

**PSALMS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Psalm 85 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Here is a Psalm that was written by the sons of Korah. Now some don't agree with this and I won't be dogmatic about it, but I feel that this Psalm was written after the 70 year Babylonian captivity. It is a Psalm of thanksgiving for God bringing them back into the land and a call for revival now that they are back. As you may remember, when they were released a small contingent led by Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest made its way back to Jerusalem. I think that is what we see here but it can also look forward to a day when the Jews turn back to their Messiah and He establishes His Kingdom in Jerusalem, He brings them back into the land. You see, it can have a near and long term fulfillment to it. Let's read on and see what the Lord has for us as we pick up our study this evening in Psalm 85 starting in verse 1.

**PSALM 85****VERSES 1-3**

1. Because of their idolatry and their refusal to turn from their wicked ways, God brought them into captivity. Now God has freed them and they are returning back to the land that God had given them. And as you read this there are three actions on their part that brought about this revival. First of all there must have been a confession of their sin. Yes we don't see it spoken of openly here but when you look at the second action, that God forgave the iniquity of His people, there had to be confession of sin, there had to be repentance! And the third action, which also speaks of repentance, is that God's wrath upon them was averted! Revival begins in our own hearts with the confession of our sin, not blaming anyone else. Look at the prayer of Nehemiah or Daniel and you will see both these men understood their sin as well as the nations and they repented!

2. Here is the wonderful thing for us. First of all we are told that the wages of sin is death, that is not good, that is not wonderful. That is just a fact and in man there is no way to change that! So man's greatest need is his salvation and God's greatest deed was the forgiveness of man's sin that is only found in the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary! God supplied our need and saved us! What a wonderful God we serve.

VERSES 4-7

1. I don't know about you, but this seems confusing to me. We see first of all that the Psalmist is thanking God for returning them to their land and forgiving them their sin. But now, in these verses he is asking God to have mercy on them, not to let His anger continue. What is going on here?

If you remember their captivity ended in 536 B. C. and then, some 91 years later, after they were in the land all that time, Nehemiah shows up on the scene and the city is still a mess. The walls are broken down, the Temple is in shambles. And the Psalmist is asking for God to return them back to their former glory, bring about a revival among the people and restore the land.

You see, God did forgive them, but there were still the consequences of their actions that they were dealing with. Even at this point they were still marrying heathen women and Nehemiah comes against them for their actions for this was the very thing that brought them into captivity in the first place.

In Nehemiah 13:25-27 we see how Nehemiah dealt with this issue. We read, "**So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, 'You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?'**" I don't think I could get away with that today but it did work for Nehemiah!

And not only that, but they had become complacent after being back home for a time. They did not do the things that needed to be done. They were more concerned about their homes than the Lord and thus, the things of God were put on the back burner you might say. May we not become complacent in our walk with the Lord!

#### VERSES 8-9

1. Here is something that we miss many times in our own lives. What we see here is that the Psalmist prayed and then he waited for God to answer his prayer. It is something that takes time and patience as we wait for God to speak to our hearts those things we have been praying about. But it is what we must do so we will move in the right direction.

“Lord, it has been 25 seconds, come on, I have plans!” I realize that may be a little of an exaggeration but you get the idea. Waiting upon God is hard. We pray and then we must wait for Him to answer and He will.

2. The Psalmist is also crying out to God for them not to go back to their old ways, their old sin but to move on in the Lord. The cry is for us to learn from our mistakes, our backsliding and sin. The problem is this. If we don't we will go through them all over again.

3. Also notice that the Psalmist says that salvation is near to everyone who fears the Lord! It is an open invitation but you have to humble yourself, you have to admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior, in need of Jesus. And you have to ask Him to be Lord and Savior of your life. That is how near salvation is to every person on this earth and yet, that is how far away it is for those who reject Him!

#### VERSES 10-11

1. Keep in mind that we are in the Old Testament and this is a very powerful statement of what Christ has done. You see, the big question for us is, “**Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other**” and how can this be when God said that the soul that sins will die? (Ezekiel 18:4). How could mercy ever come together with truth? How could a righteous God have peace, fellowship, with sinful man? There is only one way - ***THE CROSS!***

2. And notice in verse 11 where this truth will spring out of – ***THE EARTH!*** In other words, Jesus Christ, God became flesh, He sprung out of the earth, you might say. He then died for our sins and rose from the dead on the third day. He then ascended into heaven and is now seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus said in John 16:8-10, “**And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more.**” What is the only righteousness that God will accept? It is perfection, it is the righteousness of Christ and we can not attain that kind of righteousness on our own.

Now here is the beautiful thing, we can have the righteousness of Christ imputed into our lives by faith. Paul said in II Corinthians 5:21, “**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**” And thus, as the Father looks down upon us from heaven He sees us as righteous because the blood of Christ has cleansed us from all our sins!

### VERSES 12-13

1. Right now we do not see righteousness fill the land, things are not very good because man, in his rebellion against God is evil. But, when the Lord returns and sets up His Kingdom here on earth, the earth will be restored to its former state, when everything was ***VERY GOOD!***

You see, in the Kingdom Age you won't have to worry about locking your doors, people will not have to worry about their children, for righteousness will fill the land. And if someone does step out of line, if they begin to walk in unrighteousness, it will be dealt with immediately by the Lord who will rule with a rod of iron.

2. This is a prayer for revival, a revival in the individual's heart and in the heart of a nation and that true revival will take place when the Lord returns. But make no mistake about it, we should desire revival in our own lives and that fire that is in us will spread outward and touch the lives of those around us!

**PSALM 86**

This Psalm of David is a call unto God to teach him and deliver him from his enemies. We have no way to date this Psalm, but by the words David uses, it seems to point to a time early in David's life, possible even before he became King. The thing we do get insight to is the prayer of a man of God!

**VERSES 1-5**

1. As you read this you get the idea that David thought of himself as being a good person and thus, David is calling upon God to preserve his life because he is holy, he is a good person. That seems to indicate, at least to me, that this Psalm was written before David's sin with Bathsheba. The reason I say that is because as you read what David wrote after his sin with Bathsheba he is no longer asking God to respond on the basis of his holiness, his own holiness, but that God is merciful to him. And yes David does speak of God's mercy here but when you see how he talks about his own life; this had to be written before his sin with Bathsheba because after this sin David saw his righteousness as nothing and placed his life in the hands of God who is abundant in mercy.

2. Make no mistake about it, God is good, He is the perfection of goodness. Now in saying that don't come to the conclusion that God saves us because of His goodness, not at all! His goodness is not the basis of His forgiveness.

You see, He will forgive all those who call upon Him, all those who come to Him through Christ. God's grace and mercy have been extended to all of us, but not all appropriate that into their lives because they refuse to come to God through Christ, and thus, they will not be forgiven. In talking about God's mercy, Spurgeon wrote, "You can no more exhaust the mercy and the grace of God than a minnow can drink the entire Atlantic Ocean." It is as Paul said in Romans 5:20, where sin abounds grace abounds much more and thus, God can and will forgive all those who come to Him through Jesus!

It is as the Lord said in Exodus 34:6-7, "**. . . 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.'**"

You see, this forgiveness is not extended to unbelievers, only believers, but all are welcomed to come to Him, to call upon Him, and He will make them His children, as they are adopted into the family of God by the new birth, through Christ!



3. Now this is hard for some to take, for some to understand, that God can forgive them. They think they have blown it and that is it. Even Christians can feel this way. Meyer puts it into perspective for us as he wrote, “We are blinded by sin, and cannot believe that God is ready to forgive. We think that we must induce Him to forgive, by tears, promises of amendment, religious observances . . . Oh, clasp this word to your heart! Say it over and over again – ‘Ready to forgive, ready to forgive!’” And he also wrote, “You have fallen a hundred times, and are ashamed to come to God again; it seems too much to expect that He will receive you again. But He will, for He is ready to forgive.” That is our God, ready to forgive if we would only come to Him! Never forget that.

#### VERSES 6-10

1. Notice the confidence that David has in his prayer to God. David knows that God will answer his prayer. How did he know that? Because David tasted and saw that the Lord is good. He saw God answer his prayers and thus, what God has done in the past He is more than able to do right now!

2. And it shouldn't be like this but it usually is, that in the day of trouble we call upon the Lord. Think about that for a minute. Shouldn't He be guiding us in all of our ways? Absolutely but we think we can do it on our own and when we fail, when we fall, when we are in trouble, then we call upon Him!

3. Like today, David lived in a world that was polytheistic, they believed in many gods. And David is saying that there is only one true and living God. Look at the many gods that are out there today and do any compare with the true and living God? Absolutely not because our God hears our hearts cry and answers our prayers, while their gods are just idols, demons, they are nothing. There is no rock like our Rock!

### VERSES 11-13

1. I love this and my hearts desire is what David is saying here. "Lord, teach me your ways and then help me to walk in them!" You see, God wants to instruct us by His Word, and we are to take those truths and apply them to our life. As we move in that direction we are focused upon Him, we become united with Him. And because of that joy He fills us with, it bubbles out of us with praise unto Him. And as we live what we believe, He gets the glory. But this can only take place as our hearts are saved from Sheol by His great mercy, which is appropriated into our lives through Christ. Without salvation, the rest is empty works!

2. But think about today, how many people really want to be instructed by the Lord? Not many I would think. Why is that? Because when you know what God wants then you have to obey. So they figure ignorance is bliss! But just because you don't know the speed limit doesn't mean you will not get a ticket if you exceed it! God's Word is so important to us as Paul told Timothy, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**" II Timothy 3:16-17.

Notice what Paul is saying here. God's Word that comes from His mouth is profitable to us if we apply it to our lives. It is important to know what is right - doctrine. It is important that you know what is wrong – reproof. It tells us how to get right when we have gone astray – correction. And it tells us how to walk correctly – instruction in righteousness. God's Word will make us complete, ready for service if we not only read it but apply it to our lives. If we allow God, by His Spirit to teach us!

Boice put it like this, "Most of us, when we pray, are concerned about deliverance and help and guidance and such things. But we are not nearly as concerned to be taught God's way and to be helped to serve him with an undivided heart." May we not forget that!

VERSES 14-15

1. We do not know what situation that David is speaking of regarding this prayer to the Lord, but we do know it was serious. A group of men, a violent mob gathered together to kill David. These were proud men and their actions were not of God. Now you may wonder how I can say that with such confidence, but listen to what David said about them, besides that they are proud and violent. He wrote, “**And have not set You before them.**” In other words, God was out of the picture and this was just actions that came from their wicked hearts!

2. What I want you to notice here is how David comforts his heart, how he can rest, be at peace. During this difficult situation he comforts himself in the knowledge of God. You see, David knew that God was full of compassion. David knew that God was gracious. David knew that God was longsuffering. David knew that God was abundant in mercy and truth! And because of that David felt confident in bringing his requests to the Lord. I think that is important for us to understand and learn. That we too should know the Lord and then rest in who He is, the things we know about Him, especially in those difficult times we will face in life!

3. Now you probably have heard this before but when some people talk about God they divide Him up. There is the God of the Old Testament and they see Him as vengeful, pouring out His wrath upon people. Then there is the God of the New Testament, again, speaking like this is another God who is full of grace and mercy towards people.

First of all the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. His grace and mercy has not changed. Remember the story of Jonah, called by God to go to Nineveh to preach the coming of God's judgment in 40 days if they do not repent of their sin. And Jonah did not want to go. He did not want to see these people saved, for they were ruthless people and Nineveh was known as a "sanctuary of savagery." And he said to them, this was his sermon of love you might say to these people who were dead in sin, **“. . . ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’”** Jonah 3:4. Can't you feel the love? Jonah wanted them destroyed!

Well, to Jonah's displeasure, the people of Nineveh did repent and Jonah's response was this, **“So he prayed to the LORD, and said, ‘Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.’”** Jonah 4:2.

Jonah is upset because he knew that God was gracious and merciful and instead of squashing them like a bug, God spared the people of Nineveh because they repented. You see, make no mistake about it, God has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today and forever! (Hebrews 13:8). In Ezekiel chapter 18 we are told, **“‘Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?’ says the Lord God, ‘and not that he should turn from his ways and live?’ . . . ‘For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ says the Lord God. ‘Therefore turn and live!’”** Ezekiel 18:23, 32. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament!

VERSES 16-17

1. David is asking God to help him in this situation so that his life can be a witness to others of what the Lord can do! You see, David understood the heart of God and that is why he had the confidence to bring his requests to God. God is full of grace and mercy that He bestows upon us and as God delivers us from various situations, may He get the glory and may others see and hear what God has done in our lives!

**PSALM 87**

This Psalm, written by the sons of Korah, extols the praises of Jerusalem and looks forward to the restoration Jerusalem, the city of God, during the Kingdom Age. Let me share with you what Teddy Kollek, former mayor of Jerusalem, and Moshe Pearlman wrote about this city of Jerusalem. They wrote,

Archaeologists and historians have long wondered why Jerusalem should have been established where it was, and why it should have become great. It enjoys none of the physical features which favored the advancement and prosperity of other important cities in the world. It stands at the head of no great river. It overlooks no great harbour. It commands no great highway and no cross-roads. It is not close to abundant sources of water, often the major reason for the establishment of a settlement, though one main natural spring offered a modest supply.

It possesses no mineral riches. It was off the main trade routes. It held no strategic key to the conquest of vast areas prized by the ancient warring empires. Indeed it was blessed with neither special economic nor topographic virtues which might explain why it should have ever become more than a small, anonymous mountain village with a fate any different from that of most contemporary villages which have long since vanished.

- Teddy Kollek, Moshe Pearlman, Jerusalem, A History Of Forty Centuries, p. 12

The reason is really simple, God chose this to be the city of God and He established it and He will sustain it and it is the place where Jesus will set up His Kingdom and rule and reign for 1,000 years! So let's dig in and read of the glorious city of God!

### VERSES 1-3

1. The Psalmist is just singing the praise of God's city, Jerusalem. Out of all the land of Israel, all the dwelling places of Jacob, God chose this city. Jerusalem itself is some 2,500 feet above sea level. Now, if you were to travel down to the Dead Sea, less than twenty miles away, that area is 1,290 feet below sea level!

And Mount Zion is not the highest mountain in the land. It is not the prettiest place in the world. It is not the most cultured place, and yet God has chosen it for His place. And there is something about Jerusalem that draws people to this area of the world. It is the Lord!

2. Now this is the place where the Lord will set up His Kingdom, in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion! We are told in Isaiah 2:2, **“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord’s house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it.”**

In Zechariah 2:10-11 we are told, **“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,’ says the Lord. Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.”**

Again, this is speaking of the day when the Lord returns and He will dwell in the midst of His people. He will sit on the throne of David fulfilling the promise He made to the Jewish people!

And in Psalm 48:1-2 we are told, **“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, In His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great King.”**

Notice that God will be praised in Jerusalem, why? Because that is where He will dwell as He rules and reigns from the throne of David! This day is coming and we long for that day when righteousness will fill this land!



VERSE 4

1. First of all the Psalmist speaks of Rahab, which was to the south and it represented Egypt. Babylon was the power to the north. Philistia and Tyre were on the coast. Ethiopia was to the south also. And the idea here is that the people of these cities were proud. They had a lot to boast about and yet, that won't matter because the focus will be on Jerusalem and thus, to be born there will be something to boast about, even descendants from these nations. I think the close of this verse shows us that. It says, "**This one was born there.**" In other words, the people of these nations were proud where they were born, in Jerusalem! It truly will be the focal point of the world!

VERSES 5-6

1. There is coming a day when Jerusalem will be filled with peace. You will not have people trying to destroy the Jewish people by blowing themselves up in buses and restaurants. That day is coming! And verse 5 can be translated as follows, "**And Zion shall be called a mother, a place where people of every race shall be born.**"

There is coming a day when the nations of the world will turn to the Lord and they will come to worship Him in Jerusalem. We see this spoken of in Zechariah 2:10-12, which says, **“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,’ says the LORD. Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.”**

2. Here in verse 6 it can be speaking of our spiritual birth, how both Jew and Gentile are one in Christ, dwelling in Jerusalem. Yes, it can also mean a physical birth in Jerusalem, but the more important birth is when someone receives Christ as their Lord and Savior! You see, all those who come to Christ by faith will be written in the Lambs book of life, (Revelation 13:8). And where will we be gathered together? In Mount Zion, the city of God, the city of our Great King! It is as A. C. Gaebelien wrote,

Jehovah keeps a record as one after another of the nations are brought into the Kingdom through Zion’s exaltation and blessing. Then Zion becomes the glorious metropolis of the whole world.

- A. C. Gaebelien, The Book of Psalms, p. 332

3. In regards to these nations coming up to Jerusalem to worship the King, one writer shares why they are doing this. He wrote that they came . . .

not to admire its architecture, or gaze upon its battlements, or envy the tribes who had come up to worship in the city which is compact together, but to claim its municipal immunities, experience its protection, obey its laws, live and love in its happy society, and hold communion with its glorious Founder and Guardian.

- Source Unknown

### VERSE 7

1. As Jerusalem is established in the Kingdom Age it will be filled with praise. Can you imagine, the King of kings and Lord of lords is sitting on the throne, ruling and reigning and the songs that will come forth, the praise that will be sung out, what a day!

2. Now when we read, **“All my springs are in You”** it carries with it the idea that “All my heart is in You Lord.” You see, He is the giver and sustainer of all life. He brings refreshment to our lives. Thus, may our heart be focused upon the Lord that He may fill us with the waters of His Spirit, overflowing! Years ago we use to sing a song called,

Spring Up, O Well. It went like this,

I've got a river of life flowing out of me  
 Makes the lame to walk and the blind to see  
 Opens prison doors, sets the captive free  
 I've got a river of life flowing out of me.

Spring up, O well, within my soul  
 Spring up, O well, and make me whole  
 Spring up, O well, and give to me  
 That life abundantly

That river of life is found in Jesus and He wants to fill us and overflow us with the water of His Spirit. You see, it is not that we are just filled with His living water, not that we are just a container to contain God, but that this living water would overflow in our lives, we would be a channel from which it can flow through and touch the lives of others. In the Kingdom Age, the world will have these refreshing springs because they have come to the Lord, but we can enjoy them now as children of God!

### **PSALM 88**

We have just finished a glorious Psalm of the Kingdom and now, here in Psalm 88 it is one of the saddest Psalms in all of the Psalms. The sons of Korah wrote this Psalm and it is speaking of a very sad time in a person's life, just crying out to God and it seems that everyone is distant, there are none to help.

Now when you go through difficult times, this is probably not the Psalm you should read because, like I have said, it is one of the darkest Psalms that gives no glimmer of hope. Although, as we will see, one writer was encouraged by this Psalm. It opens up with a cry of despair, and ends in darkness. This Psalm is not like most of the Psalms, it doesn't fit the same pattern. Most Psalms may open up with a cry unto God to deliver them, a feeling of being overwhelmed with no way out. But by the time the Psalm ends, the situation has not necessarily changed, but the perspective of the Psalmist has. Thus, he may have opened up in despair, but he closes with joy, with praise unto God, trusting that God will sustain him. They end in hope!

But this Psalm ends where it began, in deep, dark, despair, with no hope at all. It is a sad and somber Psalm. The focus is outward instead of upward and that is how we will feel, hopeless apart from giving these things to the Lord. Let's read on and see what the Psalmist was going through.

#### VERSES 1-2

1. Now as dark and gloomy as this Psalm is, there are two important points that the Psalmist is holding on to. The first is that he understands that his salvation comes from God. Don't lose sight of that. Secondly, he continues to pray even though he doesn't see an answer to his prayer. Don't stop praying!

We are not sure exactly what the Psalmist was going through, but it must have been devastating for him. Crying night and day is speaking of something that has overwhelmed you, consumed your life; you can't stop thinking about it! Your heart is overwhelmed with the situation! When you see no way out and life seems to be crashing down around you remember what the Psalmist did here. He trusted in the God of his salvation and he is praying, asking God to hear his hearts cry and to respond to his pain, and deliver him.

VERSES 3-7

1. It seems that this was some kind of physical illness that has brought him to the point of death. People that have deadly diseases are the most vulnerable to pay lots of money for a cure, no matter how ridiculous it may be. And there are many crooks out there that will take advantage of this situation. For the Psalmist, he continues to call upon God to intervene.

Whatever this illness is, friends, family see him as a man who has one foot in the grave. They are just waiting for him to die. They do not believe that he could ever recover from this illness. That is true when you eliminate God out of the situation. Never lose hope in Him and in the end, He will see you through no matter what you are going through!

2. Now as you read this it seems like the Psalmist is feeling that God has done this to him. That God has brought him to the point of death. Maybe he felt this was some kind of punishment, but that is not always the case. God does *ALLOW* things to come into our life, as we saw in the book of Job, to help us grow in our relationship with Him. It is as James 1:2-3 says, **“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”**

Really James, count it all joy? But when you trust in the Lord, when you understand that He is aware and He will see you through, you can go through those tough times with joy, not in the situation but joy in the Lord. Don't lose the perspective that He loves you more than you will ever know!

VERSES 8-10

1. As you read this you can see that the air has come out of his sail you might say. There is no life, no strength in him anymore. And whatever was wrong with the Psalmist, it kept his family and friends away from him, they did not want to be around him. That parallels what Job went through as his family and friends kept their distance from him while he was going through his trial.

And at this point the Psalmist is thinking that if God doesn't do something quickly, it will be too late! As we have said before, God is never in a hurry. He has everything in control, and for us as Christians, the worst that can happen to us is that these tents which our spirit and soul dwells in, when we perish, when we die, we will be with the Lord. Sin has brought death and destruction into the world, and we are still feeling its effects. But God has stepped in and paid the penalty for our sins, and one day He will come back and take possession of the earth and restore it to a place of beauty, without death and destruction. Don't lose the perspective of who God is and what He is doing as you are going through trials in your life!

VERSES 11-12

1. Here it seems that the Psalmist is saying that in death we enter into a state of nothingness where there can be no praising of God. Understand this, the Bible is God's progressive revelation, and that which may not have been as clear in the Old Testament, is brought into the light in the New Testament. Back then they had hope of eternal life, but it was not clear. And so as death confronted them, many times they spoke out of ignorance. But again, even in the Old Testament they had the hope of eternal life, resurrection life. In Job 19:25-27 we read, **“For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”**

And Job understood that and yet he too struggled with death and was thinking about how God would lose out if he were to die. He could not praise God in the grave! Similar to what the Psalmist is thinking. The logic goes like this in regards to death being the cessation of life,

Since it was believed that no action or speech was possible in the grey, grim, dusty halls of Sheol, it was surely in God's own interests to keep alive as long as possible those whose earnest praises were always pleasing to Himself.



Now we come to many faulty conclusions today and the reason we do many times is the same reason that the Psalmist did and Job did, the situation has overwhelmed us so much that we have lost the perspective of God, we have moved away from His truths! Be careful, rest in God's Word for it is truth and not on your feelings, which are not always true!

2. I do believe in the Old Testament they understood about the afterlife, life beyond the grave, but maybe not to the extent we get from the New Testament as I have said. The New Testament gives us a picture of eternal life that has been made clearer than what was in the Old Testament. Paul said in II Corinthians 5:6-8, **“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”**

Also in John 3:15-16 we read, **“that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”**

Nothing about soul sleep for the believer, absent from the body, present with the Lord and in death there is not the cessation of life, but we have that eternal life with the Lord. We will be praising Him not from the grave, but as we are in His presence!

And even the wicked will enter into eternal life as Paul said in II Thessalonians 1:9, “**These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.**” No soul sleep or annihilation for the unsaved, they will be punished in Sheol until the time of the Great White Throne Judgment and then they will enter into the Lake of Fire eternally separated from God. They have an eternal state also but it is not good!

#### VERSES 13-14

1. When you go through difficult times it may seem that your prayers are falling upon deaf ears. You may feel that your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling. Don't lose hope; fall back on the things you know of God, according to His Word, and rest in that. If you start trying to figure out the things you don't know you are only going to become confused and come to the wrong conclusions as we saw with Job.

#### VERSES 15-18

1. As we have seen, this Psalms starts out with a cry of despair and ends in darkness. Here it seems that the Psalmist is crashing and burning. Why would God allow that to happen? Because that is the way life is at times. Things don't always get better when we want them to and sometimes they may even get worse. Why did God forsake Him? He didn't, but He was still working in him.

We live in a day when everything has to be done quickly. We have fast-foods, instant potatoes, instant coffee, minute rice; we even have news breaks and-so-on. But God takes His time working in us and we need to be patient. Before God used Moses to deliver the children of Israel, God worked in him for 40 years in the desert. David was on the run from King Saul for at least 10 years before God placed him on the throne. Paul spent 3 years in the deserts of Arabia and another maybe 10 years before God used him.

These times, these desert times you might say, force us to examine our own hearts, to draw close to God, to look at our walk with Him. Why are we doing these things? Is it because of what He gives us or because we are in love with Him and want to serve Him? You have to decide that for yourself, but may it be out of love for Him!

As the Psalmist concluded this Psalm he was still in the desert. Did he ever get out? I think so. Don't lose hope as you are going through these times. Don't fight it. Don't draw away from God. Learn those things that He is trying to teach you and when you get through this time, you will be stronger and you will be able to share with others how God brought you through.

It is as Psalm 66:10-12 says, "**For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment.**" God will take care of us, He will see us through, we just need to trust in Him and rest in Him and see the salvation that He will bring to the situation we are in!

2. And perspective is so important. Keep your eyes on the Lord and His Word. This life is going to be filled with challenges, difficulties, trouble, but keep in mind that we are headed for heaven and all things will be right, they will be perfect for all eternity! Remember the saying, “It is always darkest before the dawn” and how true that is! Look at this world and how dark it is getting and yet, in the darkest of the night the Lord is going to come back! Keep the correct perspective of things.

3. It is hard to close with this Psalm, because, like I have said, it is the saddest Psalm in the Bible. Why would God even put this in here? J. N. Darby makes an interesting point. He said that at one time this was the only Scripture that was any help to him at all because he saw that someone had been as low as that before and it encouraged him during the times he was going through.

Let me leave you with this quote from Clarke. He wrote,

There is only one Psalm like this in the Bible to intimate the rareness of the experience, but there is one to assure the most desperately afflicted that God will not forsake them.

- A. G. Clarke, *Analytical Studies in the Psalms*, p. 219