

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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THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 2001

For our studies this quarter, we will continue with lessons from the beloved book of Psalms. I pray that each one will receive the rich, spiritual blessings that we have enjoyed in preparing this series of Bible Lessons. —Bro. Leslie C. Busbee



OCTOBER 7, 2001

THE FLOURISHING SOUL WHO TRUSTS IN GOD

Psalms 92:1 *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:*

2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.

4 For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

5 O Lord, how great are thy works! *and* thy thoughts are very deep.

6 A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.

7 When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; *it is* that they shall be destroyed for ever.

8 But thou, Lord, *art most high* for evermore.

9 For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

10 But my horn shalt thou *exalt* like *the horn of* an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

11 Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies, *and* mine ears shall hear *my desire* of the wicked that rise up against me.

12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

15 To shew that the Lord is upright: *he is* my rock, *and there is* no unrighteousness in him.

MEMORY VERSE: Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. Psalm 92:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The soul who trusts and obeys God faithfully will enjoy the blessings of spiritual success and prosperity that will last all through this life and forever, but those who choose the pleasures of sin will in the end be destroyed for ever.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 92:4), "*I will triumph*": The Hebrew says, "I will shout."

(Psalm 92:5), "*Very deep*": Profound; not light, shallow, or chaffy; of great meaning and value, requiring much study and consideration; worthy of serious meditation.

(Psalm 92:6), "*Brutish*": Governed by the animal dispositions and appetites; without reason or good judgment; fleshly and earthly minded.

(Psalm 92:7, 12-13), "*Flourish*": To blossom forth abundantly; to grow vigorously; succeed, thrive, prosper; to be at the peak of development, activity, influence and production.

(Psalm 92:8), "*High*": Exalted.

(Psalm 92:10), "*Unicorn*": A wild ox who rules through the strength of its uplifted horn or horns. The horn of the child of God is his faith and loving devotion to his Saviour, a love and steadfast assurance in his heavenly Father's all-wise Providence. "*Fresh oil*": This refers to oil that is not rancid and stale, aged and lacking in quality. It is new, and on the level with green and verdant plants, shrubs and trees. Oil is a true and accurate symbol of the Holy Spirit living and functioning in the soul of man. It is so indispensable to have the Holy Spirit abiding and working in our souls. We need it fresh daily. A stale and rancid profession of godliness that is not backed with constant communion and refreshing from heaven is no good. We need that fresh anointing, that new touch of fire, daily and all day in our souls.

(Psalm 92:11), In this verse the words "*my desire*" in both places are added words by the translators, and not in the original text. Here is how it reads in the Hebrew: "My eye shall look on my enemies; my ears shall hear the evildoers who rise up against me." This is an expression of ultimate victory and triumph.

Nothing that devils and men can do will prevail over the faithful soul who steadfastly holds to God's ways.

(Psalm 92:12), "***Palm tree***": The wicked are like grass. Grass flourishes for a season and withers in a short time. So the ungodly have their prosperity for a little while and it is soon over forever. But the godly and those who keep their trust in God are like the stately and lofty palm tree, so stable and luxuriant, abounding with fruit. "***Cedar in Lebanon***": The mighty cedar trees of Mount Lebanon were noted for their durable wood that was not only beautiful, but it also resisted rot and decay.

(Psalm 92:13), Adam Clarke quotes from the Chaldee translation, believing that it conveys the true meaning: "His children shall be planted in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, and shall flourish in the courts of our God." "***Courts***": This refers to that which is enclosed by walls or a fence, surrounded with a stockade and separated from the open country. We are surrounded by walls of salvation, safeguarded from the inroads of Satan, with the world and its vanities and pride all shut out.

(Psalm 92:14), "***Still bring forth fruit in old age***": The inner man is renewed and refreshed by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and is thus so strongly, that the perishing of the outer man does not change nor diminish the spiritual quality and value. Thus we can continue to bring forth the fruits of righteousness and the Spirit and be borne, carried and delivered by Him who brought us from the womb. (Isaiah 46:3-4.) "***Fat and flourishing***": To be fat means to be rich and fertile, capable of production and service. The word "flourishing" comes from the same Hebrew word as "fresh" in verse 10. We can be green, verdant and new in Spirit even when the physical man is deteriorating and going down. Would you be in this state when you get old? Then be diligent NOW to be anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit and keep up to date with God. Be faithful through the years and your latter end will be thus with God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading for this Psalm says, "A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day." The absence of an author's name has no bearing on the quality and deep spiritual value of this wonderful Psalm. We can say that it is a Psalm for us who are enjoying the real Sabbath of the New Testament, the rest of the soul. The spiritual

blessings brought out in this Psalm are fulfilled in the life of the Spirit-filled child of God. Our prosperity is in faith, love, patience and meekness in Christ before God. We want to flourish in the life and nature of Jesus Christ. Our fruit is found in the fruit of the Spirit, namely, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, etc. (Gal. 5:22,23.) The victory and triumph we seek is an inward prevailing over the powers of Satan and sin to live a holy and humble life for God. The fresh oil we seek to be anointed with is the Holy Spirit. Thank God for this unspeakable Gift! —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What work has God done that has made us glad?
2. What good is it to give thanks and praises to the Lord?
3. What is a brutish man and why does he not know God?
4. What is going to happen to the wicked?
5. What kind of horn does the Lord want to have exalted?
6. What does it mean to be anointed with "fresh oil"?
7. In what way should we flourish?
8. How are we to be planted in the house of God?
9. How can we bring forth fruit in old age?
10. What do we want to show forth in old age?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

To be saved and born from above by the Spirit of God is the door of entrance into the house of God. We must also receive the Holy Spirit and yield to His guidance, following Him faithfully all the way. Through the Holy Spirit we can be anointed with fresh oil, and will be triumphant over all the powers of the devil. Temptation, sorrow, adversity and suffering cannot prevail over us. We will be able to look old Satan right in the face and shout the victory over him. We can really prosper and flourish in the Christian life. We will not have just a profession, but we mean to have the real possession of the grace of God. We have a goal to go all the way with the Lord and be faithful to Him even in the time of old age when our human strength fails and death is coming on. All of this we can accomplish as we cleave to the Lord and remain faithful to Him. We want to leave behind a clear testimony and witness of the true and faithful God, and His faithfulness to us. We can be a living proof of the uprightness of the Lord that will inspire others to seek His blessings. What more

noble and worthy thing can a man live for with the life that is given to him?
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"O Lord, how great are thy works! And thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this."

Most people prefer to be considered neither a brute nor a fool, but refined and cultured. The verse gives us an insight into what true refinement is. Education and wealth are not necessarily indicators of a cultivated, genteel person, as is the misconception of some. There is much more to refinement and it is often revealed in those who have the ability to see and appreciate the work of God.

To look at a sunset and have your soul drink it in, to marvel at the buds of spring and feel the life of God, to appreciate the intricate life forms of His creation and to wonder at His wisdom,—all these indicate a refined appreciation for the works of God.

The brute and the fool try to squeeze the mysteries out of nature, without the slightest thought that they are the deep thoughts of God.

There is a difference between a brute and a fool. The brute is someone who can't understand, and the fool is someone who won't understand. How much better to flourish in the courts of God, the very place of His presence, so that we can comprehend to a small degree just how great His works are.

—Wayne Murphey



OCTOBER 14, 2001

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS PARALLEL WITH BLESSINGS OF NATURE

Psalm 65:1 Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed:

2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

3 Iniquities prevail against me: *as for* our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.

4 Blessed *is the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to

approach *unto thee*, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.

5 By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; *who art* the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off *upon* the sea.

6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; *being* girded with power:

7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.

8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, *which* is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.

11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.

12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.

13 The pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

MEMORY VERSE: Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee*, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple. Psalm 65:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: As we come to the Lord and receive of the spiritual blessings of His holy temple, He will also manifest His goodness in the natural beauties and benefits of fruitful seasons and bountiful harvest.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 65:1), "*Praise waiteth for thee*": The Hebrew says, "Praise is silence to You." I believe the meaning here is that all praise should be given to God, and to no one else. He alone is worthy of all honour and glory. "*Vow*": That which is promised

or owed in tribute to God. "The spirit of this vow is, to love God with all our powers, and to serve Him with a perfect heart and willing mind, all the days of our life." —Clarke.

(Psalm 65:2), "*Unto thee shall all flesh come*": The real meaning here is that unto God all flesh should come. The Hebrew says simply, "To You all flesh comes." Too many in this mortal flesh refuse to come to their Maker for His grace and salvation, but they *will* ultimately come to Him in the last judgment. All who come willingly in faith and submission to God will be richly rewarded by Him.

(Psalm 65:3), The Hebrew renders this: "Things of iniquity are mightier than I; our transgressions You atone for them." The power of sin is so much stronger than we are and we cannot master it in our own strength. But through the grace of Jesus our Saviour we can be triumphantly cleansed from ALL sin and its dominion.

(Psalm 65:5), "*Terrible*": Reverent and awesome. "*Answer*": Heed, pay attention and respond to.

(Psalm 65:7), "*Noise of the seas, the tumult of the people*": In the scriptures the tossings of mankind in their strife and turmoil is likened unto the violence of the waves of the sea. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Isa. 57:20. But Christ can calm the raging sea of a man's heart and bring peace to the troubled soul.

(Psalm 65:8), "*Token*": A sign, signal or evidence. These can include the lightning and thunder, powerful exhibitions of God's energy. "*Outgoings of the morning and evening*": The dawn of day and the setting of the evening sun can both be a rejoicing to the godly and upright of heart.

(Psalm 65:9), The Hebrew renders this: "You visit the earth and overflow it; You greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water. You provide their grain for thus You have prepared it." Our gracious God conditions and prepares the soil to receive the corn and wheat sown in it, and grants rain and "fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14:17. How sad that these blessings are taken for granted by humanity for the most part, being not aware of their true Source.

(Psalm 65:10), "*The ridges, the furrows, the springing*": The terraces, the grooves for the planting, and the sprouting of the seed. This shows God's working with the soil preparing it for the sowing of the seed and the blessings of the sprouting of the seed

and growth to a bountiful harvest. It is a beautiful and marvelous sight for eyes to behold.

(Psalm 65:11), "*Crownest*": Surround and encircle. "*Paths drop fatness*": God's goings drip blessings of richness everywhere.

(Psalm 65:12), "*Rejoice on every side*": The Hebrew says, "With joy the hills gird themselves."

(Psalm 65:13), "*Flocks*": Herds of sheep, goats and cattle.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading of this 65th Psalm says, "A Psalm and Song of David." This is a wonderful exposition of the greatness of God's goodness and mercy not only for the spiritual betterment of the soul of man, but also for the wonderful goodness shown to mankind in general through the blessings of nature and the provisions therein. And woven through the various wonders of God's handiwork in nature are the spiritual treasures so great and holy to the child of God. It is for these blessings to the soul we need to really come to Him with all of our hearts. We need first, and above all, a deliverance and victory over the bondage of sin. We need to come to the Lord for a cleansing from sin and an entrance into His holy presence and the blessings of goodness of His house. The river of God spoken of in verse 9 is the river of life found and described in Ezekiel 47, and also in Revelation 22. It is the "river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God." Psalm 46:4 How blessed is the man who attains to these spiritual realities in his soul, and can visualize and appreciate the many temporal blessings as well.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What do we owe to God that we should vow to give Him?
2. For what reason should all flesh come to God wholeheartedly?
3. Why are we defeated by sin and what can we do about it?
4. What are the blessings we can gain by drawing close to God?
5. What all is included in God's awesome answer to our prayers?
6. What causes the roaring of the waves of the tumult of man?

7. How can God still this awful strife and turmoil?
8. What all is mentioned in this Psalm concerning God in nature?
9. Where is the real song heard that nature causes to sound?
10. What is the most important river for us to partake of?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Giver of life to all flesh is worthy, and He alone is worthy, of all the praise and honour we can render to Him. All flesh owes to God every thing. Every human being ought to be reaching out in the heart for the fellowship and blessings of the Lord, our faithful Creator. We need to pray to Him and resort to Him in every detail of our life. Sin and transgression has brought us into woeful bondage that we are not able to shake off. We need to come to God for His power and grace to overcome this woeful slavery. He has made a way that we might have our sins washed away and be justified before Him. This was through the gift of His precious Son, Jesus Christ. If we refuse to avail ourselves of this precious Saviour we will not be delivered from sin and will be lost forever in the end. We need to humble our hearts and come to Him in an acceptable manner, repenting and turning away from our sins with godly sorrow. We can find a place of shelter and home in His embrace and overshadowing care. Beholding His face and enjoying His spiritual fellowship, we are in a condition to behold and appreciate all of His blessings, including the many natural wonders around us. It is so beautiful when we see it through our understanding being enlightened by His Holy Spirit. We can see these wonders of His creation and draw rich comparisons of His spiritual blessings that are revealed to us. Thus we can experience and enjoy the richness of love and happiness with Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This 65th Psalm deals with two thoughts—prayer and the blessings of God.

"O thou that hearest prayer, ..." I am glad God hears our prayers and that we can have that understanding. The Epicure-

ans of New Testament times believed there were gods, but that the gods did not involve themselves in the affairs of man. It seems useless to place faith in deities of that sort.

Not many years after the inception of the New Testament Church, Papal rule was instituted and priests became mediators, teaching the people to pray to Mary and other saints. This also was misdirected worship, but the Psalmist had the assurance that God Himself heard prayer. And it is true that God loves us and has enough interest in our thanksgiving and concerns that He listens intently when we pray.

"Thou crownest the year with thy goodness." Men see what they have eyes to see. The farmer looks on a field of golden grain, ripe for harvest, and sees the reward of his toil and a return for his capital. The painter looks at the same field and sees a glorious subject for a picture. The economist thinks of prices, averages, national prosperity, etc. The devout child of God sees God's hand opening to answer prayer for daily bread.

Prayer and blessings go hand in hand and create in the Christian a joyful heart.

—Wayne Murphey



OCTOBER 21, 2001

A REFUGE IN THE SECRET PLACE OF THE ALMIGHTY

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

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

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

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

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

6 *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noon day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Being hid away with Christ in God assures us of His protection and faithful care always in this life and promises us an eternal dwelling with Him in heaven.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 91:1), "*Secret place*": A hiding place and a covering beyond human understanding and sight. The "wisdom of God is a mystery, a hidden wisdom which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." I Cor. 2:7-8. This hidden life of spiritual values and realities from heaven, unseen by the proud and worldly, is this secret place of the most High. It is the saved and sanctified Holy Spirit-filled life that Jesus shed His blood for that we might have. Only here in this close communion with heaven can we experience the protection and safeguard from all the spiritual wickedness around us in this present, evil world.

(Psalm 91:3), "*Snare of the fowler*": The Hebrew says, "The trap of the ensnarer, one who entangles. This is one of the devices of the enemy of our souls. He seeks to get us involved in complicated, confusing, difficult and complex situations of life with people and conditions. "*Noisome pestilence*": Any destruc-

tive force of ruin, whether it be spiritual or temporal. False doctrine, seducing spirits and confusion are included. The way that we can avoid these influences is by keeping in that secret place in communion with God.

(Psalm 91:4), "*Shield*": In the Hebrew this was a large shield that had a piercing point that not only warded off wounding darts and flying missiles, but also could be used as an offensive weapon. Our shield is the truth of the Word of God. It not only defends us but it will pierce and bring destruction to all who trifle and fight against it. "*Buckler*": This was a protective guard that completely surrounded a person. So is God's truth. It surrounds us and keeps us from being influenced by the winds of false doctrines and spirits in the world.

(Psalm 91:9), "*Habitation*": A home, a retreat, a place where we keep our store. Although the Lord permits us to have a place in this world we can call our home, He wants us to make Him our real home, the resting place and refuge for our affections that we resort to and cling to endearingly.

(Psalm 91:13), "*Adder*": An asp, or any poisonous reptile. "*Dragon*": Any kind of sea or land monster. These are figurative of the destructive and poison influences that we will encounter in this Satan-dominated world. There are spirits of lust and immorality, habits and associations that are degrading and stained with the lusts of the flesh. We do not have to go along with them and partake of their vanities. Our citizenship is in heaven and we refuse to indulge in this world's commodities.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The author of this most sublime and inspiring Psalm is unknown to us. But it comes to us on the wings of the sweet Holy Spirit, and affords great hope and assurance of God's Providential care and protection for every phase of our lives, especially the spiritual. Verses 11 and 12 were quoted by Satan to Jesus in Matt. 4:6 when he tried to tempt Jesus to jump off the pinnacle of the temple to show that He was the Son of God. But Jesus resisted the devil and his erroneous application of this precious promise of God by saying in verse 7, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," quoting from Deut. 6:16. Now just because Jesus would not claim the promise on the conditions Satan imposed, does not lessen the blessing and truth that

God gives us here. But all of these promises in this beloved Psalm hinges upon the conditions laid down in verse 1. It is the one who dwells in the secret place of the most High who shall have the overshadowing protection of the Almighty. This secret place is definitely referring to the Most Holy Place typified in the Mosaic tabernacle, into which the High Priest went alone once every year to offer blood in behalf of the people. Only the High Priest was allowed in that secret place of the most High. But in the New Testament every true believer in Christ has the privilege to enter into the Most Holy place which is perfect holiness, entire sanctification and the communion with heaven. This is the secret place of the Most High. And we who enter therein can enjoy the protection the Lord has promised to us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Where can one enjoy the protective shadow of the Almighty?
2. Where is that "secret place," and how can we get in there?
3. What kind of dangers are the most destructive we face?
4. What are some of these spiritual things that endanger us?
5. What does it mean to make the most High our habitation?
6. Does this Psalm mean that we will never have any trouble?
7. What must we do to have this Psalm fulfilled in our lives?
8. What does He promise His angels to do?
9. What does it mean for us to set our love upon Him?
10. What will be our reward for setting our love upon Him?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is a provision in the New Testament plan of salvation for every person who is truly born from above of the Spirit of God to enter into the secret place of the most high God. We must consecrate ourselves to God, presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable to Him. (Rom. 12: 1.) It must be a perfect sacrifice, nothing excluded. All self and earthly store must be put on the altar for Him, and Him alone. We must believe His promises and open our hearts for the Holy Spirit to come in and sanctify us wholly. We must seek for this experience with all

of our hearts and not be satisfied with anything short of it. It is just as important as being justified from sin, and even more so. This second work of grace, perfect holiness (or sanctification) puts us in the secret place of the most high where we can abide under the shadow of the Almighty. We cannot claim these promises to the full without being wholly sanctified. The Lord is gracious and long suffering and forbearing to work with us and bring us to the place where we can make this perfect consecration to receive this blessed experience. But if we draw back in unbelief and refuse to die to self and the flesh and fail to receive this experience of sanctification, then we will forfeit these promises and be without His overshadowing care. May the Lord help everyone to take heed to what He has promised us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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

A true story is told of a young boy who was locked in the house to prevent him from going to a Christian meeting. He opened the Bible to find directions and comfort in this heart-rending situation, and came upon the above scripture. Without hesitation, he ran up two flights of stairs to his bedroom and leaped out the window. He was so bruised and battered from the fall that he was confined to his bed for two weeks.

Although the boy felt like he was obeying the scriptures, it somehow doesn't seem to fit the picture of dwelling in the shadow of the Almighty. The devil is only too delighted to misconstrue scriptures and cause us to act in a delirious manner. There are times when God works in miraculous ways when our physical beings is in harm's way, but to abide under the shadow of the Almighty means to be in a place where He can calm a troubled mind and soothe a broken heart. If God calls for action on our part, He will open the way and we won't have to bring shame upon ourselves or God's cause through irrational behavior.

—Wayne Murphey



OCTOBER 28, 2001

A PRAYER TO GOD FOR RIGHTEOUS RECOMPENCE

Psalm 9:1 I will praise *thee*, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

3 When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right.

5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

6 O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.

7 But the Lord shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.

8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

9 The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

11 Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

16 The Lord is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgalon. Selah.

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.

MEMORY VERSE: The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Psalm 9:9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We can be sure that the Almighty God will judge and recompense every person justly. He will reward

the faithful who endure the abuse of the wicked and will justly punish the wicked for his ill treatment against the righteous.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 9:4). "*Satest*": Sat.

(Psalm 9:6), The Hebrew renders this: "Desolations of the enemy are ended forever, and the cities You (Lord) have up-rooted; their memory has perished with them." The damage and harm accomplished by the beastly lusts and strife of the ungodly will be brought to a complete end. They will be cast out of God's presence and remembrance forever.

(Psalm 9:12), "*When he maketh inquisition*": The Hebrew says, "For the seeker of bloodshed He remembers them." It is the vain supposition of so many ungodly people that what they are doing they will not be called to account for. They seem to be unaware that the Almighty is taking note and will remember their unlawful deeds unless they repent and plead the blood of His Son for forgiveness.

(Psalm 9:16), "*Snared in the work of his own hands*": Adam Clarke notes: "There is nothing that a wicked man does that is not against his own interest. He is continually doing himself harm, and takes more pains to destroy his soul than the righteous man does to get his soul saved unto eternal life. This is a weighty truth; and the psalmist adds "*Higgaion: Selah*," which means: "Meditate on this; mark it well."

(Psalm 9:18), "*Shall not alway be forgotten,....shall not perish forever*": There are seasons when the needy seems to be forgotten, and there are times when the poor seems to have perished. God, in His wisdom which is beyond our own, allows His saints to be mistreated, neglected, abused and persecuted at times. But this is to refine their souls. God works this way with His chosen. But, praise His Name, they will not be alway forgotten, nor shall they perish forever. In His own wise good time He will deliver the godly and bring them forth to a wealthy place.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading on this 9th Psalm says, "To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben. A Psalm of David." "Muth-labben" means "To die for the Son." Various translations, according to Adam

Clarke, point this Psalm to Christ. One example is the Arabic translation which says, "Concerning the mysteries of the Son, as to the glory of Christ, His resurrection, and kingdom, and the destruction of all the disobedient." So we can be assured that this Psalm is a prophecy of Christ and His ultimate triumph and overthrow of all the enemies of Himself and His Church. As I Peter 2:23 said of our Lord Jesus, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." And, as it is true with Jesus, it is true with His saints in their times of being treated wrongfully and abused. God is looking down and observes all that His people suffer from the hand of the wicked. II Thess. 1:6-10 declares that "it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled (God will recompense) rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." Verse 8, "And he shall judge the world in righteousness," is quoted by Paul in his message to the Atheniens in Acts 17:30-31, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." We are given assurance in this Psalm that God is just and will recompense all evil done to His saints. It is not for us to avenge ourselves, but rather, as it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do God's people have so many enemies in this world?
2. Who do we appeal to when we suffer from man?
3. Why is our God a safe Refuge from those who oppose us?

4. What is God going to do with the wicked?
5. Who will God be a refuge to in times of trouble?
6. What will God do to those who shed the blood of His saints?
7. To be humble what attitude must we hold toward others?
8. What is the wicked going to be ensnared in?
9. What should we bear in mind when we have to suffer?
10. What is God's disposition toward the poor and the needy?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The pages of history are stained with the accounts of the holy and faithful saints of God being mistreated, hated, despised, persecuted and murdered by the ungodly society of this present, evil world. Jesus said it would be so. He said the time would come "that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." John 16:2-3. The blood washed child of God who is born of the Holy Spirit and is living for heaven and not for this fleeting life, has a spirit that is contrary to the world around. Satan works in the hearts of the ungodly to hatred for the pure and the holy. Therefore each generation has seen the conflict rage with the unregenerated persecuting the saints of God. Paul stated emphatically in II Tim. 3:12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." This was working back in David's time, and that is why so many of his Psalms make mention of it. What David suffered from King Saul is typical of the persecutions that have followed in history. It was jealousy stemming from hurt pride and uncontrolled anger that caused Saul to hate David so and to seek to kill him. It is a sad tale of woe, but we have the assurance and hope in the righteousness and judgment of our God that will help take us through all the trials and sorrows that we suffer as the children of the Lord. This 9th Psalm very well expresses and declares our hope and the impending doom of all who oppose the right ways of the Lord and of His saints. God will maintain our right and our cause. God is the great judge of the earth, and He will not let people off lightly who bruise and injure His people. The true saints of God, who have fervent love in their hearts, will not retaliate or seek to return evil for evil. They will rather love in return and take a defenseless and meek attitude.

For they know that their God is sitting on the throne of judgment. They are enduring the abuse and committing the keeping of their souls unto Him in well doing. The Lord is their refuge and strength.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One translation of Psa. 9:6 says, "The enemy have vanished in everlasting ruins; their cities thou hast rooted out; the very memory of them has perished."

Sometimes the Christian is tempted to imagine what it would be like if all who oppose him were vanquished. Even the apostle Paul expressed the sentiment when he said, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." Gal. 5:12. But he realized the destructiveness of that for he went on to write, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Gal. 5:15.

When we enlarge the meaning of the text it can properly be incorporated into our desires. All of us have pain and trials of life, and we long for the time when they will be eradicated. When they are, we will rejoice in how completely God has worked on our behalf.

Death is one of the enemies we wish to see defeated. We exult in the fact that Christ overcame it and will one day abolish it forever. Even now He has removed its sting. Because of this and other works of God, every Christian may know the feeling reflected by the Psalmist in 9:11 when he said, "Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion."

—Wayne Murphey



NOVEMBER 4, 2001

AWE, ADORATION, AND TRUST FOR THE ALMIGHTY

Psalm 33:1 Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

4 For the word of the Lord *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

6 By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

13 The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the Lord *is* upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he *is* our help and our shield.

MEMORY VERSE: Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Psalm 33:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God Almighty in all of His goodness and wondrous works is worthy of all the love, adoration, reverence, and submission that the heart of man can render to Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 33:1), "*Comely*": The Hebrew word means suitable, becoming and beautiful. It also means to be at home. The attitude of praise and thanksgiving in the soul is very fitting and comfortable to the child of God. It is because it agrees with the very nature and spirit of the profession of godliness.

(Psalm 33:5), The Hebrew reads: "Loving righteousness and judgment, the mercy of Jehovah fills the earth." Let it find entrance to fill the hearts of men.

(Psalm 33:8), "*Stand in awe*": From one Hebrew word which

means "to turn aside from the road." We should stop what we are doing, cease from our travels, lay aside our activities, cease from our conversations, and behold in gazing wonder and admiration upon the greatness and goodness of our wonderful, wonderful God!

(Psalm 33:9), "*It was done*": The word "done" is an added word by the translators, not being in the original text. The Hebrew says, "it was" that is, it existed and came into being. All the heavens and the earth have their composition and being through the force and command of the Word of the Almighty.

(Psalm 33:11), "*Counsel*": Pre-determined and planned advice. "*Thoughts to all generations*": God's intentions and plans for humanity are wholesome and profitable for every generation of mankind. What will fit and benefit one generation will be equally profitable for the next.

(Psalm 33:12), "*Inheritance*": That which is received to be a cherished and valued possession. God wants a people who will meet His required standards of righteousness and holiness. He could not find it in literal Israel, but in Christ Jesus He has found a people who are really near and dear to His great, loving heart.

(Psalm 33:15), "*Fashioneth their hearts alike*": The Hebrew says, "He forms their hearts in unity." Adam Clarke has a worthy comment here: "They are all the works of His hands: and He has formed them with the same powers, faculties, passions, etc.; body and spirit having the same essential properties in every human being. *Considereth*": Understands.

LESSON BACKGROUND

No mention is made of the author of this beautiful psalm, but we know that it is by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It magnifies the greatness of God in creation as well as in His providential workings in the hearts and lives of mankind. When we look on nature and its many different and distinct things and we are persuaded that it all is the work of a Supreme Being, we are overwhelmed by how great our God really is. It really causes us to stand in awe of Him. It is all existing because He spoke it into existence. What a blessing for this to be our firm and unflinching conviction! We are the objects and loving concern of a wise and gracious God, Who is worthy of all of our trust and commitment.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What in the heart of man causeth him to praise His Creator?
2. Name some of the evidences of God's goodness in the earth.
3. How important is it to really believe God created all things?
4. What will cause a person to really stand in awe of God?
5. Why does the Lord have to bring man's counsels to nought?
6. How can we learn and discover what God's counsels are?
7. Why does God want us for His inheritance?
8. What must we do and be to be chosen for His inheritance?
9. Why is mankind, who is formed so alike, so prone to division?
10. Who does God have His eye upon?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

This earth and all the heavenly bodies were created by the almighty God. He spoke them into existence. They still exist by the power of His Word. Every vestige of creation was framed and designed by His great, magnificent mind. And when He said, "Let there be light," there was light. It is wonderful to us how He did it all. Whatever He said to let there be, there was. We stand in awe at the greatness of God as revealed in His creation. But we also are melted in humility and gratitude for the personal goodness that He has shown to us. His eye is upon us, for we hope in His mercy to deliver us from death and help us through the dangers and temptations of this life. We have learned the great blessing and value of waiting on Him, having experienced His workings in our lives. He is our help in every phase of our mortal life. He shields and protects us from evil. He loves us and has sent His Son to redeem us from sin and its destructive power. We have learned the great blessing of putting our trust in Him alone. The strength and wisdom of man that so many make their refuge, we have refused, for we know that it is all vanity and lies. We want to simply trust in Him and are willing to wait on His time to work in our behalf. When we consider how great was His power in creating the world and the heavens above, we are not afraid to trust His power to do for us what we have need. We have found

that His counsel is the best course to follow in life. As Prov. 19:21 says, "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." We know that we can be safe to heed the counsel of His Word in all things. The counsel of human reasonings and earthly wisdom we dare not follow, for we know it will come to nought. Man reasons himself out of every commandment of God. We want to obey His truth, for we know it is the answer for every need we may have. Oh, how we desire to be a part of the nation whose God is the Lord Jehovah! We want to be His inheritance! We want Him to find pleasure and joy in us! He is our inheritance and we are His inheritance, His purchased possession. We are aware that God is looking down from heaven and beholding all that we do. He understands everything about us. He has the answer for all of our needs. We rejoice in Him and His praise springs out of our hearts. We are happy in Him and satisfied with His blessings and dealings with our souls.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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

The devil hates God and is doing all he can to destroy confidence and faith in Him. Our schools are filled with those

who are trained to destroy faith in God. Our children are influenced by those teachers and by the children around them whose parents do not believe in God. Our world is filled with disbelief. May God help our young people to hold fast their faith in the true and living God. It is the means of their eternal salvation.

—Marie Miles (Written in 1981.)



NOVEMBER 11, 2001

THE SHINING TESTIMONY OF THE SAVED IN CHRIST

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: O taste and see that the Lord *is* good: blessed is the man *that* trusteth in him. Psalm 34:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To receive the grace of God and be saved from the dominion of sin brings supreme happiness and the most wonderful blessings one could ever experience in this life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 34:2), "**Boast**": The Hebrew word means to shine with a clear sound and color. It is not a verbal boast, but by a loving and upright life to show forth the beauties of holiness and fellowship with God. "**Humble**": The Hebrew says "the depressed in mind or circumstances." Such are poor, needy, saintly, lowly and meek. These are the kind of people who have the proper sense of values and appreciate the testimony of the soul who has found refuge in Christ.

(Psalm 34:3), "**Magnify**": Enlarge upon and lift up high, speak much about, make a big ado about, allow one's self to be greatly influenced and affected by.

(Psalm 34:6), "**Poor**": From the same as "humble" in verse 2. Not enough can this word be stressed and set forth as the principle condition that the heart of man must be in to be receptive to the Lord and to properly esteem the offer of His grace. To be humble and poor involves a rightful understanding of one's true condition of poverty and weakness and inability. It is the opposite of pride and self-sufficiency. It is the utter end of man's feeling of pride and accomplishment. It is a condition of heart that is so adverse to the normal way of the flesh that very few people ever allow themselves to be of this sort of feeling and attitude. Thus very few people ever discover and receive the kingdom of Christ and of God.

(Psalm 34:7) "**Encampeth round**": The word denotes a constant position of watchfulness and care encircling those whom they are the guardians of. Jesus Himself emphatically stated in Matt. 18:10 concerning His little ones (the child-like, the poor, and the needy): "In heaven *their* angels do always behold the face of my Father". It was a firm conviction and teaching in Israel that every child of God had an angel assigned by God to watch over, protect and help them all their journey of life. Such a conviction is very Biblical and soundly true.

(Psalm 34:8), "*Taste and see*": This saying always brings to my memory some thoughts Sis. Vera Forbes expressed in a young people's meeting. They went like this: There are 5 things that one must have to be able to taste and see that the Lord is good: 1. A seeing eye, 2. a hearing ear, 3. an open mind, 4. a believing heart, and 5. and a faithful obedience. How true this is!

(Psalm 34:11), "*Come*": Leave behind your ideas and thoughts, and bring yourself to an attitude of interest and concern to hear what the Lord has to say. This is a critical point. People who refuse to put forth any effort to come to Christ are not likely to find Him even if He were to put Himself right in their path. It is only the lowly and child-like of faith who are receptive to the admonition of the Lord.

(Psalm 34:12), "*Love the days*": The word "many" is not in the original text. The love of days is the appreciation and value sensed in the heart for time, its opportunities, privileges and the potentials that it holds for the enjoyment of blessings of being alive and able to see and do. It is not the selfish interests of the flesh, but the sense of God's goodness to give us our being and the golden harvest we can have by sowing to the Spirit in this fleeting mortal life.

(Psalm 34:18), "*Contrite*": Crumpled, bruised and crushed in spirit.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading of this 34th Psalm says, "A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed." According to II Samuel 21:10-15 it was before Achish, king of the Philistine city of Gath that this occurred. Adam Clarke said that Philistine kings were commonly called Abimelech. Clarke also said that the Septuagint rendering of what happened intimated that David fell into an epileptic fit and that his actions were not pretense at all. David was running from King Saul and probably felt that he would be safer to seek for asylum among the king's enemies. But the servants of Achish recognized David and David became sore afraid. Clarke was of the opinion that it was actually a working of God to cause David to behave thus so that he could be driven away and escape. Thus it may have been, and David, recognizing God's Providence in the matter, composed this Psalm. It is

worthy to note that the apostle Peter quotes from this Psalm in his first epistle, chapter 3, verses 10-12. Also verse 20 which is not included in the lesson text is quoted in John 19:36 and is applied to Christ in the account of the soldiers not breaking His legs like they did the other two thieves on the cross, as Jesus was already dead. John said, "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." God was gracious to David in the time of his bewilderment and despair and helped to guide him to what was best. For right after this in I Samuel 22 it relates how David went down to the cave Adullam and was joined by his brethren and all his father's house along with others in distress and adversity and he became a captain of a regiment of about four hundred men. The Lord is gracious to us in our times of adversity and perplexity.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the normal reaction in the humble heart for God's help?
2. Why is the poor and humble easier influenced by God?
3. What kind of poverty is the Lord looking for us to have?
4. What are angels commissioned of the Lord to do for His saints?
5. What are the 5 things that we must have to receive His grace?
6. What all must a man do if he desires life and loves days?
7. Upon whom are the eyes and ears of God constantly fixed?
8. Why is the Lord against them that do evil?
9. Why is He going to cut off their remembrance from the earth?
10. Why does the Lord permit the righteous to be so afflicted?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

A great illustration of a poor man receiving help from the Lord comes from the word of Bro. O. B. Wilson, Jr. of a time in Anthony, KS. He came home from work one day and found his wife, Opal, suffering in body from stomach trouble. He laid on hands and prayed for her. She did not get any better. He prayed again, but to no avail. He was about sick himself and went into

the other room and threw himself on a couch with a heavy heart. He was so troubled and distressed that his wife was so sick and he could not get any help to her. As he lay there so heavily laden in spirit, so poor and needy and distressed, it dropped into his heart like a bang: "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles!" It came with inspiration and a thrill that he just knew it was from God. He swung his feet off that couch and hurried back into the other room and began to pray as a poor man with no resources, helpless, needy and destitute. God answered prayer and his wife straightened up and went on into the kitchen and started preparing supper. He got poor and needy. That is what we must all do before the Lord if we hope to receive anything from Him. So sad that many souls are unaware of their poverty and need. They have it in their minds that they are all right but they are really as Jesus said to certain in Rev. 3:17, "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." It is so important that we realize how poor and needy we all really are. Let us not let pride and self deceive us. We need God and we need Him badly. Let us assume this attitude of humility and brokenness of spirit that we might receive help from God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I particularly like the 5th verse of the 34th Psalm. It says, "They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed."

The secret to a successful Christian life is to keep our face toward God. When the battles of life are hard, when we feel bewilderment or when it seems we have failed in our pursuits, we can come out victorious if we keep our eyes on God.

One mystery of godliness which every Christian has wondered about is the way in which God answers prayer. I read of one boy who would go bird hunting with his father. When the dogs would point, the boy would begin praying that they would get the bird. Sometimes it would turn out to be a false point, sometimes the birds would escape, and then there were times when they would kill the bird. The boy's faith in God was somewhat shaken because his prayers weren't answered every time.

God answers prayer according to His will and our betterment. Our job is to keep our eyes upon Him, and to stay contrite at His feet. Then we can truthfully say with the Psalmist, "his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

—Wayne Murphey



NOVEMBER 18, 2001

**TODAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE,
HARDEN NOT THY HEART**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God is so great and good and has promised us many blessings, but we must take diligent heed to His Word lest we be overcome with doubts and fears and fail to receive the grace and help that He wills to us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 95:1, 2), "*Make a joyful noise*": The Hebrew says "To split the ears with sound, that is, to shout."

(Psalm 95:3), "*Above all gods*": Above all magistrates, rulers, and even the angels.

(Psalm 95:4), "*Deep places*": All the minerals and various ores of metal deposited by God in the ground. This includes oil and gas deposits. These are in His hand, released in His charitable goodness for man to use and employ. "*Strength of the hills*": The Hebrew says, "The weariness and toil of the heights." What man has to risk his life and go to the utmost of his strength to climb and attain to is within easy reach of Him.

(Psalm 95:8), "*Provocation and temptation*": These are referring to times when Israel provoked God by murmuring against Him in the desert in times of adversity. Instead of believing and counting God faithful, they looked on conditions and complained against Him. We today are going to have hard and difficult things to suffer in life. We are to justify God and honour Him regardless of the bitterness of our lot. We must not turn against Him, but rather hold fast our faith, knowing that all things will work together for our good if we trust Him.

(Psalm 95:10), "*Grieved*": Disgusted and sore displeased. Especially after the time at Kadesh-barnea when Israel rebelled and refused to go up to conquer the land of Canaan was God grieved and His anger kindled against them. And He told Moses to take them back into the wilderness. He swore in His wrath that they would never enter into the Canaan rest.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This 95th Psalm is generally believed to be the work of David. It is a call for us to worship the wonderful Creator of the

heavens and the earth in loving admiration to Him for His great works. David encourages us to sing and shout His praises with thanksgiving. We are called to worship and bow down, kneeling before Him, our Maker. The main entreaty is that to not grieve and vex His Holy Spirit as Israel did in the times when they complained and drew back in unbelief. We have included the admonition of the writer in Hebrews who quoted directly from this Psalm. He counsels us to not harden our hearts like these sad people did. Read Hebrews 3:6-19; 4:1-11. We must learn from the error of those in the past and take warning from them. So many have hardened their hearts against God and become bitter in the times of adverse conditions. Israel met difficulty and strait places as they journeyed toward the land God had promised to them. They were too quick to murmur and recoil against their leader, Moses. Finally God became so weary of their sinful unbelief that He cut them off. Let us take heed to the warning and be watchful of our attitudes in the pressing trials of this mortal life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why should we sing and make a joyful noise unto our God?
2. What are the deep places of the earth that are in God's hand?
3. What would happen if He discontinues letting us use them?
4. What would happen if He would let us have no more oil?
5. Why is kneeling such an appropriate way to come to Him?
6. Why does he say, "if" ye will hear His voice?
7. Why are we warned not to harden our hearts against Him?
8. In what way did Israel provoke God?
9. How long did God put up with them?
10. What did God swear in His wrath and why?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We are warned in our lesson today to not allow our hearts to be hardened against the Lord. The Holy Spirit is speaking to us to this effect. As we behold the power, majesty and patience of our Lord and Creator, it should move us to be very careful in

our attitude toward Him. He is so great and wonderful. He created this wonderful world in which we live and move. He brought into being the beautiful heavens above us where the sun, moon and stars move about according to His rule. We are the sheep of His hand. He created us and gave us our life and being. We are people who receive our sustenance through His wise providence and provision. How we need to keep a tender heart toward Him and His precious Word! So many in the history of the world have hardened their hearts against Him. "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?" Job 9:4. Israel became a hard hearted and stiff necked people. They had a better chance and opportunity to enjoy God's favor and blessings more than any other nation. And just look how they treated God and reacted to His dealings! It is a warning to us today. This is one of the most serious warnings in the Scriptures! It is speaking to us today in this gospel time. Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart. Israel hardened their hearts and provoked God's anger and wrath. Look what happened to them! God brought them out miraculously from the bondage of old Pharaoh in Egypt. Look how He showed His mighty hand in their behalf. Think of all of those plagues that He brought upon the Egyptians! And then consider how He brought them through the Red Sea and drowned the Egyptian army. Look at how He brought water out of the flinty rock and fed them with bread from heaven on a daily basis. And yet, despite all of His great wonders and miraculous dealings, they drew back in unbelief when it came time for them to go over and take the land that He had promised to them. Now it comes down as a warning to us today. If ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart. But people still are doing it. They draw back from giving up their sinful ways to repent and be saved. They refuse to give up the world and its styles and fashions. They do not want to listen to the reproofs and correction of the truth of His Word. They draw back from complete consecration and dying out to self to be sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit. Ah, here is where most people have gone wrong. Just as Israel refused to go over Jordan and conquer the Canaanites, so do so many today in refusing to go over and possess the true Canaan land, the fully saved and sanctified experience and a life led by the Spirit of God. And in so doing they harden their heart and live their lives in darkness and ignorance of the will of God. Let us

take warning and be diligent to not harden our hearts against the Spirit of the Lord.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

People should never consider themselves as beyond the possibility of drawing back on God. However, if we make sure our salvation is complete in every way as God intended it, we can enjoy our life for Him.

When we first start living for God, we must build well. Once a farmer hired a man to build a fence. When the job was finished, the farmer looked it over and reported back to the worker, "On the whole, it is pretty good." "On the whole" will not work for a fence, neither does it work in salvation. A fence needs constant upkeep, as does our salvation.

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

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

We can rejoice to know that there is enough grace in the provision and power of God to prevent us from drawing back in any way.

—Wayne Murphey

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NOVEMBER 25, 2001

A PSALM OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

Psalm 145:1 I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

2 Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.

3 Great *is* the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness *is* unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.

5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.

6 And *men* shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.

7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

8 The Lord *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

9 The Lord *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works.

10 All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.

11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;

12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

13 Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.

14 The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all *those that be* bowed down.

15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

17 The Lord *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

18 The Lord *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

20 The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

MEMORY VERSE: The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. Psalm 145:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To be a child of the Lord God in His kingdom of love is the sweetest and most wonderful state that a person could ever experience and possess in life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 145:1), "*Exalt*": To hold high in esteem and affection. "*Bless*": To kneel in adoration. The Lord fervently desires the honour and adoration of every one of our hearts. He is a God dispensing love and yearns for a return of that love from us. "*For ever and ever*": We are determined that our love and esteem and honour for God will fill this mortal life and extend onward into eternity.

(Psalm 145:5), The Hebrew says, "The honour of the glory of your majesty and the things of Your wondrous works I will muse upon." "*Majesty*": The grandeur, glory and dignity of One who has the absolute sovereign rule and authority over and above all.

(Psalm 145:6), "*Terrible acts*": Things that God does that causes us to reverence and stand in awe of Him. This will cause us also to speak of Him with utmost admiration and love.

(Psalm 145:7), "*Abundantly utter*": The Hebrew says, "gush forth or express." The basic meaning of "*express*" is to bring out with pressure. This explains why a man who experiences fellowship with his Maker and the indwelling Holy Spirit has such force and vibrant joy in his witness.

(Psalm 145:8), "*Gracious*": The definition of this word from the Hebrew is "bending or stooping over in kindness to an inferior." Good will, help, pleasantness and the disposition of warmth and loving concern are all included in this wonderful attribute.

(Psalm 145:17), "*Holy*": The Hebrew says "kind." Words associated with being kind are sympathetic, friendly, gentle, tender-hearted, generous and cordial. All these are truly descriptive of God's attitude toward us.

(Psalm 145:18), "*In truth*": From the Hebrew word "aman," from which comes the word "amen." It involves stability, firm-

ness, faith and faithfulness, surety, verity and that which agrees steadfastly with the blessed Word of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This Psalm is generally attributed to David, and we have no knowledge of any occasion back of its writing. But it is a worthy treatise on the goodness and blessing of the Almighty to the souls of men that He created. David, the youngest son of Jesse, the shepherd and eventually King of Israel, was very efficient in extolling and praising the Lord Jehovah. The title "David's Psalm of praise" is a song of glory and laudation to the Almighty. He extols God and lifts Him up for His goodness and mighty works of power and graciousness. He surely speaks like one who is happy and content in God's favor. I would say that this Psalm was written by one who was on the sunny side of life. He speaks of God's name, greatness, wondrous works, mighty acts, the glorious honour of His majesty, goodness, righteousness, mercies, kingdom, power and His loving favor to those who seek Him. He expresses the joy one can know in serving such a wonderful God. Oh, if poor, deluded people who are trying to find happiness and pleasure in the beggarly elements of this world could but see how much happier they would be if they were on God's side! This Psalm shows the sovereignty of God along with His graciousness and goodness. We need to fear Him, but if we will humble ourselves to walk with Him we will find that His fellowship brings the greatest joy and happiness we could ever know.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What one word would most accurately describe our state if we would have this Psalm fulfilled in our life?
2. What are some of the things we could eliminate from our lives if we would live up to this Psalm?
3. What kind of God does this Psalm picture our heavenly Father to be?
4. What are some of the glorious things spoken of God here?
5. What kind of kingdom does He have?
6. What are some of the great works that God has done?
7. What is the Lord's attitude toward those who are in trouble and need?

8. How does the Lord respond to people who sincerely pray and call upon Him?
9. What are some of the desires that He can fulfill to those who fear Him?
10. What will He do for those who cry unto Him?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

One cannot compare all this world and its riches and pleasure with one minute of rejoicing in the Lord! To find the joy of God and the pleasure of communion with Him is to find the greatest treasure there is. God, who created us and gave us life, has wonderful things reserved for those who will seek Him with the whole heart. He is great; His blessings are great; His peace is great; and everything about Him is great and truly wonderful. It is a real pleasure to live as He has designed for us to live. People who really find God precious to their souls are truly the most happy people around. He shows us His goodness and we feel the richness of His blessings in so many ways. He helps us with our needs of life. All creation waits upon Him and is fed and sustained by His open hand. But His spiritual blessings are the best of all. His kingdom of love and peace is a dominion of rule and grace to be within the heart of man. It is not an outward show of physical power and rule. But it is the power of love to win man's affection and confidence. Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit are the main ingredients in this glorious kingdom. (Rom. 14:17.) We can talk about it and sing about it, and above all, we can live it out in our every day lives. It is a daily life that can be lived joyfully and victoriously. If we have burdens and needs we can take them to Him in prayer. He is near to all who call upon Him honestly and sincerely. To those in great stress and suffering who cry unto Him for deliverance He has special tender feelings of love and goodness. He will save them from their troubles and straits of suffering. He will bring us out from adversity and sorrow to a wealthy place. He has control of everything. He can change the most stressful situation and bring things about for our happiness and good. To be in God's kingdom under His rule, authority and provision is truly a most blessed state of life to be in!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Praise to God is a worthy pursuit by anyone. David was blessed in offering it, and so are we. It also has its place in human relationships and can be a means of encouragement. However, when people praise each other, it is sometimes prudent to be skeptical as to motive. Flattery has an insidious way of turning an individual's head and making one susceptible to the motives of another. When someone praises you, take note to see if there is just cause in what was said.

No praise can equal that which comes from a pure heart. This is a trademark of the Psalms David wrote. He saw how the goodness and mercy of God was extended to every moving creature on the earth, and any requests that he made in the Psalms were only made to further the glory of God on the earth.

Mark well that there is a difference in bragging and praising. It is possible that lifting up a leader can cause pride in the one doing it by means of association. Can you detect the humility of David? In lifting Christ to a high plane, He left himself on a low one. Although he had a close relationship with God and recognized the extraordinary ability of God through His blessings upon the righteous, he considered it unmerited mercy. David was just as dependent on God at the end of his writings as he was in the beginning. As a quote by James Barrie indicates, "The praise that comes of love does not make us vain, but humble rather."
—Wayne Murphey



DECEMBER 2, 2001

SILENTLY WAITING ON THE LORD

Psalms 62:1 Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him *cometh* my salvation.

2 He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he is* my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as* a tottering fence.

4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him.

6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved.

7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah.

9 Surely men of low degree *are* vanity, *and* men of high degree *are* a lie: to be laid in the balance, they *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity.

10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart *upon them*.

11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God.

12 Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

MEMORY VERSE: Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. Psalm 62:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is vain to defend ourselves when we are mistreated and abused of others. It pleases God for us to wait and trust only in Him to bring us out of trouble. It is in His power alone to bring us the deliverance and safety we long for.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 62:1), "*Waiteth*": The Hebrew says, "is silent." This is to bring one's self decisively to a complete attitude of submission and rest before God with confidence of His care and the heart's honour to let His will be done in every matter. This agrees with Lamentations 3:26, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

(Psalm 62:2, 5-6), "*Only*": Surely alone. We must be decisive in our decision to trust in God alone, for we will be beset by temptations to put our trust in ourselves, in man, in the flesh, or the things of this world.

(Psalm 62:2), "*Defence*": The Hebrew meaning here is a cliff; a lofty and inaccessible place, a high tower. Our trust and confidence is much higher than self or our fleshly ability or that of mortal man. We have found the rock that is higher than I (self)

to be a shelter for us. (Psalm 61:2-3.) *"Greatly moved"*: This indicates that we will feel and perhaps suffer on account of the shaking and upheavals of life, but ultimately we will survive and be preserved from destruction. As Jacob's prophecy of the child of God in Genesis 49:19 says, "A troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last." Thus we will not be greatly or permanently moved, but will overcome in the end by the help of God.

(Psalm 62:3), *"A bowing wall"*: A leaning wall. This and the expression "tottering fence" indicates something that is not permanent, but rather sooner or later to topple and be destroyed. Those who persecute and abuse others and especially the children of the most high God are headed for a mighty fall and ruin.

(Psalm 62:4), *"Consult to cast down"*: This means they plot and plan to overthrow one who has been exalted above them, as it was in the case of Daniel and the jealousy of the other princes against him. It was jealousy in Saul that caused him to destroy David and keep him from taking the kingdom. It was jealousy that caused the Israelite leaders to have Jesus crucified. Oh, what innocent people have suffered from the hands of others through jealousy!

(Psalm 62:6), *"Shall not be moved"*: Notice that he drops the term "greatly" here, as if to say that not only will I not be greatly shaken or moved, but that I will not be moved at all.

(Psalm 62:9), The Hebrew text says nothing about men of low or high degree. It says simply, "Surely the sons of men are vanity, the sons of men are a lie." There is no such thing as high or low degree in God's sight. All are equal and on the same level. *"To be laid in the balance"*: We are all to be weighed in the scales of God's judgment, not in that of man. In God's scales man in his best state amounts to absolutely nothing, and even less than nothing.

(Psalm 62:10), *"Oppression, robbery, and increase of riches"*: Why do people injure others, steal and rob? Is it not an effort to get gain? Here the Word of God warns us against this thing. Oh, if the covers were but pulled off of all the crookedness and dishonesty in our world! It would be a dark picture! And even if riches increase lawfully and by the providence of God, we are to beware lest they get into our affections.

(Psalm 62:11), "*Power belongeth unto God*": God has everything in His control. He sets up rulers and puts them down at His will. He can move any of us out at any time.

(Psalm 62:12), "*Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy*": God will be merciful unto whom He will have mercy, and whom He will he hardeneth. (Romans 9:18.) It will pay us to cast out our pride and self-sufficiency and learn to trust fully in our Sovereign Creator and Lord. We will gain nothing by resisting Him and going our own selfish way.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is another Psalm of David, and could very well have been written during his exile from home and King Saul's relentless pursuit of him in the wilds. The Lord knew that there would be many of His saints who would suffer from the hands of abusive men. Our lesson today shows the attitude of silence and patient waiting on God that He wants us to hold in our hearts. We need not be surprised if we meet with opposition and hostility from the carnal-minded world we live in the midst of. We are going to suffer one way or the other from this ruthless and lustful society. But here is where we can experience the realities of God, from His support and defense for us in the dark hours of suffering and abuse. Here is the warning against the dangerous inroads of selfishness and the love of money. Jesus warned us to "Beware of covetousness." (Luke 12:15.) Many a man has fallen prey to the spirit of lust and greed. History shows case after case of this sort of corruption of the heart. What made Judas want to betray our Lord? It was covetousness in his heart. He was the keeper of the bag, that is, the one who took care of the money and expenses. He allowed the love of money to take him. It led him to ruin and eternal death.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What temptations must we overcome to be still before God?
2. What other kind of help other than God is offered to us?
3. What is going to happen to those who imagine mischief against God's people?
4. What are some of the wonderful benefits in waiting on God?

5. What does it mean to pour out our hearts before Him?
6. In what way can the sons of men be a lie?
7. Whose balances should we weigh ourselves in?
8. What does God's scales show us mortals to amount to?
9. What causes men to oppress, rob and injure others?
10. Why can we safely trust and wait on God with no fear?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus made a statement after the rich young ruler had turned away from giving up his riches for the pursuit of eternal life. He said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" When His disciples were astonished at this saying, Jesus answered again, "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:23-24.) We could add another statement in conjunction with what the Saviour said: How hard is it for men to have riches and not trust in them. When riches increase man is so prone to set his heart upon them. Covetousness and the love of money has been one of man's greatest weaknesses. I heard of a poor family who were attending the services of God who made the statement, "If we had more money we could give more." God allowed them to be tried out in this. When they struck oil on their property they became wealthy. What happened to them? They lost interest in the service of God and ceased to attend. They allowed their heart to get set on their riches. This is the warning of our lesson today. "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. It is a warning that for the most part is unheeded. Back of every evil and sinful practice you will find the love of gain lurking. Why all the strife, the pushing and shoving of our society, the restless turmoil of human conflict? Is it not the love of gain and the fullness of carnal security? "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness" is scarcely the prayer of any. (Psalm 119:36.) May we take warning from the Word of God and escape this woeful snare!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Christ said a great deal about the danger of riches, but not many are afraid of riches. Covetousness is not practically

considered a sin in these times. If a man breaks the sixth or eighth commandment, he is branded a criminal and covered with shame; but he may break the tenth, and he is only enterprising.

"To look about, one would think a man's life did consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. Men think they become great just in proportion as they gather wealth. So it seems, too, for the world measures men by their bank accounts. Yet there never was a more fatal error. A man is really measured by what he is, and not by what he has. You may find a shriveled soul in the midst of a great fortune, and a grand, noble soul in the barest poverty."

—From *Come Ye Apart*.



DECEMBER 9, 2001

A SONG OF REJOICING

Psalms 96:1 O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.

2 Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.

3 Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

4 For the Lord *is* great, and greatly to be praised: he *is* to be feared above all gods.

5 For all the *gods* of the nations *are* idols: but the Lord made the heavens.

6 Honour and majesty *are* before him: strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary.

7 Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

8 Give unto the Lord the glory *due unto* his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

9 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

10 Say among the heathen *that* the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.

12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice

13 Before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

MEMORY VERSE: O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. Psalm 96:9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Our great and kind heavenly Father is worthy of all the praise and glory we can give unto Him. We rejoice in His salvation that He brought when He came to the earth as the Saviour of mankind. And we rejoice that He will come again to judge the world and reward all who are faithful to Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 96:2), "*Shew forth*": The Hebrew says, "Announce, or bear tidings of."

(Psalm 96:3), "*Declare*": The Hebrew meaning is very full: "To score with a mark as a tally or record, to inscribe, to enumerate, to recount or celebrate." To inscribe means "to fix or impress deeply or lastingly in the mind or memory. Enumerate means to 'count or name one by one.'" We can see by these meanings that to declare means much more than a casual mention. It is a forceful expression meant to carry weight and to have a lasting effect on everyone.

(Psalm 96:5), "*Idols*": The Hebrew word means "good for nothing, empty, vain or vanity."

(Psalm 96:7), "*Kindreds*": Families, circle of relatives, etc. "*Give*": To put or ascribe. It means to recognize and give the Lord all the credit for strength and honour that is accomplished in us. We are weak and corruptible, therefore we must attribute all success and accomplishments to be from Him and Him alone.

(Psalm 96:8), "*Offering*": Something given, bestowed, donated, or rendered unto God and His cause.

(Psalm 96:9), "*Beauty of holiness*": All the magnificence, ornament, splendor, comeliness, excellence, glory and honour that God recognizes and has regard and honour for is that which is holy, sacred, pure and without sin or fleshly pride or honour.

(Psalm 96: 10), "*The world shall be established*": Nothing can

be stable and enduring without the rulership and control of God Almighty. This present world is under the sentence of eternal destruction because of the sin and transgression that is upon it. (Isaiah 24:20.) And it will be ultimately destroyed in that last great day when Jesus comes again to judge and give every man his just and due reward. But, as II Peter 3:13 put it, "we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

LESSON BACKGROUND

This glorious Psalm 96 is very similar to a part of the Psalm in I Chron. 16, being found in verses 23 to 33. It was the Psalm that David wrote in celebrating the return of the ark of God to Zion from the house of Obed-edom. There is weighty spiritual significance in this Psalm, a prophecy of the first and second coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ, to this earth. In His first coming and visit to this earth Jesus brought great rejoicing and incited great action of the preaching of His grace and power among the nations. Jesus came at a time when the nations were hungering for something that would answer the needs of their souls. According to history many had lost confidence in the old gods and the myths about them. They had traded gods and the gods had become so mixed up and confused that very few people had any real assurance concerning them. Jesus Christ brought to earth the real truth that brought condemnation to sin and evil, and at the same time brought judgment and victory to the poor and needy who were hungering for righteousness. Wherever the gospel of Christ found an inroad and entrance into people's hearts and lives it brought happiness and satisfaction that had never been experienced in the old gods and their religions. The early morning saints exhibited such joy and confidence in the face of death and martyrdom that it had a great influence in convincing people that they were right and true. So the Psalmist is expressing the joy and rejoicing that can be ours because of the Lord coming to earth to bring victory and salvation to mankind. He came the first time to bear the sins of many by His death on the cross. He accomplished that and God, in the way of rewarding Him, raised Him up from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. He did this leaving a promise that He will appear the second time to reward those who

have taken advantage of His grace to be delivered from the power of sin and its corruption. Such knowledge, such hope, and such extensive and wonderful grace brings gladness and rejoicing to the souls of men today. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Cor. 15:57.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the Lord want His salvation preached from day to day?
2. What is contained in the new song we sing unto the Lord?
3. What are some of the gods that people worship other than the Lord?
4. What must people see about these false gods before they are willing to give them up?
5. How do we give unto the Lord glory and strength?
6. What kind of offering is the Lord most pleased with from us?
7. Why is this present world going to have to be destroyed?
8. What kind of world did Jesus establish that shall not be moved?
9. Why should the heavens and earth, field and trees rejoice before the Lord at the promise of His return?
10. In what way did Jesus bring judgment when He came the first time?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

All of this Psalm 96 in our lesson today seems to centralize around the prospect and expectation of the Lord coming to this earth to judge righteously and in truth. Jesus fulfilled this Psalm in His first appearance as the Son of the virgin Mary and the great work that He accomplished in doing the will of God, His Father. He fulfilled the work His Father had sent Him to do, and sealed it all with His death on the cross and the spilling of His precious life's blood. God the Father vindicated and approved His Son's faithfulness and obedience by raising Him up from the dead and showed Him to be alive unto many witnesses. Then, in a further showing of His well-pleasing to Christ, He caused Him to ascend up to His right hand to reign in power and grace until He would send Him the second time in final judgment. The

gospel preached under the anointing and inspiration of the Holy Spirit brings light and assurance and conviction for sin to the heart of man. The old, old story of Jesus in its simplicity and virtue has changed multitudes of people down through the years. Though the truth of the gospel has been besieged and withstood by Satan in the way of false religion and erroneous doctrines, still it prevails when it reaches an honest heart who is willing to forsake all sin and to obey the truth. And it is still being preached today by the ministers of the gospel who are anointed and led by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The peoples of the world need to hear the real truth of the gospel. They need to know that Jesus is Lord, that He reigns above, and that He can save to the uttermost from all sin. And they need also to realize that He is coming again, not to set up His kingdom, but rather to judge and punish the ungodly and to reward His holy saints for their faithfulness to Him. The heavens rejoicing, the earth being glad, the sea roaring, the field being joyful, and the trees of the wood rejoicing before the Lord are all symbolical of the blessing and effect that the coming of Jesus the first time and His second coming can have upon us. We can rejoice and be glad and give honour to Him for what His coming has brought to us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Psalms 96:9.

"Holiness is the key-note of the worship of Jehovah; but it is the key-note of the worship of no other god. Had a medal been struck in praise of Jupiter, who is the best of the pagan gods, on one side might have been engraved, 'Almightiness, omnipresence and justice,' and on the reverse, 'Caprice, vengeance and lust.' But the association of beauty with holiness now requires our attention. The best idea may be gained by thinking of ripe fruit; if it is really healthy and ripe, it cannot help having a bloom on. That bloom is the beauty of ripeness. Beauty is a combination of elements according to the laws of harmony; the more beautiful the parts or elements, and the more perfect the harmonious combination, the higher the beauty. Then we must find the elements that go to make a worship so holy that, both

in God's sight and in man's, it should be beautiful. Worship that can be thought of as showing the beauty of holiness must be lawful, pure, sincere and cheerful.

—Taken from *The Pulpit Commentary*.



DECEMBER 16, 2001

THE BLESSED STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

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

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

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

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

Psalms 112:2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Unto the upright there ariseth light in the

darkness: *he is* gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. Psalm 112:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: By the blessing of the Almighty a godly upright person can enjoy supreme happiness and the highest pinnacle of true success and honour in this present life and that which is forever.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 1:1, 112:1), "*Blessed*": In the Hebrew this is the interjection: "How happy!" "*Scornful*": One who makes mouths at, or scoffs and derides and criticizes. "*Delighteth greatly*": The Hebrew says, "to be vehemently pleased with."

(Psalm 1:2), The Hebrew says, "But only in the law of Jehovah is his delight." The true, godly man rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in that which is in accord with the law of God.

(Psalm 112:2), "*Mighty*": Powerful, valiant, as a conquering warrior.

(Psalm 112:5) "*Guides his affairs with discretion*": The Hebrew says, "keep in (maintain or nourish) his matters (things concerning him) with justice."

(Psalm 112:7), "*Evil tidings*": Bad news. He keeps his life so free from the paths of transgression and worldly associations that he knows nothing can harm him as he follows after that which is good.

(Psalm 112:8), "*Established*": Supported or upheld. "*Until he see his desire*": The words "his desire" are added by the translators and are not in the original text. The Hebrew simply says, "until he looks upon his foes." This means to look upon his foes with victory and strength to overcome. This means Satan and all the powers of darkness and sin.

(Psalm 112:9), "*Horn*": A symbol of power, authority and triumph.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Although this 112th Psalm has no title and no author is mentioned, Clarke says that it is understood to have been written after the Babylonian captivity probably by Zechariah or Haggai. We have inserted the first three verses of Psalm 1 as part

of our lesson as it blends very well with the central thought. It also has no title nor author mentioned, but Clarke says that this first Psalm has been considered as a preface or introduction to the whole book of the Psalms.

We have here vividly and beautifully portrayed the blessedness of the man who walks in godly fear and the delight of obeying God's law. We must fear and reverence God, but we must also love Him with all of our hearts' affections. This will inspire us to obedience and faithful service. God's Word is to be greatly delighted in, that is, with fervency and ardent adulation. This kind of devotion will bring every function and activity of one's life into conformity to what is right and acceptable in God's sight. God will bless and prosper such a life, not so much in a fleeting earthly manner, but principally in spiritual life and victory. The strength, the wealth, the light and the honour God wants to bestow will be concerning things that are eternal. And, as God promised to Solomon when he chose the fear of God above all, He will add to the godly many temporal and earthly benefits and favours as well.

Verse 9 of this 112th Psalm is quoted by the apostle Paul in II Corinthians 9:7-9 in his teachings on the blessing of liberality and giving: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.)" How wonderful to behold how the New Testament writers quoted from the Old Testament scriptures and how they applied them! These are wonderful Psalms, worthy of our utmost regard and sincere adherence.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main thing that our lesson today is telling us?
2. Why is the counsel of the ungodly, the way of sinners, and the seat of the scornful to be so diligently avoided?
3. Instead of these things, what should we delight in, and why?
4. What kind of wealth and riches is found in a godly man's life?
5. What kind of light riseth in the darkness to the upright?

6. Why is giving to the poor such an important thing?
7. Who is the enemy of the righteous and how shall we overcome him?
8. What are some of the evil tidings that we will hear in the world?
9. How can we keep from being affected by the turmoil and trouble going on all around us?
10. What will be the feeling and reaction of the wicked to the sight of the righteous being so blessed?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is so plain in the Scriptures that a godly life that pleases the Lord and is obedient to His commandments is by far the better and more satisfying life one can live. The happiness and inward joy that a child of God experiences supersedes all the pleasure and superficial enjoyment that the things of this world can ever give. The life of a Christian is the highest style a man can attain to. Compare, if you will, a true child of God with a carnal person who lives for self and worldly pleasure. Examine them closely and look at the contrast. We have examples in the Bible, and we have them in our present time, also. Look at Moses and Pharaoh, David and Saul, Jesus and Judas. One need not look very far to find people in your own world who exemplify this truth. It just pays great dividends to serve the Lord. One will have to forfeit many of the earthly treasures to go the way of the cross and holiness, but he will come out in the long run. And, after all, that is what counts the most. "Here little, and hereafter bliss is best from age to age," so said John Bunyan in the Pilgrim's Progress. To every person in life comes the time when a decision is to be made. It is a wise person who weighs carefully every factor involved. To choose fleshly thrills with no forethought of what will be the outcome is the course of fools. So many are hereby deceived. To choose riches and worldly pleasure instead of the spiritual values of the kingdom of Christ is a costly error that very few ever recover from. Oh, let us not allow the glitter of sin and the things it will win cause us to miscalculate and muddle our sense of values! Let the words of these Psalms penetrate our hearts and minds! It is truly better to fear the Lord and find delight in living for Him than to pursue the deceitfulness and outward vanities of sin. A beautiful life of service to God

and our fellow man is worth all the sacrifice that we have to make to have it.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In this chapter of Psalms much is said of "righteousness." Have you noticed that the word today has become almost exclusively a religious term? Its connotation is often that a particular creed will bring about righteousness, and wise men have long wrangled over what creed that might be. But to be righteous simply means to be right—right with God and right with man, doing that which is just. Some people assert that one's religion must be kept in the place of worship or at home, and that the laws of righteousness cannot be brought to bear in the public arena of thought. However, it is in the national interest that every person be righteous.

When asked if he had difficulty reconciling his private morality with his public acts, Lord Grey, one time prime minister of Great Britain, said, "No, for the right thing is always the right thing to do."

The safeguard of any nation in passing its freedom from one generation to another is to possess the righteousness of God, and it is also a catalyst in one's personal life to bring about happiness.

—Wayne Murphey



DECEMBER 23, 2001

GOD'S WORD HEALING THE BROKEN IN HEART

Psalm 147:1 Praise ye the Lord: for *it is* good to sing praises unto our God; for *it is* pleasant; *and* praise is comely.

2 The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

3 He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

4 He telleth the numer of the stars; he calleth them all by *their* names.

5 Great *is* our Lord, and of great power: his understanding *is* infinite.

6 The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

10 He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

11 The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

12 Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.

13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.

14 He maketh peace *in* thy borders, *and* filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.

15 He sendeth forth his commandment *upon* earth: his word runneth very swiftly.

16 He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.

17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?

18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.

19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

MEMORY VERSE: The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. Psalm 147:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God takes great pleasure in showing mercy to the poor, wounded and broken in heart, the outcasts, the meek, and in general all who truly fear Him and who hope with a steadfast faith in the mercy that He has brought to us in His Son Jesus.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 147:1), "*Pleasant*": Delightful and sweet. "*Comely*": That which is suitable and becoming.

(Psalm 147:2), "*Outcasts*": Those who have been pushed down, thrust sorely, driven away, or overthrown. These are the persecuted and abused because of their faith in the living God. The Lord looks upon the downtrodden and mistreated with special compassion and favour. Those who have been abused by sin and its blight are the special objects of His love because they are the only ones who will appreciate His help and let it work for their good. The outcasts of Israel include those who contend for the true faith and do not go along with apostasy and corruption,

thus being persecuted and cast out by those who have given over to the flesh and its allurements. Who is it that is a potential prospect of receiving the grace of God but those who are forsaken and grieved in spirit, refused and cast off from the world in which they found no pleasure? Those who prosper and are happy and satisfied with their sinful state are not very likely to be willing to change their ways to go with the Lord.

(Psalm 147:3), "*Broken in heart*": "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart." Psa. 51:17. Those who are impenitent and contentious to go their own way will miss the salvation of the Lord. "*Wounds*": Sorrows and distresses suffered on account of sin and its blight. Only those who recognize what damage that sin and the world is inflicting upon them will be willing to flee from its woeful grasp.

(Psalm 147:4), "*Telleth the number of the stars*": God weighs out, appoints, and determines how many stars are to be in the heavens above the earth. He has every one of them named and identified.

(Psalm 147:5), "*Infinite*": Innumerable. God's mind is far superior than the most brilliant of men.

(Psalm 147:6), "*Lifteth up the meek*": God relieves the depressed, the lowly, the humble and gentle in mind and spirit. He looks upon the heavy-hearted who yearn for deliverance and help with fervent desire to lift their burdens and solve their desolate state. Jesus said in Luke 18:14, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

(Psalm 147:12), "*Praise the Lord*": The Hebrew says, "Shout praise!" "*Jerusalem*" and "*Zion*": These are prophetic terms that point to the true Church, the holy bride of Jesus, that include all who are made partakers of His grace and holiness in salvation.

(Psalm 147:15), "*Runneth*": The Hebrew says "to rush." Paul desired prayer "that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified." The expression "free course" here means to run. We must glorify the word of the Lord, receive it with gladness, and let it rush joyfully into our hearts. The coming of the Holy Spirit was described as a rushing mighty wind. (Acts 2:2.)

(Psalm 147:19), "*Sheweth his word*": The Hebrew says, "Declares His Word." This means that His Word has force and definiteness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This 147th Psalm is without title or given author, but is attributed by several versions to Haggai and Zechariah, and was probably written after the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity while they were busily employed in rebuilding Jerusalem. But it prophetically points to those who are broken in heart because of God's displeasure for their sins, who find healing and deliverance in the salvation of Jesus Christ. This is pointing to the New Jerusalem, the true Israel of God, who worship God in the Spirit and have no confidence in the flesh. All of this precious Psalm is fulfilled in Christ and the Church. The same God that worked in those days of old is working now to save our souls from sin and eternal death. May we reject the confidence of the flesh, open our hearts to His gospel to have free course to run and be glorified in our lives, melting our cold hearts to fashion us to His good pleasure!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the old Jerusalem a type of in the New Testament?
2. What condition must we be in to receive the grace of God?
3. What is said that illustrates the greatness of our Lord?
4. Why does God cast the wicked down to the ground?
5. What does it mean to be meek?
6. Who does the Lord take real pleasure in?
7. What does God want His Word to accomplish as it goes forth?
8. Why does the proud and worldly-minded miss out with God?
9. What are the blessings the children of Zion receive?
10. How can we keep our hearts warm and tender before God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

How great and wonderful our God is to us! He was wonderful and gracious to His saints of old and many sad and broken in heart He has lifted up and healed through the centuries. God looks with favor and mercy toward those who are pressed down with the sorrows of this world. Those who are bruised by the

hand of Satan and sin can find relief and escape in His marvelous grace. A God Who is so wise and infinite in knowledge and power is able to help us in every need we might have. But we must be broken and contrite in heart and spirit. We must be meek and lowly in heart. We must humble ourselves before Him. Oh, how we need to feel our dependence upon His mercy! He has shown us what He can do, and how wise and broad is His knowledge and understanding. We need not fear to trust Him with everything in life. He is an able God He surpasses all our ideas and thoughts. He has ways of working that are past finding out. He wants to work in your life and mine. If we will be submissive and obedient to His precious Word, we can experience His wonderful working. His Word works and goes forth and accomplishes great and wonderful things in the hearts of men. As the rain, the snow, the wind, and the sunlight comes down and accomplishes good effects on the earth, so His Word and Holy Spirit can work wonderful blessings in our souls. The greatest joy a man can have is to feel the Word of the Lord in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit flowing and rushing into his heart and mind! As we pray and seek the Lord with fervency and devotion to Him, He responds by sending us His Word. He enlightens our understanding and reveals the truth to our hearts. These spiritual blessings are found in Zion, His holy Church.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." "A broken heart is a common thing at the present day. Perhaps more common now than it ever has been in the world's history. Note, there is a difference between being broken-down and broken-hearted. Broken-down people are not always broken-hearted folk. We have known some who were broken in health, broken in wealth, even broken in love, yet not broken-hearted. No; when we speak of people broken-hearted, we mean more than broken down. Broken-hearted means a great and overwhelming grief, something more than a pin-prick. So far as this world is concerned, such are hopeless. Science has, to a great extent, conquered physical pain, but science has done little to diminish mental pain.

"What a strange combination. The Psalmist speaks of star-counting and heart-healing in the same breath. What a grand breathless thought of God! 'He telleth the number of the stars.' The mystery of the stars is known by Him. Why speak thus of God? Only the infinite can heal the soul. God could not minister to broken hearts if the stars were too much for Him. The mystery of the stars, and the mystery of human pain are parts of one great mystery that is no mystery to God. No thought of God narrower and lower than that can ever truly comfort us. Christ has suffered with the same malady. He died of a broken heart, and not as the result of the physical tortures of the cross. We could not insist upon medical men suffering from certain maladies before they attempt to cure them, yet Jesus has suffered from a broken heart. A broken-hearted man needs a broken-hearted Saviour."

—Taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*.



DECEMBER 30, 2001

**PRAYER FOR MERCY, FAVOUR, AND HELP FROM THE
LORD**

Psalm 25:1 Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4 Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

6 Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

8 Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

10 All the paths of the Lord *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

12 What man *is* he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of the Lord *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

15 Mine eyes *are* ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me: for I wait on thee.

MEMORY VERSE: The secret of the Lord *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant. Psalm 25:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We must always seek to be meek before God that we might know His ways, and be led in His truth, and be preserved in integrity and uprightness all the days of our life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 25:3), "*Transgress without cause*": The Hebrew says, "worthlessly deceive." His prayer is that such will be ashamed. Their life is empty, vain, useless and of no profit to themselves or anyone else. Not until such becomes awakened to their wretchedness and empty way of life will they ever have any purpose to be saved.

(Psalm 25:6), "*Ever of old*": The Hebrew says simply, "from eternity."

(Psalm 25:7), "*For thy goodness' sake*": On account of, or because of Thy goodness. It is the goodness of God that brings us to repentance. Were it not for His goodness none of us would have a chance.

(Psalm 25:9), "*Meek*": The Hebrew meaning says, "depressed," and it infers gentleness, mildness and defenseless. It takes a meek and lowly heart in order for one to be taught of the Lord and to be led by His Holy Spirit. It should be our daily prayer and attended with all vigilance and carefulness that we have and maintain a meek and lowly attitude about us. We have to really watch and be on our guard. Meekness is one of the most, if not THE most challenging of all Christian virtues to have and to keep. And let us keep in view the One who was the perfect example of meekness, and that is our precious Lord and Saviour, Jesus the anointed of God.

(Psalm 25:10), "*Paths are mercy and truth*": All the ways and doings of the Lord are expressions of His mercy and truth toward us, and will be recognized as such by those who keep in line with God's covenant that He has made with us in Christ, and obey all of His Word. To those who are not thus united with Him, there will be many occasions to find fault and be offended with the Lord's requirements. But to the meek and submissive soul, nothing is a stumbling block because he sees the mercy and truth therein and he is willing to obey regardless.

(Psalm 25:13), "*His soul shall dwell at ease*": The Hebrew says simply, "His soul shall abide in good."

(Psalm 25:14), "*The secret of the Lord*": The Hebrew says, "The secret assembly of Jehovah." The real Christian life is a hidden life, a hidden wisdom which none of the princes of this world is aware of. It is a mystery, a secret society, hidden from the wise and prudent of this world and revealed unto babes. (Luke 10:21.) How important and vital it is to really serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear! (Heb. 12:28.)

(Psalm 25:21), "*Integrity*": The Hebrew defines this as "completeness and innocence."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading to this 25th Psalm attributes it to David, but we know not on what occasion it was composed. But it contains much good material for us to ponder over and let be real in our lives today. Several things are mentioned in this Psalm that we **MUST** be faithful in. Included in this list are these following daily functions: Lifting up our souls to the Lord; Waiting on Him; Being led and taught by Him; Keeping (that is, observing and obeying) His testimonies and covenant; Fearing Him; and Keeping our eyes ever toward the Lord. If we would be successful in the Christian life and make heaven our home at the end, we should be diligent to daily follow these things. These instructions were written for our learning and admonition. Let us take heed to them and reap the reward of seeking the Lord with all of our hearts.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we need to daily lift up our soul unto the Lord?
2. If we truly wait on the Lord with faith and patience, and

keep His ways, what can we be assured of?

3. What causes a person to not want to be taught or led?

4. What kind of person will the Lord guide in judgment and teach His way?

5. Why must we always be aware of God's goodness and mercies?

6. What is there about the Lord's tender mercies and loving kindnesses that we can call on Him to remember them?

7. Unto whom will all the paths of the Lord be mercy and truth?

8. Why is godly fear such a vital and important thing for us to have in our hearts?

9. Why is the Christian life such a secret and hidden life from the world?

10. What other things might we be tempted to have our eyes toward rather than the Lord?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a blessing and privilege is ours to lift up our soul unto the great Heavenly Father each day! We know that He cares for us with a tender loving care and concern. So we enjoy coming to Him and lifting up our thoughts, desires and cares to Him. But we have found through experience and the truth of His word that we must also tarry and wait on Him to work. He does not always work as quickly as our poor, finite minds might suppose. But He always comes on time and He has never failed us yet, and we know that He never will. We are constantly and ever seeking to know and understand His ways better. We have found that the course He takes is quite adverse to the way we might think He will take. He surprises us many times with ways of working that are so strange and unusual, yet so blessed and edifying! Oh, how we need His instruction and counsel! We are so ignorant and our minds so low. We find that He is a precious Friend and Counselor. We are leaning hard on Him to guide us through each day. It is a slow and sometimes painful process that He takes us through in getting things across to us, but the lessons learned and the truth revealed makes it worthwhile. All of the things that He teaches us are part of His working for the good and the salvation of our souls. And we are fully and ever aware that this is the most important thing of all. We have a soul, an eternal

soul, that will be worth everything to save. But we have the help of the Lord. He daily works with us as we earnestly seek His face. What we put into it in the way of seeking Him in fasting and prayer and diligent obedience. He is faithful to reward us with spiritual light and blessings. However He chooses to work we know that it all amounts to mercy and truth for our eternal welfare. We want to keep our hearts and minds open to Him at all times. There is always a lesson for us to learn. We realize that it is a hidden wisdom, and not grasped by the carnal mind and human understanding. It is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit that He has given us. Oh, what a wonderful and unspeakable Gift is the indwelling Spirit of the Lord! He takes the Scriptures and opens up their meaning and application to us. Where would we be if we did not have this inward Light and Witness? We would be adrift on the cold sea of life with no chart to guide us. But He is our Pilot and we know that He will safely guide us through this life. We mean to walk in integrity and uprightness and hold fast to our love and faith in Him. He will be with us to the end of the world. How bright is our living Hope! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." Psa. 25:9.

Meekness is retiring, not boastful. The person who builds himself up in his own eyes is often quite hurt when others fail to appreciate him as much as he appreciates himself.

Generally, those who lack meekness are primarily preoccupied with thoughts of themselves and their personal interests. They are often inflated in their own perception, as illustrated in a story about a little boy who repeatedly heard his father describe the important part he played in the Civil War. Finally, the child asked, "Father, did anyone help you put down the rebellion?"

Meekness is not weakness. It is strength under control; strength of character and mind. When Abraham faced a property dispute with Lot, he could have exercised his rights and taken the land he wanted. He had the strength to do so. Instead, he purposefully assumed a retiring position and allowed Lot to choose.

In understanding when and what we can be firm about, we

need to understand our rights. Our rights begin and end with our God-given responsibilities. Our first responsibility is to our soul. We must protect it and allow no one to deceive it. We may have Christ-like firmness in that matter. If we are married and have children, they are our responsibility to train and care for. That is also our right. However, these things entail a very small scope and do not give us a right to dictate in the lives of others. It is not meekness to be forward enough to try it. It is true that we are our brother's keeper, but what kind of dictates are allotted us in that Scripture? Isaiah 35:3 says, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." This is the kind of interest we should have in others. It is not a domineering involvement, but one of care.

As Psa. 25:9 indicates, God has promised to help us exercise proper judgment. If we are willing to learn, He will teach us to live so as to please Him.

—Wayne Murphey



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