*Thou compasseth my path*": The Hebrew word here means to toss about, to scatter, to sift. It means to scrutinize or examine closely. God is taking note of every single thread of our existence, our thoughts, attitudes, feelings,

desires, likes and dislikes. He will go before us and prepare the way, working all things together for our good, accompanying us as we pass each day, and will also follow up His workings, filtering, soothing and blessing our works for the good of others. All of this can be true in our lives if we will seek to faithfully serve and obey Him.

(Psalm 139:5), *"Thou hast beset me behind and before"*: The Hebrew word for "beset" means to "confine or close me in." God is round about His children collectively and individually. He is watching us intently and with great interest. He allows nothing to touch our lives except what will be profitable and for our good.

(Psalm 139:13), *"Thou hast possessed my reins"*: God has laid claim and holds the absolute ownership of our inner most being. He not only has this right because He created us, but we are His solely because He purchased us through His precious blood. He has a perfect right to jurisdiction and control every facet and function of our existence.

(Psalm 139:14), *"I am fearfully and wonderfully made"*: The Hebrew expression here is: "With reverent things I am distinguished." God formed us reverently for a sacred and holy purpose. We are each one special, unique, separate and different. The human body and all creatures as well portray the ingenuity, the skill, the marvelous craft and design, and the extreme tenderness and forethought of an intelligent and gracious Being.

(Psalm 139:15-16), Let us notice how the Hebrew renders this: "My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret, when I was woven (embroidered or fabricated) in the depths of the earth (the womb). Your eyes saw my embryo and on your book all of them (the whole, every part and every member) were written; the days they were formed when there was not one among them."

LESSON BACKGROUND

This Psalm of David is a very encouraging declaration of the goodness and loving concern that our God has for us, His children. It expresses the interest which God has for each one of us individually. He made us complex and with special

foresight and care. The sum of this writing can be the truth that since God planned us before we were created and knew every shred of our substance before we were formed in the womb, He subsequently is worthy of our complete trust and yielded submission and obedience. He has a perfect right to **examine** and search every thing in our hearts and lives and make any change or adjustment which He sees best to make. We must be open to His counsel and be willing to conform our ways to be in accord with His ways. No idea or imagination that moves in our being must be allowed which conflicts with His. Let us have great thanksgiving and praise for the devotion and warm interest that our God has for us, and let us not be so foolish as to lightly esteem His wisdom and counsel for our lives.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of life will we seek to follow if we are able to receive the light from this 139th Psalm?
2. Why do we need God to go before us and behind us?
3. Why is God so concerned to know every word in our tongues?
4. Why does God want to close us in and lay His hand upon us?
5. Why are these thoughts so wonderful to the child of God?
6. Does God really plan and design every human being in the womb?
7. What do we owe to our Maker for all of this care and concern?
8. How can God know all about us before we were formed?
9. Why should we desire that God search and try us?
10. Is it possible that God could find in us a wicked way?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Before we were ever formed the almighty, all knowing God had us in His great loving mind. He fashioned us according to His good pleasure. We were planned and designed by a great loving Mind and heart! He created us to serve Him and be happy. He wants to mix and mingle with every part of us. He

wants to rule and govern our existence in this world. He knows what is best for us. He will send difficulties and hard trials our way to teach us lessons of His care and goodness. He will prepare our hearts for blessings that He wants to send. He goes before us, working way ahead of our passage, making things work out for our good. God forces no one to serve Him. We have to want Him and be subject to Him. He only accepts willing service. He wants to bless us, but He will only bless when we yield wholeheartedly to Him. Just think of His great all seeing eye watching us every moment! We cannot get away from Him. People seem to think that they can ignore God and get away with it. No matter what we do or where we go, we are going to have to reckon with God. He created us and has special, legitimate demands on us. If we trifle with Him and carelessly handle His dealings we will pay a terrible price. But if we seek after Him in earnest love and fervent desire, we will be rewarded with wonderful blessings. Don't forget that God really loves us and is eagerly waiting for our love and submission to Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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

We sometimes say "we know" someone, perhaps a neighbor. By that we mean we can distinguish him from other people on the street and call him by his proper name. That is a slight acquaintance.

Other times when we say "we know" someone we mean we have a general knowledge of that person's occupation, habits or relatives.

There are times when we know even more than this. We might know a person's principles, their beliefs and the type of companions with whom that person chooses to associate.

There are family members whom we know in an even greater manner. We might know what kind of spirit they have, what displeases and pleases them and how they act in a relaxed atmosphere.

We also know ourselves. We know our own intentions and our every thought.

Yet there is a deeper knowledge of ourselves and all human beings—and that is the one which God possesses. Even in the knowledge of ourselves we might overestimate our virtues and underestimate our weaknesses, so much so that it can be debated as to whether we actually know ourselves. But the Lord knows us as we truly are. What an awesome God! Small wonder David said, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.” —Wayne Murphey



APRIL 22, 2001

OUR PLEA UNTO OUR GOD IN OUR PERISHING STATE

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 Whoknoweth 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* the 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. Psalm 90:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Our short mortal life in this time world will soon be ended. We pray God that His mercies will so bless our journey in time that we may experience His workings in our souls, that the beauty of His holiness may be seen upon us, and that He will direct and be pleased with all that we do to His honour and glory.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 90:1), "*Dwelling place*": An abode, a retreat or refuge, a home.

(Psalm 90:3), "*Destruction*": The Hebrew says dust, or powder. Powder represents that which will be winnowed and blown away. This goes along with what is further said in our lesson about man being like the grass, growing up in the morning of life and then being cut down to wither in the evening. Man is under the sentence of death, a decree given because of the defilement of sin. It is wise that we come to grips with this truth and reckon with it to help us to bring forth a heart of wisdom and godly fear. "*And sayest, Return, ye children of men*": Adam Clarke has a good thought on this. He expresses this verse thus, "Thou shalt turn dying man to the small dust, but Thou wilt say, Return, ye children of men." This may be a prophecy of the resurrection from the dead.

(Psalm 90:9), "*We spend our years as a tale*": The Hebrew

renders this: "We finish our years like a muttering or a sigh."

(Psalm 90:10), "*Threescore years and ten*": A score is 20 years, so it would be 70 years. "*Fourscore*": 80. "*Yet is their strength labour and sorrow*": The Hebrew says, "Yet their pride is labour and vanity."

(Psalm 90:12), The Hebrew renders this: "Therefore teach us to number our days that we may bring a heart of wisdom." May the Lord help us through the inspiration and illumination of His Holy Spirit to be able to reckon with the brevity of life and the shortness of our mortal days, that it will spur and provoke us to sense the value of the fear of God.

(Psalm 90:13), "*Let it repent thee concerning thy servants*": The Hebrew says simply, "Give pity to your servants."

(Psalm 90:14), "*Satisfy us early*": The Hebrew says, "Satisfy us in the morning." This is a wise prayer for ourselves and others, also. It is speaking principally of the early morning of our earthly life, that is, the days of our youth. To seek after our Creator in the days of our youth and receive His mercies will help assure us that we WILL be able to rejoice and be glad all our days.

(Psalm 90:15), The Hebrew says, "Make us glad according to the days of our affliction, the years we have seen evil." If we will give our hearts to God in our youth and follow hard after Him all of our days, God is faithful to guide us through all the sorrow and trouble we meet and will more than atone for all that we are called upon to suffer.

(Psalm 90:16), "*Let thy work appear*": Not our own selfish and lustful endeavors and vain accomplishments, but Thy work, O Lord, would we experience and see in our hearts and lives. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Ephesians 2:10. "...Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. 2:12-13.

(Psalm 90:17), "*Beauty*": The agreeableness or delight of the Lord. It is a blessed experience to be so in tune and harmony with the Holy Spirit and the will of God that we can enjoy the benefits of the light of His countenance and well pleasing! "*Establish thou the work of our hands upon us*": Set up erect and straight and solid the work and operation of the

gifts and callings given to us. Let our works not be from covetousness, pride, worldly honour, or self-gratification. Let our labours accomplish good for eternity both in our own souls and in the souls of our fellow men.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading of this 90th Psalm says that it is the prayer of Moses, the man of God. It could very well be the writing of Moses, and if not the writing, it could very well fit in his life. He was 40 years old when he had to flee from Egypt and he was about eighty when God called him to go rescue Israel from Egyptian bondage. During those intervening forty years that he spent in Midian he had plenty of feelings and experiences that could have inspired this Psalm. This Psalm could have fit Joseph in the prison years of Egypt separated from his father and brethren. It could very well be the breathing of the soul of David in his perilous flight to escape from the jealousy of King Saul. And it could very well be the sighing and prayer of the captive Israelites in Babylon. It is a Psalm also for us today, and blessed are they who are able to receive and benefit from the holy truth contained therein. It is the prayer of the contrite heart who has tasted delay, suffering, denial and the shortness of strength that mortal life brings. It is a comfort to the aged and should be a challenge for the youth to provoke them to apply their hearts to wisdom and the fear of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. In what way is the Lord God our dwelling place?
2. What kind of destruction does God turn us to, and why?
3. How is our mortal life compared to grass?
4. What punishment has God given mankind for his sin?
5. Why are the figures 70 and 80 years used?
6. What does it mean to number our days so we can apply our hearts unto wisdom?
7. What must we do if we would rejoice and be glad all our days?
8. Why do too many young people fail to seek after God?

9. How do we need the work of God to appear in us?
10. How can the beauty of God be upon us, and why do we need our works to be established?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our mortal state of life is but vanity and so soon to come to an end. We are like grass. In our youth we are fresh and strong and fair like the tender green grass and herbs are in the spring. It is amazing how swiftly our youth passes. Life is likened unto a single day. In the morning of our life we go about and have much energy to go and do as we please. But toward evening things are different. In our youth we need to look ahead and reckon with the fact that we are going to get old some day. In our morning of life we need to get down to business and really get saved and be born from above and give up the flesh and selfish ways of life. We need to work at this thing with all of our heart. We need to keep encouraged in the holy way for the years soon fly by and we will be so glad that we have had a life spent for God and will receive a crown of life that fadeth not away. The Lord wants to bless our lives. But we must apply our hearts to wisdom. We must discipline our minds and hearts to be humble and receptive to the counsels of the Lord. We must be attentive and prayerful, and learn to live in communion with God. We must be diligent to obey the voice of the Holy Spirit. We must be on our guard constantly against the inroads and devices of Satan. Such diligence and consecration will pay off. We will have trials and disappointments. God's people all down through the ages have had to suffer things unjustly. But if we will humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, He will exalt us in due time. May the truths of this wonderful Psalm find its way in every heart. Let it be your psalm, a reality in your own life. Its reward is beyond compare.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How quickly time passes! It seems that one day fades into the other and the years come and go. The Psalmist exhorts us to "number" our days. (Psa. 90:12.) To number means to

pause and take note of each item. It is well to do the same with the days of our lives. Christian maturity and progress come with stopping at frequent intervals to determine how wisely we are living.

Did you note that the Psalmist invoked God's help to teach us how to do this? We must have His help to know how to put the correct value on the way we live. It would serve no purpose to count money if we did not know the difference between a penny and a quarter. Neither would it profit to count our days if we have no comprehension of God's purpose for our lives versus our own human inclinations. —Wayne Murphey



APRIL 29, 2001

DELIVERANCE FROM MEN OF THIS WORLD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORYVERSE: Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings. Psalm 17:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: This time world is dominated by wicked people who have no regard for eternal values. We must diligently seek God's help to keep our vision keen for the unseen eternal blessings that are found only in Christ Jesus.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 17:1), The Hebrew meanings in this verse: "Hear intelligently righteousness, O Jehovah, prick up your ears unto my loud voice of grief, broaden out your ears unto my prayer not in lips of deceit."

(Psalm 17:2), The Hebrew says, "Let my judgment go out from your presence; your eyes see uprightly."

(Psalm 17:3), The Hebrew says, "You will test my heart: You will visit in the night; You will refine me, You will find nothing; My thoughts do not pass my mouth." "Thoughts unexpressed so often fall back dead, but God Himself can't kill them once they're said." From the poem, "First Settler's Story," by Will Carlton.

(Psalm 17:4), "*Destroyer*": The violent.

(Psalm 17:5), The Hebrew says, "My steps kept in your tracks, that my stroke has not slipped." "Tracks" here are defined as circular ramparts or embankments of earth upon which are protective fences that surround a castle or fort. This refers, of course, to God's Word. God has given us His Word that we must keep in line with if we are to benefit from His

keeping power. This word "stroke" translated *footsteps* refers to the moves we make, the attitudes we form, the judgments we pronounce, and the way we allow ourselves to react to what comes our way. It is our God-given responsibility to keep close watch and restriction on what we allow to transpire in our lives.

(Psalm 17:8), "*Keep me as the apple of the eye*": The Hebrew says, "Keep me as the pupil, the daughter of the eye." As the tender and delicate part of the eye through which the light shines unto the sensitive retina is protected by the eyebrow, the eyelash, and the eyelids, so we need God's protection upon our weak and helpless souls. There is another thought about the daughter of the eye. Godly parents of a son or daughter cherish and protect their offspring and carefully seek to help them to escape the destruction of the wicked world around them. Is not the heavenly Father in a much greater way earnestly watching over and protecting His little ones who are trusting in Him?

(Psalm 17:9), "*From the wicked that oppress me*": He is praying unto God to hide him under the shadow of His wings from the wicked who would ravage and strip him of even life itself.

(Psalm 17:10), "*Enclosed in their own fat*": They are sullied and resting confident in their carnal prosperity and wealth. So does prosperity work havoc in souls today.

(Psalm 17:13-14), The Hebrew says, "Arise, O Jehovah, go before his face and bow him down; deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword: from men by your hand, O Jehovah, from men of the world whose portion is in this life, and with your treasure you fill their belly, they are satisfied with sons, and will leave their riches to their babes." David did not seek to avenge himself, but pled the great hand of God to deliver him from Saul. In this he was a great example for us to follow today. "*Their portion in this life*": How accurately the men of this world are described here! Having no vision nor confidence in the eternal riches their only hope and desire is centered around accumulating the wealth of this present fleeting life. It is the greatest error that men are making today.

(Psalm 17:15), The Hebrew says, "I, in righteousness will

I look on your face: I shall be satisfied by your image when I awaken." Our portion and inheritance is not in this life. "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Hebrews 13:14. Herein is found the sharp contrast between the holy and the wicked.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We see in our lesson today not only the expression of a persecuted soul of long ago, such as David in his peril with King Saul, but also the prayer of our hearts in the trials and sufferings that we meet today. It was David's constant prayer and intreaty to God that He would maintain his right and his cause against this unreasonable and cruel man. Let us remember that I Peter 1:12 tells us that the things written by the prophets are also ministered unto us. They were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Romans 15:4. Life is not going to be flowery beds of ease. There is a continual conflict between those who have their hearts set on heaven and those who are pursuing the riches and pleasures of this life. How needful it is for us to know what God's Word says, and be diligent to follow it explicitly! What is our portion? What are we striving for? Jesus spoke about not laying up treasures on earth but in heaven. (Matthew 6:19-20.) —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of spirit must we have for God to answer our prayers?
2. How does the Word of God keep us from the paths of the destroyer?
3. What are some of the ways of the godly that causes the worldly to despise and persecute them?
4. How are we the apple of God's eye?
5. From what do we need God to deliver and keep us?
6. Why is worldly prosperity a snare to men's souls?
7. How is it that men of the world have their portion in this life?
8. What is going to become of the worldly minded souls?
9. What is the portion that the child of God seeks for?

10. What does it mean to be satisfied to awake with His likeness?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

David had done absolutely nothing to merit and deserve the vile abuse and murderous attitude of King Saul. It was jealousy in the proud and lustful heart of Saul that brought on the trouble. This spirit of jealousy was in the hearts of the leaders of Israel against our Lord Jesus. They were jealous of the praise and worship people were bestowing upon Him for His wonderful works unto them. And we will find that this same spirit of jealousy is alive in the world today. It is a hatred that brews in the heart of the ungodly against the righteous. It passes down from one generation to the next generation. Cain was jealous of and hated his brother, Abel, and eventually slew him. Joseph was hated and abused of his jealous brothers. Moses was sought for by Pharaoh and had to flee Egypt. No doubt Noah and his family took a lot of abuse and ridicule from the people of their time. And so it is today when godly people stand up for what is holy. Saint women are criticized for the way they dress in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety. God's people are persecuted for having faith in Him. In times past young men have had to suffer because they refused to go to war and fight with carnal weapons. Saints who have taken a stand against deceptive and false religions have been wrongfully accused and condemned. But godly people have a great privilege of prayer and trusting in God to vindicate their stand for the truth in these adverse conditions. Let us not forget that our real portion is not in this world, but in the world to come. Let us keep our affections on things above, and pray always that we will be accepted of Him in that day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are three passages in the book of Psalms that I love to link together. They are Psalm 18:30, "As for God, His way is perfect"; Psalm 103:15, "As for man, his days are as grass"; and Psalm 17:15, "As for me, I will behold thy face in

righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Notice these three statements, "As for God—as for man—as for me."

"As for God, His way is perfect." No matter what comes I know He makes no mistake. Sickness may come, financial trouble may come, family trouble may come, church troubles may come—and there is no trouble on earth so bad as trouble among the people of God—but no matter what happens, "As for God, His way is perfect."

As for man: David says, I have learned not to expect much from him, "his days are as grass." But "As for me,... I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

—Taken from writings by H. A. Ironside



MAY 6, 2001

THE MYSTERY OF THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED

Psalm 73:1 Truly God is good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart.

2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

3 For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

5 They *are* not in trouble *as other* men; neither are they plagued like *other* men.

7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches.

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands *in* innocency.

14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

16 When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me;

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end.

18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.

19 How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with thee: thou hast holden *me* by my right hand.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire beside thee.

26 My flesh and my heart faileth: *but* God *is* the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

28 But *it is* good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

MEMORY VERSE: Let not thine heart envy sinners: but *be thou* in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off. Prov. 23:17-18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him. Ecclesiastes 8:12.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 73:13), "*Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain*": This was his thoughts before he had gone into the sanctuary and sought God's face about the matter. He was looking at the prosperity of others who were not seeking to please the Lord, and comparing them to himself and the adversities that he suffered as a follower of God.

(Psalm 73:18), "*Slippery places*": The Hebrew says "smoothness or flattery." The comfort and enjoyableness of the things of the flesh and the world with its treasures and pleasures beguile the mind and heart. For a time it seems that they are doing well while the godly are being taken through the crucible of pain and adversity. But there is a time coming when the prosperity of the wicked will suddenly end while the righteous

will come forth as gold tried in the fire to enjoy God's reward for eternity.

(Psalm 73:19), "*As in a moment*": The Hebrew says, "In an instant." There are parallel thoughts in the Scriptures. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." I Thess. 5:3. The apostate church, Babylon the Great, "glorified herself, and lived deliciously, for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, mourning, and famine, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.... For in one hour is she made desolate." Revelation 18:7-8, 19c. The prosperity of the ungodly is short lived.

(Psalm 73:25), "*None upon earth that I desire beside thee*": The Hebrew expression is "There is no one on earth that I hold as equal with you." The Lord God deserves our highest esteem and love.

(Psalm 73:27), "*A whoring from thee*": To commit adultery or fornication with the world and its pride and vanity. Spiritual adultery is the worst and most serious kind. God will destroy all who allow this world to become the object of their worship and devotion.

(Psalm 73:28), The Hebrew rendering of this verse is so good: "And I, the nearness of God to me is good; I have set in the Lord Jehovah my refuge, to declare all your works."

(Proverbs 23:18), "*Surely there is an end*": The Hebrew says, "Surely there is a hereafter."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading of this Psalm says, "A Psalm of Asaph." Adam Clarke says that "it is likely that this Asaph lived under the Babylonish captivity, and that he published this psalm to console the Israelites under bondage, who were greatly tried to find themselves in such outward distress and misery, while a people much more wicked and corrupt than themselves were in great prosperity, and held them in bondage." This Psalm has a great lesson of truth for the child of God. The first part expresses his bewilderment at the prosperity of the ungodly

society around him and it almost caused his feet to slip and lose his hold on faith. But after going into the sanctuary, into the place of holy quietness and prayer, he saw things in a different light. It is imperative for us and also a critical point in our lives to really seek the Lord for guidance and understanding. To just go ahead and suppose the Lord is with us can be a costly error. The Holy Spirit is our only safeguard of keeping out of error. The latter part of this Psalm is the expressed joy of his faith and hope, that his portion is in God and will be enjoyed afterward when the Lord will receive him to glory.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why are we tempted to wonder about the prosperity of the wicked?
2. Is it true that the children of God will suffer for their faith?
3. Why did the writer at first feel that he had cleansed his heart in vain?
4. How did he come to the right understanding?
5. How can we go into the sanctuary of God today?
6. How should we view the prosperity of the wicked?
7. What do we, as children of God, have to look forward to?
8. What can we do when our flesh and heart fails us?
9. How can a person commit spiritual adultery against God?
10. How can we draw near to God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is a sad fact that the ungodly so often prospers in his evil ways. It is sad because so often such a one has stubbornly resisted the Spirit of the Lord, and God in turn gives him over, withdrawing all restraint and discipline, and actually grants him the fulfillment of his covetous desires. It was said of Israel in Psalm 106:13-15, "They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." God is weighing the spirits of men. He respects their desires and decisions. If they

are bent on fleshly fulfillment He will give it to them, but with it will come spiritual destruction. The Lord knows them that are truly inclining their hearts to Him and His good pleasure. He trieth the righteous and allows much suffering and adverse conditions to come their way. He wants to bless His people but will first prove and refine them in the furnace of affliction. It is a wonderful victory when a person can recognize that the sufferings that come their way are special blessings from God. They are for our good and eternal welfare. It is far better to suffer as a Christian than to enjoy worldly prosperity and be out of joint with one's Maker. How wonderful is the opportunity we have to go into the sanctuary of God and seek Him concerning the perplexities of life! We enter into the sanctuary when we close out the strife and attractions of this frivolous world and pour out our hearts in prayer and supplication to God. When we meet up with adversity and disappointments in life, it is the best thing to seek the Lord earnestly and draw closer to Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When people prosper in a material sense, it is not necessarily an indication of God's favor or blessing upon them. Or, just because adversity and hard times come, we must not conclude that people are out of harmony with God.

It was Christ who spoke of the deceitfulness of riches. (Mark 4:19.) The apostle Paul also spoke of some who considered "gain is godliness." (I Tim. 6:5.) The misrepresentation involved is that as individuals obtain opulence and the prestige that often accompanies it, they feel they are finding their place in the world. The reality may be that the world is finding its place in them. The psalm in our lesson described the corrupt and lofty lifestyle of those who had allowed themselves to be defiled by the things of this world. This indicated a malady of the heart. However, we should never lose sight of the fact that there is a place in the sanctuary of God where we can enjoy the blessings of life and yet be free of the ignoble ways of the wicked, and after this life, inherit an eternal home in heaven. Sometimes God blesses His children with the best of both worlds.

—Wayne Murphey

MAY 13, 2001

**CONFIDENCE, DEVOTION AND STEADFASTNESS
IN OUR GOD**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: One *thing* have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. Psalm 27:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Regardless of all that comes against us in this wicked world we can steadfastly remain in the house of the Lord and enjoy His presence and protection all the days of our life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 27:2), "*Enemies*": The Hebrew meaning implies those who trouble us and put us in a narrow and tight place. This includes all sources of affliction, anguish, distress, sorrow, or any other of the various straits of trouble and difficulty. Jesus spoke of the way to life being strait and narrow (Matthew 7:14) and this is because of the many adverse powers in this world against godliness and what is pleasing to the Lord. If we live a godly life to please God we can expect much adversity and opposition.

(Psalm 27:3), "*Will I be confident*": The Hebrew says, "I seek and hasten for refuge."

(Psalm 27:4), "*Beauty*": Agreeableness, delight, pleasure, suitableness, splendor, grace. "*Inquire*": To plough, open up, inspect, admire and consider.

(Psalm 27:5), "*In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me*": In the Most Holy Place of entire sanctification and perfect holiness we can be hid away with Christ in God. There we can be kept and preserved from the pride of man and the strife of tongues. (Psa. 31:20.)

(Psalm 27:6), "*And now*": The Hebrew says, "At this time." Yes, it is when we are hid away with Christ in God, sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit, that our hearts and minds can be lifted up above our foes in grace and victory which will cause us to rejoice and offer sacrifices of joy and sing praises unto our Lord.

(Psalm 27:11), "*Platn path*": The Hebrew says, "level

path”..This means that which is straight, just and in agreement and harmony with the holiness of God. “*Because of mine enemies*”: The Hebrew says, “because of those who watch me.”

(Psalm 27:13), “*I had fainted, unless I had believed*”: The words “I had fainted” are added words by the translators and are not in the original text. “Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living—what! what, alas! should have become of me!” —Clarke. There are surely those times when we have to ignore and refuse to respect how things appear or seem to the human and outward, and simply believe the promises of God that He has given us.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is another of David's songs of trust and deliverance. In it we find wonderful and inspiring expressions of his confidence in God and his decision to be devoted and faithful to Him. These expressions take shape in the heart's desire of the child of God today just as they were the pulsing of David's heart. Oh, that more would conceive this righteous desire to dwell in the house of the Lord and behold His beauty and seek to know of the riches of His grace! Too many make a start and do not stay with it through thick and thin. Always something will come along to throw you off the track if you are not unreservedly determined. Our hearts must be willing and full of purpose to seek daily the Lord's face. We have to seek His face in prayer and fervent hunger for Him. And, oh, we've got to believe! This word “believe” is a deep and vitally important word! It mainly implies counting something to be true. In fact, the words “true” and “truth” come from the same root word as does the word “believe.” The carnal policy of this wicked world is against believing faith. To live or walk by faith means that the world is against us. We must press against the tide of unbelief, doubts, fears and darkness if we are to prevail and conquer in the Christian life. May the Lord help us, as He did the saints of old, to count God's Word and promises faithful and true and hold fast to them all the days of our life!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we overcome the temptation to be afraid?
2. What is the fervent desire expressed in our lesson?
3. What kind of beauty of the Lord is he speaking of?
4. What are some of the things we need to inquire in His temple about?
5. What are some of the benefits we can enjoy by dwelling in God's House?
6. What does it mean to seek God's face?
7. Why do we need to be led in a plain or level path?
8. What will happen to us if we fail to really believe the Word of God?
9. What is so important about being able to wait on God?
10. What are some of the enemies that we need to overcome today?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

No one can successfully live for Jesus without a strong and irrevocable determination and decision. Being saved is more than getting forgiven of our sins. It is a turning away from sin and evil and a wholesome, pure decision to go with God and His blessed holy way. There are going to be many foes and obstacles to meet and overcome. If you do not settle it in your heart to go all the way, regardless of the opposition, you will not make it. You have to have decision, pure and clean decision. It has to be all for God and none for the devil, all for God and none for self. What does it mean to live in God's house? It means to really give all to Him and be submissive to His blessed will regardless of what it costs us. To be in God's house and go no more out means to be in co-operation with His laws and judgments. Oh, in God's house we are blessed to behold His beauty and the delightful treasures of His sweet Spirit! Real beauty is inward beauty of the soul. There are many people who are handsome and beautiful outwardly but are horrid and repulsive in their spirit. God wants us to behold His beauty and to have His beauty reflected in our ways and attitudes. There is much exploring to be done in the great and spacious Temple of the Lord. Many lessons in life to learn and much from His Word we need to gain knowledge of. We need

to learn how to resist the devil and be an overcomer. Sheltered in His loving care we can gain the victory every time. We need never be a loser. It pays to really seek the Lord every day with all of your heart. Even if loved ones fail or forsake us, the Lord will stand by us if we will stand by Him. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Psalmist David desired to dwell in the house of the Lord so that he could behold the beauty of the Lord. What does he mean by the “beauty of the Lord?” It is His moral beauty. No man has ever looked upon the countenance of God, and yet it is possible to see His beauty.

The beauty of the Lord is His character. He is moral and spiritual perfection. In the house of the Lord we look into His Word and behold these attributes. We contemplate His love and sacrifice for man. His grace and compassion overwhelm us. This is what going to the house of the Lord is all about.

The Psalmist also found that in the house of the Lord he could “inquire.” Many times our soul has questions and longings, and in the house of the Lord, in His presence, God can speak to our hearts, answer those questions and satisfy our longings.

—Wayne Murphey



MAY 20, 2001

REMEMBERING THE WORKS OF THE LORD

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.

4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

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.

7 Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

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.

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: I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. Psalm 77:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Despite the afflictions and adverse conditions we face in the present time, we can find comfort and encouragement in remembering the great works that God wrought with His people in ages past, knowing that His love and goodness is still the same for us today as it was back then.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 77:2), "*My sore ran in the night, and ceased not*": The Hebrew says, "My hand was poured out in the night and did not grow numb." This means that He was in earnest prayer in the night and did not relax the earnestness of his soul.

(Psalm 77:3), The Hebrew reads, "I remember God and am troubled; I ponder and meditate, and my soul faints." "*Selah*": This is generally believed to be a musical notation for a brief

or momentary pause. I take it as a place to stop and reflect and consider thoughtfully.

(Psalm 77:4), *"Thou holdest mine eyes waking"*: His grief and trouble of soul was so great that sleep went from him and even was dumb and not able to speak.

(Psalm 77:6), *"I call to remembrance my song in the night"*: He is remembering times before when he was in distress and heaviness of heart, and how the Lord visited him with a song in the midst of his troubles. *"Commune with mine own heart"*: It is wise to be able to discipline and deal with one's own self. So many cannot do this, but are continually drawing in things that will drown and quench any personal conviction or reproof that they are so greatly in need of. *"Made diligent search"*: We need to throw open our hearts for the Lord to weigh, inspect and ponder deeply our innermost being.

(Psalm 77:10), *"This is my infirmity"*: This can cover any thing that is distressing and difficult, such as sickness, weakness, affliction or grief. It is good to recognize that God is in these adverse difficulties and infirmities which come upon us. The apostle Paul learned to take pleasure in infirmities, reproaches, necessities (times of need), persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake. (II Cor. 12:10.) They have a good and wholesome purpose and effect on our spiritual life if we will take them right. *"The years of the right hand of the most High"*: I believe this is prophetic of the Saviour's intercessory role for His saints as our High Priest at the right hand of God. At least it is our refuge today to resort to our King seated on high and overcome through His help from heaven in every conflict and adversity of life.

(Psalm 77:11), *"Remember"*: To call to mind, consider, not to forget or lightly esteem. Why did God do so many spectacular and mighty works with Israel down in Egypt and through the wilderness and into the Caanan land? He wanted to declare to the ages to follow His great power and goodness, as a comfort to all in the trials and adversities of life. He will be faithful and show Himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him.

(Psalm 77:13), *"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary"*: Thy way is in holiness, or in the holy place. Here is where we can

learn of God's ways, and the only way that they are to be discerned. What God wants to make known to us comes through the sanctity of holy worship and full devotion to Him.

(Psalm 77:16), *"The waters saw thee"*: The passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea is what these remaining verses of this Psalm 77 are referring to. It was no mere sea of reeds and shallow waters to be waded through as some have inferred it to be. No, it was a deep, impassible body of deep sea water that stretched out before Moses and Israel that night as the Egyptian army pressed on them from the rear. The Spirit of the Lord moved upon the waters and parted them, making a path for His people to cross over. It was their deliverance and the doom of their enemies, who pressed in behind them, not knowing what they were in for.

(Psalm 77:19), *"Thy way is in the sea"*: The way God led the children of Israel was through the Red Sea. The impossibility, the insurmountable obstacles, the unreasonable situations are the things that have blocked the path of God's people down through the years. God's way is still in the sea. We find His ways in the sanctuary revealed in His Word through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But we also learn through the trying scenes of life His way of working. *"Thy footsteps are not known"*: We do not know what route God will take in fulfilling His promises to us. But as we live close to Him in the sanctuary and keep our faith and courage up, we will be able to follow Him in those times when He takes out across the great waters.

(Psalm 77:20), *"Thou leddest thy people"*: His ways are past finding out and His judgments are unsearchable (Rom. 11:33), but He has ways of leading us, as He did Israel by the hand of Moses and Aaron, if we will stay in that holy place of communion and fellowship with Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This is a precious Psalm full of inspiration and benefit for us today. As the writer expressed his trouble and sorrows, so we have trouble and sorrows. Sometimes it seems more than we can bear and it may look to all outward conditions that the Lord has cast us off forever and will not be favorable any more.

But the lesson here is for us to not accept these suggestions, but to remember His works and wonders of old. Let us consider how God has worked with His people in the past, and hold fast to the confidence that He can work wonders for us today. What we have to do is to keep our faith and trust in Him and keep in that holy place of communion and well-pleasing with Him. His ways are above ours, but He will make known His ways to us if we will hold steady and be true.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What should we do in the day of trouble?
2. Do we as human beings have a tendency to fail to remember as we should?
3. What kind of diligent search should we make?
4. What does it mean to commune with our own heart?
5. Why did God do so many wonderful works of old?
6. Of what value is it to call them to mind?
7. What message do they give to us?
8. What kind of sea does God take us through today?
9. Where and how can we learn the way of our God?
10. What is the result of forgetting the works of God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a blessing the gift of memory is to us! To remember things from day to day that we have learned in the past years and to keep using them and applying them to our needs and endeavors is surely a wonderful benefit. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would bring to our remembrance all things whatsoever He had said. (John 14:26.) Simon Peter sought to stir up our minds by way of remembrance in his second epistle. Jesus wanted us to take of the bread and the cup in remembrance of Him. (1 Cor. 11:24-25.) It is vital for us to call to remembrance things that have taken place in the past that were God's working. Many times we can be saved from spiritual failure or defeat by calling to remembrance the right scripture or incident that God has brought to pass in times before. God has worked in times past in wonderful ways. He does not want us to forget these things. As we go on for the Lord

and are faithful to love and serve Him He will work many wonderful experiences that will be a comfort and an uplift to us when we call them to mind. When we think of God's wonders of old like how He worked with Israel in Egypt and in His great deliverance for them from the bondage of Pharaoh, our hearts swell with admiration and praise. The God that saved Daniel from the hungry lions and the Hebrew children from the fiery furnace can just as wonderfully bring us through whatever we might face in life. So let us call to remembrance these former days of old and also the things that God has already worked more recently in our lives. Let's sharpen up our memory by daily applying our hearts to His Word and living a life of prayer and communion with God in holiness and truth. Keeping our minds active in positive and encouraging things will help keep our hearts and minds from deterioration and ruin. And we will be able to rise above all the powers of darkness and gloom that may come against us in the Christian life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Isn't this typical? David is troubled, so he remembers how God worked in ancient times. Then he wonders, "...will he be favourable no more?" He thought about it so much, and complained to such an extent that his spirit became overwhelmed.

This is typical of most Christians when there is trouble. They remember the Scriptures and how God worked in ancient times to deliver the righteous. They even recall how God provided a way in the days of their grandparents and parents. Then they wonder, "Is God still working today?" The temptation is there to remonstrate and say He doesn't.

I am glad David ended the Psalm by arriving at this conclusion, "Thou leddest thy people like a flock..." Whether one was a saint two thousand, two hundred or twenty years ago, God has led His children. And He will lead us yet today.

—Wayne Murphey



MAY 27, 2001

GOD, OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: *Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*
Psalm 46:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: No matter what happens in this mortal realm we can escape and be preserved from evil through the help of our wonderful God. By ceasing from our own works and learning to be still and wait on Him we can really experience His blessed reality.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 46:1), "*A very present help in trouble*": The Hebrew

says, "A help in troubles is found very much."

(Psalm 46:2), The Hebrew renders this: "Therefore we will not fear when the earth changes, and in mountains slipping into the heart of the seas." The upheavals described here can be natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, tidal waves, etc., or it can be political turmoil, such as governments overthrown, oppression from tyranny, civil wars, or other conflicts between parties and factions of men.

(Psalm 46:3), "*Waters...roar,...mountains shake*": Waters are symbolic of masses of people. Jesus said that in the last days before His second coming there would be "upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21:25-26.)

(Psalm 46:4), "*A river, the streams whereof*": We have here presented a river and its streams, or channels. These channels are brooks or rivulets coming from the river to various points to water or irrigate. This is a beautiful likeness of the Holy Spirit flowing down from heaven into this world. The indwelling fountain of the Holy Spirit springing up in the soul into everlasting life is the true means by which we can triumph in the upheavals of this present world.

(Psalm 46:5), "*And that right early*": The Hebrew says, "at the dawning of the morning..." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalm 30:5. "And he (Christ) shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds." (II Sam. 23:4.) Oh, what a wonderful picture this is of the saints of God, hearing the joyful sound of the voice of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and walking in the light of His countenance, the bright and morning Star! (Psalm 89:15. Rev. 22:16.)

(Psalm 46:6), Watch the sequence: "The heathen raged (in their lust and pride against God and each other), the kingdoms were moved (shaking and constantly in change and upheaval): he uttered his voice (through the prophets, the law, and the gospel of His Son), the earth melted (was brought to judgment and passed away.)"

(Psalm 46:7), "*The Lord of hosts*": Jehovah of armies.

(Psalm 46:8), *"What desolations he hath made in the earth"*: The Hebrew says, "who sets ruins on the earth." These ruins and wastes and destructions bring dismay and consternation to the pride of man. Look around you and behold the terrible woes that the works of men have brought upon themselves. Behold, these are the workings of the judgments of Jehovah. The weapons of war fail and are proven vain securities. God destroys the wisdom of the wise and brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent. (I Cor. 1:19.)

(Psalm 46:10), *"Be still, and know that I am God"*: Silence your foolish endeavors, quiet your restless activities, for it is all useless and vain. "In returnings and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength!" (Isa. 30:15.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

The author and origin of this wonderful Psalm in our lesson today is unknown, but we know it comes to us by the inspiration of the Almighty God. It is a Psalm for His saints today. It has been a stronghold for His people down through the ages. This River is a glorious thought and reality to all who are made partakers of the unspeakable Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit when He promised to those who are thirsty and come to Him to drink, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John 7:38. This is the refuge and the dawning of the morning to us. We can find that our works are of no profit, and learn to be silent and still before the Lord, hoping and quietly waiting for Him to work. Thus we can know without a doubt that He truly is God, our refuge and strength and is a help found in troubles very much.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. By what means are we not afraid in times of trouble?
2. What is this wonderful river that makes us glad?
3. What are some of the things that bring fear to men's hearts?
4. How can we keep peace in the midst of this troublesome world?

5. What do we see when we look upon the face of humanity?
6. Why is God called the Lord of hosts?
7. What happens when the heathen rage?
8. What happens when God utters His voice?
9. What are some of the ruins and desolations that God makes?
10. What does it mean to "be still," and what will it profit us if we learn to be still?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God is our refuge, strength and help. These three words convey great meaning and value. What is a refuge? It is a place to go for safety and protection. There are many dangers in this world. Not only physical dangers and harm threaten us, but there are spiritual foes and agents of Satan that are going about seeking whom they might devour. God is a stronghold for the soul who desires and wills to be holy and right. Then He is our strength. He is so mighty and powerful that we can scarce begin to comprehend it all. He will strengthen, that is, warm the heart and comfort it with courage and confidence. He gives us promises and statements from His Word, and as we know and are persuaded that such is true, then we are strengthened in our decision to go forth and face whatever is before us. The endurance that we need in the times of stress is well supplied by the strength He daily gives us. And not only is our God our strength and refuge, but He also is greatly our help in times of difficulty and trouble. He helps our infirmities, (Romans 8:26), and works in conditions and situations that makes the way more bearable. He literally goes before us, arranging, moving, opening up and closing down. He helps us one day at a time. He gives not grace and help for tomorrow, for we are not in need of that. We can testify fully that God has been, is now, and always will be the strength and help that we need to be triumphant and successful in our life here in this world.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Being still before God does not mean inactivity or useless-

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

Of course the key to this rest is resting in God. Psychology has much to say about the relationship between relaxation and sanity. When the din of living overtakes the spirit, the mind becomes endangered. Therefore, the therapy that is advised is to lay down on a couch and let someone guide you into a restful frame of mind. The rest you derive will be to the same degree that the practitioner is able to convince you that circumstances will work out. Many times a therapist is unable to take an active part in solving your problems, and therefore finds himself greatly limited in how he can help you. Herein is the difference in the rest God gives. As we get quiet before Him, He has promised to show us what He will do. When Moses told the Israelites to stand still, God showed them He could part the Red Sea.

In the ninth verse of our lesson the Psalmist said, "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire." Great hope and confidence is engendered by resting in God.

—Wayne Murphey



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JUNE 3, 2001

THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES

Psalm 49:1 Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all *ye* inhabitants of the world:

3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart *shall be* of understanding.

5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, *when* the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?

6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

7 None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

8 (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

9 That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

10 For he seeth *that* wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

11 Their inward thought *is*, *that* their houses *shall continue* for ever, *and* their dwelling places to all generations; they call *their* lands after their own names.

12 Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts *that* perish.

14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;

17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

MEMORY VERSE: Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Luke 12:15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We should not seek for earthly riches and wealth, for they provide no hope beyond death and the grave. We should trust in the living God, do good, be rich in good works, and lay hold on the hope in Christ of being redeemed from the power of the grave unto life everlasting.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 49:5), The Hebrew renders this: "Why should I fear in the days of evil the iniquity of my supplanters who surround me?"

(Psalm 49:6), This tells us who his supplanters and ambushers are. They are those that trust in their wealth and boast in their many riches.

(Psalm 49:7), "*Nor give to God a ransom*": All the wealth of this present world cannot purchase a true hope of being redeemed from death or the grave.

(Psalm 49:8), "*The redemption of their soul is precious*": No amount of earthly wealth can equal the value of the redemption and salvation of our precious and eternity bound soul. When death comes, it ceases forever, that is, there is no more chance or opportunity to do something about our soul's salvation after death.

(Psalm 49:9), "*That he should not see corruption*": Oh, it is so hard for a man of wealth to face up to the reality of death and the emptiness of his worldly possessions! How true are the words of the Lord Jesus concerning the rich man who looked forward to many years of ease and prosperity, "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:20-21.

(Psalm 49:14), "*Like sheep they are laid in the grave*": Though in life they were ferocious and terrible as lions, yet they are herded and subdued by death and lined up obediently in their tomb. "*Death shall feed on them,*" or, "death shall feed them." Instead of renouncing their wealth and taking Christ as their Shepherd, now Death is their shepherd. "*The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning*": What a change takes place in the great judgment morning for those who

scorned the godly and Christ-like! Those whom they looked down upon in scorn and despised their meek and modest ways of life are now their victors, appearing in glory with Christ whom they rejected and despised! *"Their beauty shall consume in the grave"*: The outward beauty is corruptible and vain. How sad that our world is so carried away with the fleshly beauty of this old mortal shell! The inward beauty, the hidden man of the heart, the meek and quiet spirit, and those who have been beautified by salvation will be in eternal admiration while the worldly and proud are lost for ever.

(Psalm 49:15), *"But God will redeem my soul"*: The Hebrew says, "Surely God will redeem my soul." To redeem is to sever from bondage, release from debt and set at liberty. This is the hope of the resurrection. God spoke through the prophet in Hosea 13:14, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." This is the promise of the resurrection at the last day. This is why we do not seek for the wealth and pleasures of this world. We have a richer treasure, one that fadeth not away.

LESSON BACKGROUND

As it was with the previous lesson the author of this Psalm 49 is unknown. But we know that it is an inspired writing of the holy Scriptures that is meant for every soul of every age in this time world. So much is said in the precious Word about the vanity of worldly riches and the need for seeking treasures that are heavenly and eternal. This Psalm pictures the grave, looming ahead of every one of us, a dark and forboding foe that we must overcome, and that there is but one way to overcome its woesome blight and dreadful curse. Wealth and physical powers are helpless against its devouring scourge. But through the Lord, Jesus Christ, and His holiness and salvation, we can find hope of a resurrection from the grave to live forever with Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the coveting of earthly wealth so destructive?
2. Why do people who lust after riches despise the godly?

3. Why are riches so deceitful?
4. What are the riches that money cannot buy?
5. Why is the redemption of our soul so precious?
6. What is the price that had to be paid for our redemption?
7. What does death do to riches and beauty?
8. Who will have dominion over the rich in the judgment?
9. What must we do to truly insure our redemption?
10. Why can we not love wealth and God at the same time?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

A coveting mind and heart is ever roving and seeking for more of this vain world's commodity. It is a dreadful and frightful disease of the soul, so blinding and treacherously deceiving. It has caught millions in its snare. Consider the rich young ruler that came to Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 19, Mark 10 and Luke 18. He had a lot of things to his credit, as he professed to live up to the commandments that Jesus at first mentioned. But oh, the blow fell when Christ gave to him the requirement of giving up his riches. His heart was so entwined about his earthly wealth that he was not willing to give it up even at the cost of losing his chance of obtaining eternal life. Think about the rich man Jesus told about in Luke 12:16-20. Here was a man who was a fool. Listen to what he said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." But he did not get to have them as he died that very night. Someone else got his riches. Then think about the rich man in Luke 16:19-31. He was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. Notice what Abraham said to him: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." Those who are lusting and striving for earthly wealth are choosing to have their good things here. They are forfeiting eternal wealth. Jesus said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (Matt. 19:24.) The choice is that plain. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." I Tim. 6:9. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The material things of this life must be recognized only for what they can accomplish. Our lesson makes the point that it is possible to become so enamored with riches that we forsake that which is able to save the soul. Riches can provide a facade of security, but no matter how honored on this earth a person becomes, death is impartial.

An Aesop fable tells about a great gathering of all the beasts. A monkey got up to entertain his friends by doing a dance. So nimble were his feet and so amusing his gestures and grimaces that all the animals roared with laughter. Even the lion, the king of the beasts, forgot his royal dignity and rolled on the ground with glee.

Only the camel seemed to be bored by the monkey's performance. "I don't see anything so funny in that exhibition," she sniffed. "As a matter of fact, it seems very crude and amateurish to me."

"All right, then," cried all the animals, "suppose you show us what you can do!"

Realizing what she had set herself up for, the camel shambled into the circle, and in no time at all had made herself utterly ridiculous by her awkward and stumbling performance. All the beasts booed and set upon her with clubs and claws and drove her into the desert. The moral of the story? "Stretch your arm no farther than your sleeve will reach." This is a perfect application regarding the material things of earth. We should not reach out to encompass more than what the grace of God will cover in keeping us humble. If we do, when it comes time to demonstrate what we truly possess, death will reveal just how ridiculous we have been. And to be driven from the presence of God would be a punishment beyond description.

—Wayne Murphey



JUNE 10, 2001

MOUNT ZION, THE JOY OF THE WHOLE EARTH

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

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

3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 87:3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

6 The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, *that* this *man* was born there. Selah.

7 As well the singers as the players on instruments *shall be there*: all my springs *are* in thee.

MEMORY VERSE: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. Hebrews 12:22.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The city of God, called Zion, is the assembly and holy communion of all who are born of the Spirit of God. They make up the Church of God, the bride of Christ, and many glorious things can be spoken of her.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 48:2), "*Beautiful for situation*": The Hebrew says, "Beautiful elevation." This means that Zion is elevated up above this present, evil world in the beauties of holiness and purity. "*Zion*": The term Zion is first mentioned in II Samuel 5:7 where it tells us that David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David. I Chron. 11:5 called it the castle of Zion. It seems that this hill of Zion was part of the city of Jerusalem that David conquered for the purpose of making it the capital of Israel and for his home. The name Zion became filled with a special meaning, probably because it was home to David, the man after God's own heart. The names Zion and Jerusalem became synonymous, and as a prophetic expression pointing to the New Testament Church. The word Zion, (the same as Sion as it appears in the New Testament), comes from the Hebrew word which means an elevated place or hill as being conspicuous, or in view from a distance. It also means to glitter from afar. This gives rise to various thoughts such as being sunny, bright, brilliant, beautiful, etc. The term Zion is mentioned repeatedly through the Psalms and the Prophets and is definitely a prophecy of the Church of God which Christ purchased with His own blood.

(Psalm 48:3), "*Palaces*": The Hebrew word means "citadels," which were strong and elevated fortresses and places of defense.

(Psalm 48:12), "*Tell the towers*": Count, enumerate, record, make a note of to remember.

(Psalm 48:13), The Hebrew says, "Set your heart upon its ramparts (defenses), pass between its citadels, so you may tell to the generation following."

((Psalm 87:7), "*As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there*": The Hebrew says simply: "And the singers and the music makers." The words "shall be there" are added words by the translators and are not in the original text. The real music that God is interested in is the melody and the grace in our hearts to the Lord. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.) "*All my springs are in thee*": All that quenches the thirsting of our souls of the fountains springing up into eternal life are found in Zion, the holy city of God, the spiritual (new) Jerusalem, the Church of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The city of the Lord, the mountain of His holiness is no longer a literal city in Palestine as it was in the days of David and Israel. God told Israel before they took the land of Caanan that there was to be a place which the Lord their God would choose to cause His name to dwell there. (Deut. 12:10-11.) David was persuaded that Jerusalem was to be that place and he took it from the Jebusites. Zion was a hill in Jerusalem. David took it for his home. Zion became a prophetic name for the New Testament Church. In our lesson today we see Zion spoken of with great blessing and joy. We can apply what is said here of the literal Zion to the principles of truth in the spiritual Zion, which is us, the people who are the New Testament Church. We are using the 48th and 87th Psalms as our text concerning the Lord's special blessings in Zion. We are not told who the author of these splendid Psalms are, but it is likely that it was David. Our memory verse shows that Mount Zion is really referring to the Church of God. We come to it when we gain Christ and are His true people and holy Bride.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Where does the name Mount Zion come from?
2. What is the Zion, the real city of God, and who is it made up of?
3. In what way is the true Zion the joy of the whole earth?
4. Can you think of some of the glorious things spoken of Zion?
5. What kind of birth must we experience to be in Zion?
6. What are the towers and citadels in Zion a protection against?
7. Can you think of some of the truths of the Word of God that are pillars and bulwarks of Zion?
8. Why is literal Jerusalem no longer the true city of God?
9. What kind of victory can we enjoy as citizens of Zion?
10. Why should we walk about Zion and mark well her bulwarks and towers?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Glorious things have been spoken in the Scriptures of the true Zion of God, the home of the free. It is the true home of the soul. Here in this blessed city that came from heaven is the satisfaction and contentment that the soul of man thirsts for. We are born again, that is, born from above of the Spirit and the Word of God. This is a spiritual experience and it makes up a spiritual city of all of those who have it. It is a fellowship of Holy Spirit led and filled men and women. It is not a literal city of outward form and composition of the flesh and material things. It is a community of saved and sanctified souls whose names are recorded in heaven in the Lamb's Book of Life. They have been saved and rescued from the sinful ways of this present, evil world. They are holy, modest and humble in spirit and manners. They seek not the wealth and vain riches of this time world. Their treasures are above where they have their hearts set upon. They are willing to suffer shame and reproach for their Lord from the ungodly society of those who do not know God and who refuse to obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are happy and full of joy every day no matter what their material circumstances might be. Their beauty is the inward beauty of love and perfect holiness. This is Zion, a people united in one Spirit, one doctrine, one faith and one hope. They are bright and radiant with the Spirit of Christ, elevated in righteousness above the carnal ways of men. They are willing to suffer, yea, even to give their lives and die for the sake of their Lord and His blessed will. Oh, what a beautiful, peaceful and enjoyable city to be a happy member of!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." This scripture has such special meaning. To be born in a particular country means you are an automatic citizen with all the rights afforded by the government. As a citizen of the Church of God, a heavenly country, you have access to what David described as "glorious things," and no one can deprive you of your citizenship except the government, which is God Himself.

On May 23, 1498, Girolamo Savonarola, an Italian reformer, was burned at the stake for criticizing Pope Alexander VI. During the preparations for the execution, Savonarola stood gloomy and seemingly distracted. But when the Bishop pronounced the words, "I separate thee from the Church," a sudden hope lighted his face, and he answered aloud, "From the Church militant, but not from the Church triumphant."

—Wayne Murphey



JUNE 17, 2001

THE BLESSEDNESS OF DWELLING IN 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: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Psalm 23:6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: How happy is everyone who enjoys the blessed privilege of being an accepted member of the household of God! The benefits cover every need for soul and body and it is far better to fill the lowliest place in God's house than to live in the vain and fleeting circle of unholy associations.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 84:1), "*Amiable*": In the Hebrew this means loved, pleasant, enjoyable and delightful. "*Tabernacles*": The residence or place of habitation, referring to the place where God's glory was manifested to abide. In the Old Testament it was the Mosaic tabernacle, and later was the Temple of wood and stone. Now we know that His dwelling is in the hearts of men. "*Lord of hosts*": Hosts refers to a mass of persons especially regularly organized for war. It could be expressed, "Jehovah of armies." Jehovah, the Eternal Self-existent One, is a God of great innumerable company of angels and redeemed souls. Is it not a great comfort to know that God is the Lord of such a great army of holy and faithful souls, and that we can be a part of this great host?

(Psalm 84:2), "*Longeth*": The Hebrew word here means to be pale or pine after. To pine after something means to waste away through grief, pain, or hunger. "*Fainteth*": The Hebrew word means to cease, be finished or perish. These words are the expression of the deep love and fervent desire the child of God has for the presence of God in his soul. No one gets any where with God who does not have an intense longing and hunger for Him. This means to seek God and His countenance above every other appetite and desire.

(Psalm 84:3), "*Thine altars*": The worship and sacrifice unto our God is our home and place of safety. As the birds find a place for their protection and for their little ones to safely survive danger and harm, so we find in loving and worshipping God a hope and safeguard from the perils of this present, evil world.

(Psalm 84:4), "*Blessed*": In the Hebrew this is an exclamation meaning "How happy!" Each of the three times this word is used in this Psalm, (verses 4, 5 and 12), it is this same exclamation. "*They will be still praising thee*": Or, they will praise thee continually, repeatedly, again and again, more and more.

(Psalm 84:5-6), The Hebrew reads, "Blessed is the man that strength to him is in You. The highways are in their hearts. Passing through the valley of weeping, they will make it a fountain; even the early rain covers with blessings." The Greek Septuagint translation is really good: "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 (God) has appointed, for there the lawgiver will grant blessings."

(Psalm 84:7), "*From strength to strength*": From one degree of grace and victory to the next, being led and instructed by the God of all grace. "*Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God*": The words *every one of them* are added words of the translators and are not part of the original text. Adam Clarke believes that this statement should be translated thus: "The God of gods shall be seen in Zion." This is how the Greek Septuagint translates this text.

(Psalm 84:9), "*Look upon*": The Hebrew word means to scan, to look intently at, to regard with pleasure, favor or care.

(Psalm 84:10), "*I had rather be a doorkeeper*": The Hebrew says, "I have chosen to stand or wait at the threshold." The Septuagint says, "I would rather be an abject." An abject is defined as the lowest of the low, less than the least.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The author of this Psalm is unknown, but it is certainly a Holy Spirit inspired psalm that can be a reality in our souls today. It is an expression of the love and joy we find in living for the Lord and serving Him in His holy temple. In times of being deprived or delayed in receiving desired blessings, or in times of sorrow and Providential sufferings we are comforted and encouraged by the Psalm. We are so many times called to pass through the Valley of Baca, or weeping. But as we cling

to the Lord and are faithful to do His will, regardless of our trials and tribulations, we can make it all a fountain of spiritual strength and victory. We are desiring God's ear to our cries, and His look upon our face. We must be, as Christ, the anointed of the Lord, following the leadings and inspiration of His Holy Spirit.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What makes the House of God so enjoyable and sweet?
2. Why is it that so many do not have a hungering for God?
3. How are the altars of God a refuge and dwelling place?
4. What is there in God's house that draws praise from us?
5. What must we do when we are in the valley of weeping?
6. What can we expect if we are faithful in that valley?
7. Why do we desire God to behold and look upon our face?
8. Why is a day in the Lord so much better than days in sin?
9. How can the Lord be a shield as well as a sun?
10. Why does God give both grace and glory?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The Christian life and living for God in this world is surely an enjoyable and pleasant experience for the soul no matter how much trouble one may encounter along the way. We have found a refuge and a security in Christ. It is a wonderful experience to compass the altar of God and realize His forgiveness and grace. As the birds of the air find refuge in a nest in a place they have chosen, so we find in the love of Christ safety and shelter unailing. The life of praise and rejoicing needs never to end. But there will be those times when we must go up the valley of weeping. It is good for us to purpose in our hearts to tread that valley, knowing that it is the will of God. Weeping is mentioned several times in the Scriptures. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalm 30:5. Jesus told His disciples concerning His being taken from them, "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow

shall be turned into joy." John 16:20. In Luke 6:21 Jesus said, "Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." Then in verse 25 He said, "Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep." I would rather go up the valley of weeping willingly now for Christ than to seek the mirth of the world and then be cast into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 8:12.) God is our sun to warm and brighten our lives, but He is also our shield to protect us from the heat and the cold. He will give grace for the trials and difficulties of life, but will give glory and richness to the inner man, and some sweet day receive us into His eternal glory.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well."
Psa. 84:6.

"The valley of Baca," i.e. of weeping, or lamentation. The image is of a company of pilgrims towards the holy city, whose way lies through a desolate, sterile valley. In that "dry and thirsty land" many a traveler has fainted with thirst. On those rugged rocks many a feeble or heedless foot has slipped, many a pilgrim had fallen. But if "the blessings of heaven above" and "the precious things of the earth" be denied, there is yet "the blessing of the deep that worketh under." The pilgrims gird their loins, pitch their tents and dig deep. Cool treasures of living water from hidden springs reward their toil. At morning they go on their way with a new song of praise, and leave a blessing for those who follow. —*The Pulpit Commentary*



JUNE 24, 2001

THE REWARD OF TRUSTING AND WAITING ON GOD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

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

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

30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

31 The law of his God *is* in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

34 Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

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

38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

MEMORY VERSE: Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. Psalm 37:27.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The man who trusts and obeys God and waits on Him to work out his difficulties will come out far ahead of the man who follows his own selfish ways.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 37:1), "*Fret not thyself*": The Hebrew says, "Do not

inflamm yourself." Do not allow your heart to blaze up in anger.

(Psalm 37:3), "*Land*": The words "land" and "earth" in this lesson are from the same Hebrew word. It is spoken or referred to about six times in this chapter. To inherit the land, to inherit the earth—it all means the same thing. There is a spiritual inheritance that is the Caanan land of the soul, which is perfect holiness and the fulness of Christ. And all who are meek and patient to trust in and wait on God to experience and maintain this sanctified grace in the heart will be given possession of the new heaven and new earth in eternity. "*Verily thou shalt be fed*": The Hebrew says, "feed on faithfulness." The Hebrew word for "verily" is from the root word "aman" from which comes the expression "amen." It is the basic word for "truth," "faith," "faithfulness," "steadfastness," "trust" and "stability." Feed on faithfulness, that is, receive into your heart the holy attitude of trust and confidence in God and His promises.

(Psalm 37:5), "*Commit thy way unto the Lord*": The Hebrew says, "Roll on Jehovah your way." To commit means to give in charge or trust, to deliver for safekeeping. This means to put matters and things that concern us into God's hands and trust Him to arrange or dispose of or bring about as He sees fit. "*And He shall bring it to pass*": The Hebrew says simply, "He will work."

(Psalm 37:7), "*Rest in the Lord*": The Hebrew says, "Be silent in Jehovah." This means to still all restless expressions and words of despair and anger, murmuring, criticizing and gloom.

(Psalm 37:23), "*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*": The Hebrew says, "From Jehovah the steps of a man are established." "*He delighteth in his way*": This works both ways. Man delights in God's way and refuses to take his own way or the way of what others may suggest. Then God delights in the way a man takes who carefully seeks Him to know the heavenly way and is faithful to obey.

(Psalm 37:31), "*Slide*": To slip or waver, be unsteady and falter.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading of this Psalm says, "A Psalm of David." The life of David surely shows the reality of the blessedness of waiting on God and also the sorrow that can come when we fail to wait on God and obey Him. David's experience of being patient while he was exiled from home by the jealous and murderous spirit of King Saul is the good part, while David's sin with Bathsheba and the time when he numbered Israel shows the bad part. In the Christian life of the New Testament age this matter of learning to wait on God is one of the most important and yet the most difficult thing to master. So many people never learn it. They go through life pushing, shoving and seeking their own fancies to fulfill. Blessed is the man who learns the joy and value of waiting patiently. We must join the number who through the ages have successfully through faith and patience inherited the promises of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. In what matters are we prone to fail to wait on God?
2. How can we keep from being fretful about evil doers?
3. Why is it so vital to learn to wait on the Lord?
4. Why is it so much better to wait on the Lord?
5. What will happen to all who refuse to wait on God?
6. What does "inherit the earth" mean to you?
7. How many times have you acted or spoken hastily in the past week?
8. Why does God see fit to let us suffer in waiting on Him?
9. What will be the end of the man who faithfully waits on God?
10. What keeps a righteous man from slipping or sliding?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It surely pays to patiently wait on the Lord. And it is surely a detriment and spiritual disaster to fail to wait on Him. A child should be disciplined and taught the way of patience and learning how to wait and obey. It will help him or her to be more apt to faithfully wait on God in the Christian life. Here is where

God puts us to the greatest test. Oh, how thankful one is when he waits on God patiently until things are brought about to the glory of God and for his happiness and joy! When it comes time in a young person's life to choose a lifetime companion the will of God must be carried out if true happiness is attained. Very few are willing to even pray about this serious matter of marriage let alone wait on God for it. And, not only about marriage, but for every step and move we make in life we need to employ prayer, faith and patient waiting on the Lord. Many times there is suffering involved in waiting. There is adversity to endure as we tarry while we are waiting on God to work. We must be meek and very submissive to the Lord and very determined to keep our hands off and wait on God to give us direction. We must learn to wait patiently, quietly and cheerfully. Murmuring, fretting, complaining and expressions of anger must be denied. It is not easy, but it is the way God requires us to take if we would inherit the earth and all the blessings He has promised.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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

Someone once picked up George Mueller's Bible, thumbed through it and came to this 37th Psalm. He noticed Mueller had written something in the margin by the words "the steps." The writing said, "and the stops." In meditating on this verse, Mueller said the thought had come to him that not only are the steps of a good man ordered by the Lord, the stops of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

There are times in our Christian life when it seems that progress is nonexistent. One writer said "Sometimes the Lord puts us on our back and says, 'Now you glorify Me here.'" It is a comfort to know that even in trials like that, God is in control.

—Wayne Murphey



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