

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE PSALMS OF DAVID

Psalms 21 - 25

A VERSE-BY-VERSE STUDY

by

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[BOOK 49-D]

Revised 16 December 2015

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Professor Simon Greenleaf was one of the most eminent lawyers of all time. His "Laws of Evidence" for many years were accepted by all States in the United States as the standard methodology for evaluating cases. He was teaching law at a university in the United States when one of his students asked Professor Greenleaf if he would apply his "Laws of Evidence" to evaluate an historical figure. When Greenleaf agreed to the project he asked the student who was to be the subject of the review. The student replied that the person to be examined would be Jesus Christ. Professor Greenleaf agreed to undertake the examination of Jesus Christ and as a result, when he had finished the review, Simon Greenleaf personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Professor Greenleaf then sent an open letter to all jurists in the United States saying in part "I personally have investigated one called Jesus Christ. I have found the evidence concerning him to be historically accurate. I have also discovered that Jesus Christ is more than a human being, he is either God or nothing and having examined the evidence it is impossible to conclude other than he is God. Having concluded that he is God I have accepted him as my personal Saviour. I urge all members of the legal profession to use the "Laws of Evidence" to investigate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you find that he is wrong expose him as a faker but if not consider him as your Saviour and Lord"

HOW CAN I BE SAVED?**Salvation is available for all members of the human race.**

Salvation is the most important undertaking in all of God's universe. The salvation of sinners is never on the basis of God's merely passing over or closing His eyes to sin. God saves sinners on a completely righteous basis consistent with the divine holiness of His character. This is called grace. It relies on God so man cannot work for salvation, neither can he deserve it. We need to realise that the creation of this vast unmeasured universe was far less an undertaking than the working out of God's plan to save sinners.

However the acceptance of God's salvation by the sinner is the most simple thing in all of life. One need not be rich, nor wise, nor educated. Age is no barrier nor the colour of one's skin. The reception of the enormous benefits of God's redemption is based upon the simplest of terms so that there is no one in all this wide universe who need be turned away.

How do I become a Christian?

There is but one simple step divided into three parts. First of all I have to recognise that I am a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24).

Secondly, realising that if I want a relationship with Almighty God who is perfect, and recognising that I am not perfect, I need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (I Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16).

Thirdly, by the exercise of my own free will I personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, believing that He died personally for me and that He is what He claims to be in an individual, personal and living way (John 1:12; 3:36; Acts 16:31; 4:12).

The results of Salvation

The results of this are unbelievably wonderful:

My sins are taken away (John 1:29),

I possess eternal life now (I John 5:11,12),

I become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17),

The Holy Spirit takes up His residence in my life (I Corinthians 6:19),

And I will never perish (John 10:28-30).

This truthfully is life's greatest transaction. This is the goal of all people; this is the ultimate of our existence. We invite and exhort any reader who has not become a Christian by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to follow these simple instructions and be born again eternally into God's family (Matthew 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

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THE PSALMS OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR:

The book we have before us was the hymn book of the early church and of Israel beforehand. These Psalms form the finest musical expression of spiritual life, with all its ups and downs, than appears in the literature of any other nation that has ever lived upon the earth. The Psalms were the comfort to my old father as he walked the decks of his warship in World War II, and continued to be his comfort through the even darker days of cardiac caused episodic dementia as his life ebbed away in the Old Folks Home where he finally died full of years at 90. Through the most incredible pressures I have faced over the last eleven years in my own life they have comforted my soul with the same power they did when I was a young university student. I love this book!

I love my brothers in the Lord who wrote these psalms, and there were many authors, and they all testify to the grace, mercy, love, and patience of God with us all. David wrote all the psalms of the first section (or "book") of the collection, and he is a "trophy of grace" if ever there was one. David gives me hope every day, for if he could be forgiven and lifted up to serve again after his great sin, then there is hope for each and every one of us. The "Sons of Korah" later in the book also testify to the grace and mercy of the Lord, for they ought not to even live, given the great sin and judgment that came upon their forefather, and yet the "remnant of grace" survived and they lived on to sing the glory of the Lord who judged their ancestor in justice and righteousness and saved their posterity in loving kindness. King Hezekiah also figures as an author, and he also testifies to the grace and mercy of the Lord under the greatest time of national suffering.

King David was the youngest son of Jesse and ruled Israel from approximately B.C. 1052 - 1012. David learned to play music on the hills around Bethlehem and his skill saved his life several times from the madness of Saul. He was a skilled musician even as a young man (1 Samuel 16:18-23), and as is seen in 1 Chronicles 16:7 and 2 Samuel 23:1, continued writing psalms through to the end of his life. The psalms were his heart felt expression of his walk with God and his honesty with the Lord is at times overwhelming and humbling. The first forty-one psalms are, with a handful of anonymous exceptions, all attributed to David with a number of others scattered throughout the remainder of the book. The entire collection is called after him as he is the greatest of the singers of Israel, and their great king from whom Messiah is to come. It was probably collected into its final form that we see today by Ezra after the return of the Exiles from Babylon, but it had existed in earlier forms right back to the days of David and Solomon and in its five sections formed the song book for the Temple worship services, just as it will again in the Millennial Temple.

In the entire book of Psalms David is specifically credited as author of 73 Psalms, Asaph with 12, the Sons of Korah with 10, Moses with 1, Solomon with 2, Ethan with 1, Heman with 1, and 50 are anonymous.

I thank Brian Huggett, who did the earlier series of volumes on these Genesis Psalms, and I honour him for these works. My Reflections and Application points are the result of my present walk through a deep "valley of the shadow of death" that the Lord has allowed me to walk through at this time in 2014. It has been the severity of the trials I have experienced over recent weeks that has moved me to reflect deeply on these psalms and write these new books for our ministry. I have been encouraged and pray you will be.

PSALMS SECTION ONE

THE GENESIS PSALMS – PSALMS 1 - 41

INTRODUCTION

The Psalms are arranged in five specific books. Book 1 covers Psalms 1 – 41, and is tied to the book of Genesis, book 2 covers Psalms 42-72 and is tied to the book of Exodus, book 3 covers Psalms 73-89, and is tied to the book of Leviticus, book 4 covers Psalms 90 – 106, and is tied to the book of Numbers, and book 5 covers Psalms 107-150, and is tied to the book of Deuteronomy. The book of the Psalms gets into its final form in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (around 440 BC) when books four and five of the Psalms appear to be added to the earlier collection. The longest Psalm, 119, dates from the time of the Exile to Babylon in the early sixth century, but there are others that may date from the times after the Exiles return in 535 BC, and even some from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century BC.

The dominant name for God used in this section is "Jehovah - JHWH", the holy name of God given to Moses. It is used 277 times in this book of the Psalms, well ahead of the next three sections, with the last section alone getting close with

226 uses of this special name of God. This name of God was never pronounced so do not get into debate about whether it should be said as “Jehovah” or “Yahweh”, because it was simply breathed through by the readers, or the word “Adonai”, or Lord, used in its place. Other names for God used in this first book of the Psalms are, Elohim 48 times, El 15 times, Adonai 11 times, Alyon 3 times, Adon 2 times, and Eloah once. Refer to the doctrinal study on the names of God below to explore the significance of these names, as all carry important reference to the psalmist’s understanding of the triune God.

Just as Genesis was the book of beginnings, or “first principles” so this section of the Psalms covers doctrinal topics that are the “first principles of faith”. The section begins with the consequences of the Fall of Mankind in the Garden of Eden, where man confronts his daily choices as to what his eternal destiny is to be. This section includes many of the psalms of the Great Rebellion of Absalom where David must face the consequences of his own great sin with Bathsheba that let loose such evil in his own household. This section traces man’s choices and the terrible and gracious consequences of those as they work out in time. David must face the full reality of his life and works, both for good and for evil and bring them to the Lord for solution. 1 Peter 5:5-10. He does and we rejoice in the things we learn about ourselves through our brother David and the things we learn about our great redeemer through his honesty in confronting his sins, fears, doubts and errors.

These five Psalms (21-25) are crucial ones for understanding the person and work of the Lord Jesus and are called the Great Shepherd Psalms by some. They give us an insight into the mind, heart, and Plan of the Lord.

Psalm 20	A National Anthem for the Kingdom of the King of kings who has won the Victory
Psalm 21	A National Song of praise for the final Victory of the King of kings
Psalm 22	The Inside of the Crucifixion – The Source/Ground of the King’s Victory
Psalm 23	The Chief Shepherd Leads His Own Through to Victory
Psalm 24	The Ascension and Return of the King to His City to Rule there
Psalm 25	The Cry of the Lord’s People as they Await His Return

DOCTRINE

CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

NOTES

Psalm 21

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

A National Anthem for the Kingdom of the King of kings who has won the Victory over Sin and Death

This Psalm would seem to be praise and thanksgiving for the LORD'S answers to the prayers of Psalm 20.

Phrases from the first two verses (separated from those that follow by the musical notation *Selah* (*suspension or pause*)), when read with this in mind, make it fairly obvious that it is the case. **Thy strength... thy salvation... given him his hearts desire... request of his lips**, all correspond to Psalm 20 in its request for **strength** in vs.2, **salvation** in vs.5, **according to thine own heart** and **fulfil all thy counsel** in vs.4.

We believe that David wrote Psalm 20 as a sung liturgy for the congregation of Israel, this song of praise for answered prayer, even though written in the third person, is almost certainly written by David. This is the clue to its second level of prophetic significance, for it is seen today as a song for the Ascension of the Lord. Acts 1:6-11. David writes this prophetically in his gifting as the prophet-king of Israel looking forward to the King of kings who will come from his line and rule forever. 2 Samuel 7:8-24. This psalm is likely the one sung by the apostles as they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Ascension.

Psalm 21:1-2

“The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withheld the request of his lips. Selah.”

REFLECTION

There are two levels of this psalm, as we saw in the brief introduction above. The first level is that it is a psalm of David related to his kingdom and rulership as king over his people. It is a joyful answer to the heartfelt cry of Psalm 20, written for the people to sing in answer to that earlier psalm. It is designed to be sung as a formal answer by one half of the worship choir, after the other half has sung psalm 19. As such it is a reminder that the Lord answers prayer and does so with joy, and our response is with joy as we receive assurance of the answer, and then even more joy as we see the answer arrive.

The second level of this psalm is that it is the song of the Ascension, Session and Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. “The king shall joy in thy strength O Lord.” The joy of the realisation that the Lord is truly victor forever is unstoppable. There is nothing but joy to be expressed when we realise that he has indeed “overcome the powers of this world”. John 16:33. The Ascension occurs to end the Lord's first earthly ministry, and he will not touch this earth again except as acknowledged King of all kings and he will return to rule the earth.

The joy of David here is that he sees that even now he has received of the Lord a glimpse of the power of the Creator-Saviour of all and the joy overwhelms him as he sees the strength of the Lord and his then still latent power to take back the total rule over all the earth. We must remember even now that Satan is only “prince of this world” through the legacy of Adam's sin, and that his real power over man is broken by the Cross and Resurrection. The Ascension, that Satan was powerless to stop, as he was powerless to stop the Cross and Resurrection, seals his doom in the eyes of all the apostles.

They see on Ascension Day, that the Lord's return in glory to heaven signifies that practically and operationally, the curse over man is broken for all who follow Jesus, and that His future rulership over the earth is certain. The victory over Satan is won brethren by the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is King of all kings and Lord of all lords right now. 1 Timothy 6:15, 1 John 4:4, Revelation 1:8, 18, 17:14, 19:16. David rejoices aloud in this total victory, and sees that the challenge is to live in the sphere of it, and not as if he did not win. David expresses this truth 1000 years before the Cross, but is able to celebrate it all by faith in his own day, for the victory was certain. Let us be challenged by this and live by such faith.

“In thy salvation, he shall greatly rejoice.” It is in the victory of the Lord of all, and King of our hearts, that we are to live, not in the fear and slavery to doubts, as if Satan may yet win. He has won our salvation and given us such great grace that we can lift our hands and rejoice in all he has done. Let this be our daily prayer of thanks for so great a salvation. His great love wherewith he loved us. Ephesians 2:4. His great salvation wherewith he saved us. Hebrews 2:3, 7:25. His great promises which are ours because of his great grace. 1 Peter 3:4, 2 Peter 1:2.

Psalm 71:14-19

“14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!"

"God has given him his heart's desire". What a great prayer promise is here in Psalm 21:2, and one that is precious to my heart right this morning as I write these words and draw strength from our brother David. Reflect upon your "heart's desire" as you pray believer. What do you seek above all other things? What is the deep desire of your heart as you bring your petitions to the Lord? If it is the glory of the Lord through your ministry here, then you have always the desire of your heart in your prayers.

"Not withheld his requests." All that we request in accordance with the deep desire of our heart is granted, that we might be the people of faith we are called to be, and that as people of faith, we might manifest his power and achieve all he requires upon this earth. Jesus words as recorded in John 11:22, 14:13-14, and many other passages, tell us bluntly to "ask the Lord" all that we require in Jesus name, and he will answer. Let us ask the Lord and be direct in unfolding the desire of our heart for his service.

Read again the section quoted from Psalm 71 above, for it is my heart felt prayer this day as an older man, for every day that passes my passionate desire to serve the Lord to the full measure of my strength increases and the Lord will give me the desire of my heart, for he is the Risen Lord, the Victorious Lord, the Ascended Lord, and the soon Returning Lord. Catch this "song of victory" here in Psalm 21 believer and sing it aloud. He delights in answering his servants now, and he will answer their final prayer for total victory on earth in his return to rule.

APPLICATION

1. Let us live in the sphere of the victory of the Lord over sin and death, and with the shield of faith held firmly to quench the arrows of doubt and fear related to sin and death, let us advance against the enemy strongholds in our lands. The Lord will give us the desires of our heart as we advance for his glory.

2. Let us "greatly rejoice" in all he has done and given, and also in all he is yet to do upon this earth. Let us praise him for his great salvation. He has heard our prayers and not withheld anything from us that we need to accomplish his will here upon the earth.

DOCTRINE

PROMISES

Psalm 21:3-4

"For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head. He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days forever and ever."

REFLECTION

"For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness". The Lord anticipates our needs and from eternity past they have been provided for us. God does not hear and then respond to our prayers; the truth is far more marvellous, indeed almost too marvellous to comprehend this side of eternity. God hears our prayers from beyond space and time, in heaven itself. There is no past-present or future there, for heaven is beyond space and time. This means that our prayers have been answered as it were "from eternity past". Even the way we explain it is a contradiction in itself, for eternity is only "eternity past" from our perspective in time. We are not going to completely understand this here in time, but glimpse a little of the glory David sees here, that we are heard well before we speak, indeed, we are heard well before we were even made! Is there any doubt about God's Final Victory believer, or any doubt that you are heard?

God blesses us with "goodness", not with discipline unless it is designed for our goodness/blessing further down the track. We are under his blessing, not under his discipline as his children. Discipline is only ever for repentance, and so once confession of sin is made we are under God's love again. Hebrews 12:1-15. Let us seek the blessing of the Lord as we advance, not fear the blows of the enemy. Keep your armour on believer, daily put it consciously on, or don't complain about a wound you didn't need to take! Ephesians 6:10-18.

"Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head". The Lord Jesus is crowned King of all kings and Lord of all lords on his return to heaven after his earthly ministry is complete. The Ascension and Session are the coronation prelude, and he sits now as our King, and the crowned King of the Universe, and the crowned Lord, as God and Man, over all powers and places. It is as King that he sends the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and it is as ruler over all that he directs us daily as we speak with him in prayer. Hebrews 2:6-10.

"He asked life of thee". The great joy of this verse was only prophetically glimpsed by David, but we can look back to the Day of Ascension and even back beyond that to the Lord's prayer in Gethsemane and see its meaning and we can feel that holy shudder down our spine. The Lord asked for life indeed, but not for his own, but for us all. He did, in his humanity pray, as we do at times, that the cup might pass from us, but he did that to encourage us later, for his next words are our example and joy; "nevertheless not my will but thine be done". Matthew 26:39, Luke 22:41-44.

"Thou gavest *it* him, *even* length of days forever and ever". The great "Lord's Prayer" in the Garden that night before the arrest and trials was for eternal life for us all through his person and work upon the Cross. John 17:1-5. Jesus prayer that night echoes David's psalm here, for the Lord asks the father that we might all have "my joy fulfilled in them". John 17:13. He ends his great prayer asking that "the love wherewith thou hast loved me might be in them, and I in them". John 17:26. These great prayers on that dark night were all answered perfectly because they were asked perfectly by the only perfect one, and this psalm tells us that he is granted his heart's desires! Hallelujah!!!

APPLICATION

1. Have you thanked God today for the answers to the Lord's Prayer for us in Gethsemane, for this prayer was fully perfect and perfectly is answered in the life of every believer? We have eternal life through him. We have all that we need in Christ Jesus through his person and work. He is the Victor over sin and death, and over the prince of this world. Let us celebrate that victory by walking in the Holy Spirit's power and lifting up our shield of faith high.

2. Praise God for eternal life and for the blessing of grace abounding every day as we advance in the Lord's work in the Holy Spirit's provided power. The Holy Spirit was given by the Lord as crowned King, and there is no stopping his plan, and you are part of that plan, and so rejoice as you advance. Satan will attack us, that we can be assured of, as we can be assured of his malice, but let us be more assured of the keeping power of Almighty God our saviour, for he is the King and Lord of all. Let us have no fear of the beaten "prince of this present evil world". Let us advance fully armoured and defeat all his strategies and assaults upon us.

DOCTRINE

HOPE

Psalm 21:5-7

"His glory is great in thy salvation: honor and majesty hast thou laid upon him. For thou hast made him most blessed forever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance. For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved."

REFLECTION

"His glory is great in thy salvation". The salvation of every believer is a glory to the Lord, for in the saving of every human being there is a celebration of grace victory over the kingdom of sin and death that Satan established through Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. We are to be beacons of God's glory in this dark world, bringing the light of the Gospel into this very place where Satan has so many deceived and enslaved to his lies. We are called to stand against him in spirit and truth, so that his power might be seen for the deceptive lie it is, and that the truth of victory through Christ Jesus might be seen by all.

"Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him". The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of all now through his total victory over sin and death. Satan hates us even more because of the victory we share in the person and work of the Lord, but let us rejoice in his hatred, for the Lord has majesty and honour laid upon him and he is worthy to be praised, and mighty to save and deliver. Let us rejoice in his majesty and honour and give honour to him in his victory and in his majesty over all things. The enemy may hate, but his hatred is empty, and his malice is powerless against a fully armoured and Holy Spirit filled believer. Let us be on this earth as we are meant to be and in Holy Spirit power praise the Lord for his majesty and honour. To him be the glory!

Ephesians 1:20-22

*19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,
21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,"*

“For thou hast made him most blessed forever”. The victory of the Lord Jesus in the Angelic Conflict is so total that forever the results flow onwards to the great blessing of all mankind who bow their knee to Him. The Lord is most blessed forever, and we with him. Let us bless his holy name, now and forever. Ephesians 1:3-8.

Psalm 72:17-19

“17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.”

“Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance”. There is more than just gladness, there is “exceeding gladness”, “abundant joy”, overwhelming power, and everlasting glory in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is King indeed and his Ascension was the glorious prelude to his Session as King. Romans 8:26-34, Hebrews 7:25.

“For the king trusteth in the LORD”. The trust we have must always be in the right object. Faith/trust in the wrong person or thing is fatal at all times, but the smallest faith in the right object always brings great rewards. Matthew 17:20, Luke 17:6. The absolute unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is unbreakable by the enemy’s malice and hatred. The unity within the godhead means we have absolute fellowship and access to power right now and forever. John 17:14-26.

“Through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.” Thank God it is within his grace, mercy, and love that we stand, for in these things we have hope and absolute confidence about our future direction and eternal blessing. It is the Lord’s mercy that we are not consumed! Lamentations 3:22. Praise God that he keeps our steps and we do not slip and fall in front of the enemy. God alone keeps our feet from slipping on the rough ground we must walk over at times. In the midst of the toughest time in my life I rejoice in these verses, for the Word of God builds strength into my bones this day as I reflect upon these truths. Truly we shall not be moved – his mercy will be received by us.

APPLICATION

1. Let us praise the Lord for our “so great salvation”. To Him alone be the glory, the honour, the majesty! Let the heavens and the earth hear our voices raised in praise to our King.
2. We all stand in need of his mercy, and it is his abundant mercy that we receive in the fullness of his grace.

Psalm 21:8-9

“Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.”

REFLECTION

“Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies.” There is not the slightest doubt that the Lord can deal with those who make themselves our enemies by opposing the Lord’s path for our life. The Lord doesn’t need our targeted instructions to deal with the enemy, for he “finds out” their hiding places, and knows their strategies and their hatred of us. There is no hiding place that will secure those who attack believers on God’s service, for the Lord will deal with them.

“Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.” The hand of power is the hand that finds those who oppose the will and purposes of God, and we can confidently leave our enemies in the Lord’s hands for solution. We have just had to do this with the trust that owns our land, and there is a sense of relief once the extent of their malice was revealed, because now we know the battle is the Lord’s indeed, for they have declared war upon us and all we seek is the Lord’s will. The Lord will “find them” and deal with them, and that is now what we seek, and rest in the Lord’s protection now.

“Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger.” It is a seriously dumb thing to fight against the creator. When you see red hot lava come out of the ground it is an awesome reminder of the shallow crust of earth we live upon and when you smell and see it there is awesomeness that overwhelms the soul and spirit. This is David’s feeling here and he identifies that those who fight against God’s servants fight against God and the “red hot anger of the Lord” will be upon them. Feel sorrow for such fools as fight against God, for fools they are, and in their arrogant hatred of believers they reap exactly what they sow. Hosea 8:7, Proverbs 22:8, Galatians 6:7-9.

Hebrews 10:30-31, 12:25-29.

“30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

25 *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:*

26 *Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.*

27 *And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

28 *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*

29 *For our God is a consuming fire."*

"The LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them." There is no hope for those who persist in active hatred of believers and active opposition to the will of the Lord in any matter. There is only the Lake of Fire that burns forever for those who wish to follow Satan there. It is only narcissism that leads to that terrible place, and man must work really hard to be and remain lost. You must seriously hate the truth to end up in judgment, but for those who hate the author of truth there is the place prepared for them! Revelation 20:10-15.

APPLICATION

1. Pass over all those who hate you into the hands of the Lord for judgment. If people are determined to hate you and the Lord's path for you, then formally pass them over for judgment and move forward with the task the Lord has given you. He will deal with them, do not waste any more time daily than firmly placing them under the Lord's hand for judgment.

2. God judges those who hate him and his servants. The Lord is, as an old pastor of mine said, a "gentleman"; he will not force any person to spend eternity with him. He has provided a place for those who hate God and all God stands for and they can spend eternity there. It is called the Lake of Fire. Don't minimise or ignore it, for it is the Lord's provision for those who are determined to be lost.

DOCTRINE

JUSTICE

Psalm 21:10-11

"Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform."

REFLECTION

"Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth". Those who believe that they will destroy the people of God and rob them of their lives and goods have a shock coming, for as they intended in evil, just so it will be done to them, unless they repent. These people believe that they are invincible and unassailable, but they are chaff in the wind for God's power and they will be blown away.

I can't help but think of cases I have worked with when I read these words, and I think of a man I met back in the early 1990s. He was wealthy and powerful and had treated his loyal and faithful wife terribly. They came to me for counselling, but he was narcissistic and cared nothing for his wife or the children. He did counselling just long enough to get his money offshore and rob his wife of resources. She remained calm and focused upon the children and brought them up to be wonderful adults. I met her last year as her ex-husband, still not sixty yet, was dying of a terrible cancer. All his mistresses had left him, but his wife returned to his plush apartment and cared for him as he died for the sake of her children, and so brought about reconciliation for them all and secured his property for their children – thereby robbing the whores of their expectation. All his evil came back upon him and he gained nothing but distress for his actions. It is a dumb thing to treat others badly, for it comes back in God's timing to "reward" you appropriately. Satan really does pay his wages, and those who serve him forget that he hates mankind with a vengeance!

"Their seed from among the children of men." There have been many I have met through the years who "did all their work for their children", but they were never there to guide them and their children took their money and repaid their parents with drug addiction, crime and early death from overdose or suicide. The evil of the parents in their workaholicism and worship of money was repaid by the children who also worshipped things and they were killed by them. These old men and women now sit with all their often ill-gotten wealth, won from the sweat of their workers, and they have no posterity to pass it on to.

"For they intended evil against thee." The reason for evil coming upon these people is that it is what they wished for others and the Lord always repays like with like! God is just, and just as we mete out to others will be meted out to us!

Jesus is very clear as to this divine principle, and we do well to heed it. Matthew 7:2, Mark 4:24, Luke 6:38. Evil thoughts rot the fabric of the mind over time and destroy ability to enjoy life itself. God's "hate list" involves mostly evil thinking patterns, for they rot the person and destroy their joy over time. Proverbs 6:16-19.

"They imagined a mischievous device, *which* they are not able *to perform*." This is a very funny verse for those who are watching the antics and actions of evil men and women, for like Satan their mentor, they over-estimate their ability and mental capacity. They over-estimate their ability to carry out their evil plans and nearly always in their arrogance underestimate opposition and problems. Mostly they end up in a mess because of both their over and under estimations. Hitler is the most evil of the recent examples of this, with his vast resources he should have won, but his own arrogance defeated him, just as his lord Satan is defeated on the same ground.

Proverbs 11:5-8

*"5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.
6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.
7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.
8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead."*

Isaiah 57:19-21

*"19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.
20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."*

APPLICATION

1. Do not fear evil, simply pass it over to the judgment of God, for He does such a better job than we could ever do with evil men and women. Place the enemies of the truth into the Lord's hands for judgment and the Lord will deal with them. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay!"
2. As man deals with others, so God will deal with them. There is no rest for the wicked! Proverbs 10:7, 28, 13:9, 15:29, 24:19, Isaiah 57:21.

DOCTRINE

GOD – ABILITY OF GOD

Psalm 21:12

"Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, *when* thou shalt make ready *thine* arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.

REFLECTION

"Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back". The enemy will be defeated and be forced to turn away from the Lord who they despise, for they will realise they are being sent to judgment. Men turn their back on the Lord only to obey his command to go to the Lake of Fire and there is no resistance to Him at that point. None may stand against the Lord and in the end all realise it fully. They will turn their backs to the Lord and they will head into judgment and eternal death.

"*When* thou shalt make ready *thine* arrows upon thy strings against the face of them". The issue of the Lord's actions against evil men is simply one of timing. The Lord has the artillery to fire, it is simply the timing of the arrival of the volley the Lord will fire at them. At the great battles of the 100 Years War the English Longbow was decisive again and again and the French armoured knights knew that it was only a matter of time before the arrows fell upon them and pierced their amour to their capture or death. There was never any escape from the arrows.

APPLICATION

1. Some boast that they will "turn their back" upon the Lord, and indeed they will, but it will only be as they head for judgment, for they have no choice then. Do not allow men to make such boasts without referring them to this verse and to Revelation 20.
2. There is no escape from the arrows the Lord fires. Leave the enemy in his hands; he is the King!

Psalm 21:13

“Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.”

REFLECTION

“Be thou exalted Lord.” Let us lift up the name of the Lord and exult his name on high for all to hear how we love and worship the Lord our God. The Lord is great and greatly to be praised and honoured amongst men. Let us speak often of the Lord for there is a lovely promise to all who do. It is also followed by the certainty of judgment again and it is good to remind ourselves that the Lord always offers both alternatives; for blessing and cursing. Deuteronomy 28:1-19.

Malachi 3:16ff

“16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Malachi Chapter 4:1-3

1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.”

“In thine own strength”. God has the power and there is no power on earth or in heaven that stands against Him. What he is doing he will complete amongst men, for his plan will be worked out in the lives of all who open their hearts and in the lives of all who will have nothing to do with the Lord, then they have their own selected judgment to head for. John 6:44, 65; see also Jeremiah 31:3; Hosea 11:4.

“So will we sing and praise thy power.” The lost are doomed in their own arrogance and hatred of the truth, and I always am amused by pagans who cremate and scatter their ashes as if that will stop the Lord resurrecting them for judgment, for nothing will stop them being judged. We will sing of the power of the Lord, for we expect to see it operating in the affairs of men and we expect to see victory at the hands of the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. We seek the Lord's strength and power, not that of man. Let us expect to see the Lord work and rejoice in his victory before it occurs by faith.
2. The wicked are to be witnessed to and left to the Lord's dealing. Let us commit them to the Lord and keep telling them the truth when we can, but not be distracted by their hatred and vicious malice, for they are in the Lord's hands. Let us rather worship the majesty of the Lord and his mighty power. Let the spirit of worship cast off the spirit of heaviness that can otherwise oppress. Isaiah 61:3.

DOCTRINE**CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE****NOTES**

Psalm 22

To the Chief Musician upon Ajeleth Shahar. A Psalm of David.

(The Inside of the Crucifixion – The Source/Ground of the King's Victory)

Chief is from the Hebrew *natsach* - to glitter from afar, that is to be eminent, and because it is a psalm (a song), it is addressed to the one it most concerns, the head of the musical department of the tabernacle services, the **chief Musician**.

The expression **Ajeleth Shahar** is the combination of *ayeleth a doe*, a female deer, and *shachar* or dawn, the sun rising. Although *ayeleth* is used in the Old Testament in terms of passionate regard toward one's wife, "*the loving hind (ayeleth) and pleasant roe*" (Proverbs 5:19), its use here is in keeping with Genesis 49:21 where Naphtali is referred to as "*a hind let loose*", which suggests a love of freedom.

With the word *shahar* meaning "*the dawn, the morning*", the combination of these two words can be translated 'hind of the dawn' and probably stands for the first rays of the morning sun as they spread over the earth. Barnes tells us "*The Arabian poets call the rising sun 'the gazelle,' comparing his rays with the horns of that animal.*" The picture of freedom these words conjure up in the mind is in stark contrast to that of this psalm, a psalm of both mental and physical suffering. The juxtaposition is important to feel and "sit with", for many commentators are I believe too quick to try to explain this away rather than see its possible deep truth.

It is concluded therefore by many commentators that **Ajeleth Shahar** is the title of another psalm, the tune of which is to be used for singing this psalm. I will suggest however that the "hind of the dawn" is the Lord Jesus Christ, who brings in the new dawn for mankind through the Cross and this Psalm above all others tells us of the mental anguish that he went through on the Cross. I want to suggest for meditation that the Lord is the true "loving hind of the dawn"; He alone is the "free spirit" who enslaves himself and voluntarily sets aside his freedom to win ours. I believe this image of the hind of the dawn gives us the loveliest picture of our Lord's great sacrifice, and emphasizes what he gave up to win our salvation. He set aside his freedom and joy to win joy for us. John 10:10, 17:12-26.

A number of the verses here are shown to be clear Messianic references, (prophetic of the events in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth), evidenced in the New Testament quotations of them.

Compare the following:

- a. Verse 1 with Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.
- b. Verses 7-8 with Matthew 27:39; Mark 15:29; Luke 23:35-39
- c. Verses 16-18 with Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; John 19:23; John 20:25
- d. Verse 22 with Hebrews 2:12

PROPHECIES ABOUT THE CRUCIFIXION

1. The Crucifixion, (Genesis 3:15), (John 19:18)
2. No bones broken, (Exodus 12:46, Psalm 34:20), (John 19:32-36)
3. Leaders of Israel take counsel against Jesus, (Psalm 2:2), (Matthew 26:3-4)
4. Christ's cry on the cross, (Psalm 22:1), (Matthew 27:46)
5. The crowd despised him, (Psalm 22:7-8), (Matthew 27:39-44)
6. The mob ridicules him, (Psalm 22:7-8), (Matthew 27:39-44)
7. The staring soldiers, (Psalm 22:17), (Matthew 27:36)
8. Parting of garments, lots for the coat, (Psalm 22:18), (Matthew 27:35)
9. The rejection of the Jews, (Isaiah 53:3), (John 1:11)
10. The substitutionary death, (Isaiah 53:5,6,10),(Romans 5:6,8)
11. Christ's silence in Pilate's presence, (Isaiah 53:7), (Matthew 27:13-14)
12. Christ's unfair sufferings, (Isaiah 53:8,9), (Mark 15:1-25)
13. The tomb of the rich, (Isaiah 53:9), (Matthew 27:57-60)

14. Numbered with the thieves, (Isaiah 53:12), (Mark 15:27-28)
15. Messiah cut off - betrayed, (Daniel 9:26), (Matthew 26:24)
16. Darkness at noon, (Amos 8:9), (Matthew 27:45)
17. Thirty pieces of silver, (Zechariah 11:12), (Matthew 26:15)
18. The potter's field, (Zechariah 11:13), (Matthew 27:3-7)
19. The piercing of his side, (Zechariah 12:10), (John 19:34)
20. The disciples scattered, (Zechariah 13:7), (Mark 14:27,50)

CRIES OF CHRIST FROM THE CROSS

1. There are seven phrases, which our Lord uttered on the cross.
2. During the six hours between the crucifixion and our Lord's death, the following is the sequence of events that took place.
3. Christ having been scourged, the crucifixion party arrives at Golgotha, The Place of the Skull (Matthew 27:33).
4. A drink of red wine and a narcotic gall is offered to Jesus but he refuses because it would impair his free will (Matthew 27:34)
5. Jesus is crucified between two gangsters followed by the first cry from the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:32-34).
6. The first cry recorded of Jesus Christ on the cross was a prayer asking the Father to forgive those who had crucified Him. This was important because He was about to be judged for their sins.
7. The soldiers gamble for his clothes (Matthew 27:35,36, Psalm 22:18).
8. Monies raised from the sale of the clothes would be spent on rough red wine. Traditionally, those crucified were naked.
9. The Jews mock Him (Matthew 27:39-43). They tempt Him to come down from the cross. They say that they would believe if He did. (Psalm 22:7-8)
10. One of the gangsters trusted in Him (Luke 23:42)- It is of interest that all the gangster could do was believe. He was not baptised, he did not come from a church.
11. Principle: Faith in the work of Christ for one personally is the means of salvation.
12. The second cry: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise. " (Luke 23:43)
13. Principle: The soul of Jesus went to Paradise, the body of Jesus went to the grave, the spirit went to the Father (Luke 23:46).
14. Paradise, or Abraham's Bosom, was a temporary holding place for OT saints in Sheol or Hades pending the cross becoming an historical fact. The unbelieving gangster, at death, would go to Torments, an area separated from Paradise by a great gulf fixed.
15. The two gangsters represent humanity in its two categories - believers and unbelievers (John 3:36).
16. The third cry: He said unto his mother "Woman, behold thy son. " Then said He to the disciple, "Behold thy mother." (John 19, 26,27)
17. Jesus never called His mother 'Mother'. He always called her 'Woman'. He emphasised that she was the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) and not the mother of God. By not using the word 'mother' He was seeing problems in the future involving Mary, the mother of God.
18. He also made provision for His mother complying with the fifth commandment "Honour thy father and mother." (Exodus 20:12) by saying to John, "Behold thy mother" ' John would appear to have lived to be 100 years old, which confirms the second portion of the fifth commandment "that thy days may be long".

19. At 12 noon darkness covered the earth (Matthew 27:45).
20. The fourth cry: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (cf. Psalm 22:1) Christ was forsaken. This cry showed that Jesus Christ was being judged for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24). The Father and Spirit forsook Him because they can only judge sin.
21. The fifth cry: "Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, 'I thirst' " (John 19:28). His work on the cross now completed, He fulfilled the scripture of (Psalm 69:21) which was a drink of vinegar and gall.
22. Even in His greatest extremity, Jesus put the greatest of emphasis on the Word of God and fulfilled the total prophetic spectrum in the correct sequence. He had refused the drink previously
23. The sixth cry: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar he said, 'It is finished' " (John 19:30). Christ's work on earth is completed. He has been judged for the sins of the whole world. Salvation is complete.
24. Principle: You cannot add man's works to salvation. It was completed in total in AD 32 at Golgotha. The attitude of each individual to the sacrifice of Christ determines his or her eternal future. Either they attempt by their own works to enter heaven (Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:9; Titus 3:5) or by Christ's work through belief.
25. The seventh cry: "Father, into thy hands I commit My spirit " (Luke 23:46). It is of great significance that there is the change of vocative towards God here. Christ is no longer bearing our sins. He is back in an intimate relationship with His Father, rather than forsaken. (See fourth cry, 12.) Jesus Christ's timing is perfect as he dismissed His spirit to the Father at the very instant that was the Father's will.
26. Christ dies physically on the cross at 3.00 p.m. (Matthew 27:50), thus fulfilling the Mosaic Law that no person who is killed on wood should hang overnight. So Christ was buried before sunset on that day. (Matthew 5:17; Deuteronomy 21:22,23).

Psalm 22:1

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*"

REFLECTION

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me". This becomes the words of the Lord 1000 years later and is clearly applied to him by New Testament writers as being significant evidence of his being forsaken for us as our sin bearer. (Matthew 27:46, 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22-24; Hebrews 9:28). These words ring down the years of history as the most amazing ever spoken prophetically and then uttered by our Saviour, for they sum up the greatness of our salvation.

He has become sin for us who knew no sin himself, and so by being the perfect and sinless sacrifice, he takes away all the sin of mankind by his work on the Cross. (John 1:29, John 1:36 c.f. Genesis 22:8; Exodus 12:3-13; 1Peter 1:19). He is the innocent victim paying the 'wages of sin' for the guilty (Romans 6:23, Romans 5:12; Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 3:23). He takes our condemnation so that we can be without all condemnation. Romans 8:1-2.

"Far from helping me, *and from the words of my roaring.*" The terrible and the amazing thing about the Cross was that the Father had to turn away from the Son for the first time in history, leaving him without fellowship while he carried the sins that would otherwise have eternally separated us from God. Romans 6:1-23, 2 Corinthians 5:21.

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee". (Psalm 37:25, Psalm 37:28; Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 41:17; Hebrews 13:5). We have this assurance and peace in the midst of great pressures, only because the father did forsake the Son, and the Son accepted that, so that He could complete the plan for our salvation. Truly greater love has no-one ever had than this. We are recipients of God's great love and mercy through the greatness of this sacrifice made for us.

Isaiah 41:9-18

"Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.

16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17 When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."

John 15:9-17

"9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 These things I command you, that ye love one another."

APPLICATION

1. He was forsaken that we might never be again. He was smitten with the full penalty for all our sins so that we might be without condemnation forever. Let us praise his holy name for this so great salvation. It is beyond all words.

2. Having been loved this much and saved this far, let us love one another and seek all ways to show our Saviour's love to others. He calls us his friends, and we are to walk forward with that assurance and with that peace in our soul.

DOCTRINES

CHRIST – IMMORTALITY

CHRIST – RESURRECTION BODY

Psalm 22:2

"O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent."

REFLECTION

"O my God, I cry in the daytime... the night season... am not silent." David practised persistent and consistent prayer, crying out to the Lord through the day and night, even if he felt he was not being heard at the time of his prayers. At times we go through what is called by some, the "long dark night of the soul". Let us remember that if we walk this dark path, the Lord, our Saviour, walked the darker one before us and is with us in our dark places. As He walked so we must walk at times, "taking up his Cross" and suffering unjustly, just as he did. Matthew 16:24. In such places we look to Jesus, who is the "author and finisher of our faith". Hebrews 12:2. As He walked in dark places to bring light to our life, and went through isolation to bring fellowship, so he will be with us all through and comfort us on the path with his love.

Isaiah 53:3-10

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”

“Thou hearest not.” The only prayers the Lord “hears not” in all of history are those whose hearts were darkened by the unconfessed presence of sin, for sin alone stops the Lord hearing mankind. Isaiah 59:2. The Lord could not be heard through the terrible hours of the Cross because he was carrying our sins as they were poured upon him. But praise God for the greatness of the Plan of Salvation, for the moment came when our Lord cried aloud, “It is finished”, and it was; our sin was taken away forever. John 19:30. We may suffer here and feel cast off and unheard, but because of what he did we are never cast off, or unheard. 2 Timothy 2:12-13.

1 Peter 5:7-11.

“7 Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us be patient under pressure and calm under the assaults of hate filled men. We are walking in dark places at times, but the Word is a light to our feet, and so let us “turn the light on” by Bible study. Let us be assured that the one who went through the darkest place ever in history is with us and will never forsake us. Matthew 28:20.

2. We may not feel heard at times, and in some situations that pressure may be prolonged beyond what we would humanly be able to cope with, but the Lord will bring us through to victory in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the fellowship of Jesus who is always with us. We have his Word upon these things, and the reality of his words in our heart must lighten the dark places of this world. Hallelujah Lord.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

Psalms 22:3

“But thou *art* holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. “

REFLECTION

“But thou *art* holy.” The starting point for mankind every day is to remember the “otherness” of God. We begin properly each day by remembering that we are creatures in a creation, made by a creator. We are creatures of space and time but we have, through Christ, been entered into an eternal context. We are limited in our comprehension, but we do not need to be limited in our worship, for the Lord is great and mightily to be praised.

Barnes in his “Notes” writes: *“It expresses a state of mind such as all true believers in God have - Confidence in him, whatever may be their trials; Confidence in him, though the answer to their prayers may be long delayed; Confidence in him, though their prayers should seem to be unanswered”.* (Cf. Job 13:15).

“Inhabitest the praises of Israel.” The right place for God in our hearts is in the place of worship and praise, even when for a time we feel devastated and bereft of comfort. In the worship and praise of the Lord there is comfort for our soul and joy in the midst of great pressures. I have known this over recent months as waves of great fear and anguish have flowed over me in the terrible trial we have endured in God’s power, but it is God’s power and it is worship that has kept us. We have no hope in anything or anyone other than the Lord still, as the trial is not over yet, but our worship continues, for in the Lord alone there is a path to walk through this present valley of shadow of death.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord is holy always and worthy of our praise. We can rest in his provisions and his power, for it alone will bring us through to glory.
2. Even when despair grips our soul let us praise his holy name and honour him in all things.

Psalm 22:4-5

“Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.”

REFLECTION

“Our fathers trusted in thee... thou didst deliver them”. David meditated on the great stories of the past and the promises of God associated with them “*day and night*” (Psalm 1:2; Psalm 40:8, 1 Corinthians 3; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 John 1:8). It is the great stories of the past that are recorded to give us hope and focus our minds forward in the battles we fight. Hebrews 11:1ff.

“They trusted in thee, and were not confounded.” This is the word of encouragement to us all as we face things that “confound” our understanding. As I have walked through very dark days over recent years I have reflected upon this fact, that even though waves of doubts and fears flow over us at times, and just like Abraham we have the “horror of great darkness” at times, the Lord remains faithful to us, for we are his blood bought saints. (2 Timothy 2:12-13; John 8:32, 58).

Deliverance is in the Lord’s hands alone; there is no other Saviour for us than the one who died for us. We must keep reminding ourselves of the logic of grace at dark times, that if he died for us while we were his enemies, will he do less for us now that we are his friends. Romans 5:10.

APPLICATION

1. As the saints of the past were delivered, so will we be in Christ Jesus. The Lord does all things well, and we must wait upon the Lord in his work for us.
2. Let worship and praise banish fear and doubt, and cling to the promises of the Lord’s Word to us in the dark places and keep serving and praising his holy name, for he will deliver us.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

Psalm 22:6

“But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”

REFLECTION

“But I *am* a worm...” This may properly describe our Saviour-Messiah’s condition during the time he *was made sin for us*, the time he hung upon the cross: For as it is written, “*Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*” (Galatians 3:13). He was truly “crushed” for us, with his life blood poured upon the ground for us. He did not look human at all as he hung on the Cross, so “marred” was his face and body after the beating he had endured. Isaiah 53:3-11. Our Lord was beaten and despised beyond all that any man had ever endured and so he paid for our sins. As we face this in our own lives let us take the burden to the Lord who fully knows our pain. 1 Peter 5:5ff.

Note:

In regard to the word ‘worm’ *tola* the ISBE has the following information: “*Tola’ath shani*, “scarlet,” is the scarlet-worm, *Cermes vermilio*, a scale-insect which feeds upon the oak, and which is used for producing a red dye. The female is wingless and adheres to its favourite plant by its long, sucking beak, by which it extracts the sap on which it lives. After once attaching itself it remains motionless, and when dead its body shelters the eggs, which have been deposited

beneath it. The dye is made from the dried bodies of the females. Other species yielding red dyes are *Porphyrophora polonica* and *Coccus cacti*.”

APPLICATION

1. How greatly our Lord suffered on our behalf. How great his love towards us and how fully he understands our pain and distress. Let us take our distress to Him in assurance and love. If we suffer it is simply to bring greater glory to our Lord’s witness through us.
2. Let us hear the Lord’s cry on the Cross daily and give thanks for the great love wherewith we are saved, and the great love that meets our prayer requests, for he knows the depths of all pain that man can ever know.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DOUBT

Psalm 22:7

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,”

REFLECTION

“They laugh me to scorn.” It is one thing to suffer pressure and abuse, but contempt is a lot harder to handle when you are noble, righteous and doing something that is good and true. The mockery of the lost towards the Lord is the harshest thing to be bourn by the Lord, for he was doing all that he did for mankind and the people who had their sins forgiven were mocking the sacrifice. If they did not later repent, and many did, (Acts 2:47. 6:7), they would certainly face eternal judgment without any hope at all. To trample the blood is the most serious of offences before God. Hebrews 10:29-31.

“They shoot out their lip.” Matthew, Mark and Luke use plain speech to reveal the murderous hatred of those who crucified Christ Jesus (Matthew 27:39-40; Mark 15:29-30; Luke 23:35-39). They “shoot their lips out” to spit at the ground or towards Him as he hung there, paying for their sins. The crowd that day at the Cross expressed their feeling of contempt by facial gestures and by spitting at the one on the Cross. Let us recall the great evil that the Lord endured and remember that God is not mocked! Those who work such evils will pay terribly for their sins and evils done. Galatians 6:7.

“They shake the head.” A silent gesture of contempt and disapproval. See Matthew 27:39, “*Wagging their heads.*” To “wag the head” is to express disbelief at the stupidity of an event or action. People still do this today when they look at the action of another person and express disbelief that such things could occur. It indicates that the head wagger believes the person they silently abuse is simply “too stupid for words”. Such contempt was directed at the Lord and will be at us at times.

APPLICATION

1. Let us beware of contempt for any man. Let us not be in any way like those who abused the Lord on the Cross.
2. Let us be wary of any contemptuous actions towards others for whom Christ died. Let us always pray for their salvation and the restoration of fellowship for them through repentance.

Psalm 22:8

“He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”

REFLECTION

That the Chief Priests and others would actually say this of the Lord is incomprehensible, and yet they fulfilled this scripture regarding the Lord and so condemned themselves forever. David experienced all these things himself also we must remember and suffered greatly in his life, especially at the time of the Great rebellion of Absalom his son. Many spoke of David this way at that time and the majority of the nation turned away from him. It was only his victory at

Mahanaim that restored the confidence of the people in him. 2 Samuel 19. David suffered, and our Lord greatly suffered, and we may at times also, but we rest in the one who was with David and went through the Cross for us all.

*“Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, “He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. **He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God”** Matthew 27: 41-43.*

APPLICATION

1. Even the worst evils of men praise the Lord as they fulfil scripture and bring glory to God forever. We rest in the arms of the one who was despised, and so when we are mocked for our faith, we have a rest in Him alone.

DOCTRINE

BLASPHEMY

Psalm 22: 9-10

“But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother’s breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou *art* my God from my mother’s belly.”

REFLECTION

From the very beginning of a life there is a plan and purpose to be worked out, and our failures do not halt that plan, as long as they are faced and confessed. God delights in bringing blessing from cursing, Romans 8:28. The Lord is the one who takes us from the womb alive, and from that very time our path and our steps are guided by the Lord. David was the youngest and may have been nearly lost in the birth process. He was not the favoured son at all and it may be that his birth was difficult and nearly cost the life of his mother and she had no other children. Whatever the story behind this with David he really celebrated his birth and his being kept through early years.

This is also a very real assurance to me from the dark days I find myself in the midst of as I write these words, and like David, for me there is great hope in this verse as I look back. My dear late mother was under great pressure to abort me given the situation she faced, and yet the Lord protected me from out of the womb, and I was born, adopted away from the very real dangers that destroyed others, and was kept to become the Lord’s servant. When we look back we must give thanks for the Lord’s preservation and the Lord’s guidance all the way through our life. The Lord himself was kept within Mary, and Mary was kept safe and brought through to a safe delivery in the stable of an Inn. God protects and preserves us, and he does so for a purpose.

APPLICATION

1. Let us seek the purposes of God for our life, for he has brought us this far and will not abandon us at this point.
2. God preserves our life for his glory and service.

DOCTRINE

GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – FREE WILL

BOOKS

CHRIST – HYPOSTATIC UNION: GOD-MAN

Psalm 22:11

“Be not far from me; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help.”

REFLECTION

“Be not far from me.” When we get focused upon the problems around us we lose our sight of the Lord alongside us, and this prayer is a reminder to refocus upon the Lord through worship. The Lord is never “far from us”, but we get closed off from the Lord in our distractions and preoccupation with our problems. David will cry this prayer out three

times in the Psalm, in verse 1, here in verse 11, and later in verse 19. It is a phrase used in a number of psalms through David's life and that encourages me. Psalms 27:9, 35:22, 38:21, 71:12.

We will experience a feeling of being "bereft" of comfort at times under great pressure and will cry out to the Lord in our despair, and that is alright, as long as we keep talking to the Lord and listening for his answer to us. David will realise the Lord is with him in the end. In Psalm 55:22 David tells us to *cast thy burden upon the LORD* and as we continue on in this psalm it would appear that this is exactly what he did. There is no sin in doubt and fear, it is sinful only if it is sat down and lived in the midst of! Keep talking with the Lord and the doubt-fear will lift in time.

There are often times when there are no people who can help, or will help. I am myself in such a time and have been trapped here for some time, and David's anguish is real to me. There is none to help, and that will either focus our mind on the Lord, or focus our emotions on panic. David will win the battle for the mind and focus upon the Lord, and so must we. 2 Corinthians 10:5.

APPLICATION

1. When none may help it is the Lord's opportunity for deeper fellowship with us and we need to turn our eyes upon Jesus. The Lord will help us; all we need do is pay attention to Him.
2. It is alright to feel bereft at times, for that is simply to be human. It is always wrong to stay with despair, and always right to draw closer to the Lord and seek his comfort, for in his time we will always find that comfort and support.

Psalm 22:12-13

"Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me *with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*"

REFLECTION

The strong bulls of Bashan (cattle ranching area where the animals were large and fierce) is a potent symbol of aggressive and violent enemies who are baying and roaring for his blood. There are violent bulls that even if you look as if you are heading for their paddock they will attack the fence. In my childhood my uncle's farm had quiet angus bulls, but also Jersey Bulls, and they were a different thing altogether to the angus breed. The Jersey's would attack you through a fence and you learned to stay well away from them, for they put their heads down and being gored by a large bull can be fatal very quickly. David is feeling deep threat here.

They are surrounding him and making violent noises that leave him in no doubt that they mean to kill him. David faced many fierce and violent enemies, and every battle could be his last. Only if God was with him did he have any hope of survival and the nation with him. The stakes were high in the ancient world, for if a battle was lost the civilian population were slaughtered. David knows the consequences of getting it wrong and he feels the fear that a caring man feels in such places. Once again let us reflect carefully on this; it is not wrong to feel fear and apprehension when we face serious issues. We take all such feelings to the Lord and then do what the Lord orders.

APPLICATION

1. Let us "feel the fear" and do what is right anyway. Let us feel the fear and take it to the Lord, for he knew our feelings and he kept moving forward to win our salvation. Let us keep moving forward and win the battle in front of us.
2. Let us realise that at times we will face horrific levels of malice and evil, but God is more powerful than the evil of petty men, even if they are demon possessed. Let us rest in the Lord on all these matters.

Psalm 22:14

"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

REFLECTION

This is a feeling that most who have gone through great stress or traumatic events have felt many times. The adrenals will create this feeling of all the energy just flowing out of you through your feet.... As the stress hormones pour into the system the body is quickly debilitated, simply imploded and worn out. I have been working yesterday with a big and well built war veteran dealing with his PTSD and he can only work with me in counselling for an hour a day per week and then

rest because the power of the emotions released simply exhaust him. I have him both exercising and relaxing in a very controlled way, as he is just worn out by the constant stress he has been experiencing.

Stress, especially traumatic stress causes all the muscles to be under tension from the corticosteroid Cortisol that is the body's "brake fluid", and as it is poured into the system to try to slow down the stress it creates muscle tension and joint pain in time. It can feel that every joint is being pulled out of its place. Tension and pain in the lower back, neck and joints of the body is normal when stress is at overload levels.

David's last symptom here is that the heart feels like it is melting within the chest cavity and then running down into the bowels. Stress hormones affect the chest wall tightening the intercostal muscles and creating a band of steel feeling across the chest. As stress continues it will feel like deep chest-heart pain, and then there is a "weird" feeling like the heart/stomach is "melting" and it can lead to "looseness in the bowels" with the entire gastro-intestinal tract playing up for days or even months on end.

APPLICATION

1. Having a severe stress reaction is a sign of great inner distress. David is seriously stressed by events, and that encourages all of us who are under such great pressure that we feel "unspiritual". Even though we ought to know better we are all influenced by the "prosperity gospel" that teaches, falsely we see here, that no believer ought to be under this level of pressure. This is a great believer under this pressure here, and don't blame sin for it, it is simply massive pressure from the devil's world. This stress that David faces is not a sign of his sin, but of his danger to the enemy and Satan's hatred of him. John 15:18ff. Let us remember that if we are under pressure, if it is for the right reasons, we are to relax and focus ourselves forward and keep fighting.

2. Let us encourage each other under pressure and pray for each other and encourage each other to rest upon the Lord in great distress, for we are in good company if the fight is the right one.

3. Let us take our deep distress and strong physical symptoms of stress to the Lord and "body slam them" upon the ground at the foot of the Cross. He cares for us, we rest in that alone in the toughest times. 1 Peter 5:7.

Psalm 22:15

"My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death."

REFLECTION

Once again we have very good descriptions here of stress in the body of an exhausted man or woman. To feel "dried up" inside is to express the effect of total chronic stress on the body. The feeling of being like a "dried leaf" within, ready to crumble at the slightest pressure is the way we would put it today, but for David it was the piece of broken pottery that summed up his feeling. It is good for nothing except being written on and used to transfer information to another. Potsherds were used for writing short letters in the ancient world, and David feels he is a letter written by others on his brokenness.

Stress especially makes the mouth dry and smelly. Dry mouth is one of the signs of depression and bad breath, without teeth problems, often results from stress/depression. The metabolism of the distressed person speeds up with the "Flight-Fight" reaction and unless lots of water is being taken in the mouth dries and sticks to the top of the mouth and the breath stinks. The Lord was certainly caught with his mouth so dry he couldn't speak aloud at the end of his suffering on the Cross. He called for something to help him and the soldiers gave him a sponge filled with cheap soldiers wine and he used that to moisten his mouth and cry aloud his last words. John 19:28-30.

We still say, "I feel like death warmed up", and that is David's last expressed feeling here. He feels close to death and doesn't even care about that. Soldiers under great battle pressure can get to this place, where they envy the dead, for they are at peace, and the soldier so battle fatigued just doesn't care whether he lives or dies as he launches his attack.

APPLICATION

1. Serious physical and psychological effects of stress will at times be felt by genuine believers doing the Lord's work, and it doesn't mean they are out of fellowship. Our Lord was so fatigued on the Cross that he felt many of the symptoms we see written up in these verses. If we are this stressed and distressed, we need to pause, pray and focus on the task, assure ourselves that it is indeed the Lord's path for us, and then throw ourselves forward into the battle again in the Holy Spirit's power. There will be times when we have no strength, but in the Spirit we can achieve all the Lord has for us just as the Lord and David did. Let us plod forwards – trust and obey and wait upon the Lord for the strength to continue the march.

Psalm 22:16

“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.”

REFLECTION

This verse certainly is seen to apply directly to the Cross, although there also must be an application to the life of David at some point but we cannot identify an event with the limited information we have. Keep remembering that fact; we have very little of his life told to us clearly, and there is clearly much to tell, and we will hear of it in heaven. Keep the personal application in mind here, for we also will face the “dogs” who seek to destroy us.

The Lord was on the Cross surrounded by the “dogs”. This was an insulting term for Gentiles especially, and referred prophetically here to the Roman soldiers and officials who surrounded the Cross and ensured that he was not rescued. The majority of them were sold out to evil and they certainly pierced his hands and feet. The application to the Cross is clear, but 1000 years before there is something in David’s life that causes him to write this, and there will be times when you face this if you are dangerous to the enemy. David must have had some event where he experienced a foretaste of the Cross to write this, for it is not simply prophetic, it is passionately cried aloud by a man who has felt this pain himself.

I have often said to my students in the Bible College that it is never an easy thing to be a prophet, for the prophet must suffer to understand many of the utterances he/she is to speak, and they will often have experiences that the Lord then later uses to assist their communication. Few prophets are able to calmly walk through life; most have great suffering as part of their walk and ministry, and David illustrates this with his prophetic gift here. He has experienced something awful here himself, but it works for glory that he would see from heaven alone.

APPLICATION

1. Things will happen to us on our walk through this life that make no sense except that they prepare us to assist others on their journey. Suffering is often for others, in that it brings us to a place where we can understand and help, where previously we only had head knowledge.
2. Always seek the Lord’s learning in all awful events, for the Lord allows great things to come to us, both good and bad if we are to achieve “great things” for Him. Only those who have suffered greatly can assist those suffering greatly.
3. When there is no sense to the suffering/assaults you face, look up and seek the Lord’s purposes in the battles that you are to assist others to fight in the future. There is always a purpose on the Lord’s path, but some will only be clear when we look back from heaven.

Psalm 22:17

“I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me.”

REFLECTION

When we are under great pressure the body’s metabolic rate speeds up and weight literally “falls off” us and that is what David identifies here. Over a quite short space of time we can shed kilos of weight under pressure and David had gotten to the point where his bones stood out and he could count his ribs as he washed.

When we get to that place we are certainly going to attract attention from others who know us, and they often express aloud just how bad we look. People start to poke and prod us to see what is wrong, and David expresses the embarrassment at this when you are in such a depressed and stressed state.

David was stressed and had great weight loss but his was nothing like the suffering of the Lord later when the Lord’s bones were visible because the flesh was ripped from his body by the Roman lash. Matthew 27:24-26, Luke 23:24-25, John 19:1ff.

APPLICATION

1. Severe and sudden weight loss is a significant sign of physiological distress. Something is wrong and we need help of some sort when weight starts to drop off us. David had been there, and takes this problem to the Lord and receives the Lord’s answer in the end. He wasn’t to know it when we wrote these words that they would be prophetic of his own Messiah.

2. Let us take our stress to the Lord, for the Lord has allowed these things to come upon us for a reason. Let us pray long enough to find it.

Psalm 22:18

“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”

REFLECTION

At some point David must have been beaten up by other shepherds, or even by his brothers, and experienced the humiliation of having to buy back his clothes. Many boarding school boys and military personnel have had this happen, where the clothing is lost and forfeit and must be purchased back. In the ancient world a beaten person had their clothing auctioned to those who beat him and he had to buy back his clothing for whatever the “going price” was later.

For David the experience was humiliating and likely was one of the many things that made him the warrior he later was who would not be beaten! For David there was a way back and he took it. For the Lord 1000 years later it was the end of his life and he saw his clothing stripped from him and gambled for by the soldiers beneath his Cross. It was the death details “perk” that they got to keep the clothing of the condemned man, which were carefully taken off him and folded up before the beatings and crucifixion so as to be worth having. John 19:23-24.

APPLICATION

1. Humiliating experiences can work to forge a toughness of character that makes a man unbeatable later. David experienced many things that would be considered “harmful to self esteem” today and he would be given counselling in a school for this. In lieu of counselling David got tough and focused on never being beaten again. Let us learn from David and “quit ourselves like men and be strong!” 1 Corinthians 16:13.

2. Let us be humbled by the Lord’s humiliation for us. He was prepared to suffer the ultimate of indignity that we might win the dignity of being the sons and daughters of God, and might become members of the Royal Family of heaven. Let us praise his holy name.

Psalm 22:19-20

“But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion’s mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.”

REFLECTION

Once again David is pleading for the Lord to “hasten”, and on the Cross we can see the Lord in his battered and smashed humanity asking the father to make the terrible hours of extreme pain fly by and hasten his end. It is not wrong to cry out to the Lord this way, and I myself have been seriously encouraged of this over recent days. As we awaken in the early hours of the morning with, like Abraham (Genesis 15:12) great “darkness” over our soul, we are able to cry out to the Lord for relief and for the testing time to be over, and we can do so again and again, without the Lord’s anger at us. The Lord’s patience with us flows like an inexhaustible river of grace in our direction.

Hebrews 4:14-16

“14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”.

David sees that the Lord alone is “his strength”, and that he seeks the deliverance of the Lord, realising that the Lord often will “snatch us away from danger” at the last minute, testing our faith till the end, so that every test builds our faith and trust in his plan. The Lord is not “playing with us” in these things, but giving us a spiritual gym workout to build our faith in the process. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

“Deliver my soul from the sword”. This is the anguish I have felt these last months as you feel around 3am when waking with a dark feeling within that your very heart is being cut asunder. It is a deep sadness and worry at such a level that it truly feels like a sword cutting the very soul. David’s cry is heart felt in his situation but he couldn’t know the greater pain of the Lord as his heart literally would be “cut asunder” by the terrible weight of our sin. He dies of a rupture of the heart and he suffers all this for us. John 19:30-37.

We are the “darling” or precious ones of the Lord and this phrase carries a lovely and encouraging message as we groan and weep our way through the dark times we often must face in ministry. If we would serve the Lord we must expect, like David, that we will experience things that others have and that our Lord has for us. We are to grow to be Christ like and that means sharing his suffering and understanding more of his heart, and that is only through the pain he felt from the lost and the world he had made. As I have gone through my dark months I have grown in understanding of the sadness of the Lord for the broken creation, destroyed by the sin and evil of the demonic and fallen man. I have felt a little of the pain that breaks the heart of Jesus as he looks upon us and it is terrible, but humbling and helpful for my ministry.

David cries for help against the lion who attacks his body and soul, and of course with Peter and James help we know who that “lion” is. James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:7-11. The lion is vicious but defeated by the Cross now and our call from the Lord is to resist and stand against all his devices of despair and doubt. David feels he is being impaled by the very horns of strength of the demonic forces (unicorns) but he realises that the Lord will pluck him off the very horns themselves and save him. He has not been delivered to be “skewered”, but to serve until the Lord calls him home, and so have we. Let us have the confidence of Paul that the Lord will bring us to the end of our race, for that is his eternal plan for us, and using his resources we will always get there, and no demonic force can stop us.

APPLICATION

1. Praise the Lord that we are recipients of his gracious understanding of our limitations and weaknesses. We can cry out again and again in the night watches and receive strength again and again to keep coping until the testing time is over.
2. The Lord will save us from the “lion’s mouth”. We are kept from the devil and his evil angels, and they cannot attack us without permission and restriction. Job 1-3. Rejoice in assaults upon you for it proves whose side you are on. Firmly fix your armour, stand firm on the rock of your salvation, and fight with the sword of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God.

Note from Brian Huggett on this last phrase.

Unicorn:

Described as an animal of great ferocity and strength and untamable ((Numbers 23:22; Numbers 24:8; Isaiah 34:7; Job 39:9), it is translated “wild oxen” in the RV. It was in reality a two-horned animal; but the exact reference of the word so rendered (*reem*) is doubtful. Some have supposed it to be the buffalo; others, the white antelope, called by the Arabs *rim*. Most probably, however, the word denotes the *Bos primigenius* (“primitive ox”), which is now extinct all over the world. This was the aurochs of the Germans, and the urus described by Caesar (Gal. Bel., vi.28) as inhabiting the Hercynian forest. The word thus rendered has been found in an Assyrian inscription written over the wild ox or bison, which some also suppose to be the animal intended (c.f. Deuteronomy 33:17; Psalm 29:6; Psalm 92:10). From the Easton Bible Dictionary

Unicorns/Aurochs:

DESCRIBED AS:

Intractable in disposition
Job 39:9; Job 39:10; Job 39:12

Of vast strength
Job 39:11

The young being remarkable for their agility
Psalm 29:6

ILLUSTRATIVE:

Of God as the strength of Israel
Numbers 23:22; Numbers 24:8

Of the wicked
Isaiah 34:7

(Horns of,) of the strength of the descendants of Joseph
Deuteronomy 33:17

(Horns of,) of the strength of powerful enemies
Psalm 22:21

(The position of its horns,) of the exaltation of saints
Psalm 92:10

From RA Torrey’s New Topical Textbook

DOCTRINE

SOUL AND HUMAN SPIRIT**Psalm 22:22-23**

“I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.”

REFLECTION

“Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee” (Hebrews 2:12). (The ‘Church’, the Gk. *ekklesia*, has the same meaning as the Heb. *qahal*, or congregation.) The quoting of this first verse in Hebrews is instructive of its perceived meaning and significance to the early churches. The writer to the Hebrews saw that the Lord’s sacrifice had brought all mankind to an equal footing before the throne of grace, with Jew and gentile equal before the Lord, equal in sin, in forgiveness, and so in their status as saints. He saw that the entire creation, lost at the Fall, is restored to his total rulership. All things are under submission/subject to him now.

Jesus absolute rulership, through the victory of the Cross is significant to recognise in light of our present pressures. We are under pressure, but not from an enemy who has absolute power, or anything even resembling that. Satan is defeated and for all who stand in Christ Jesus, there is victory also, it is just in his time and in his way! We are called to obedient faith and dynamic trust under pressures. We are called to name the truth about his victory in the midst of what feels like defeat in our soul. We are to claim personal victory in and through Christ’s work for us, right in the midst of our depression and anguish, calling what is not in our soul as if it is that victory, and so we gain the victory in our soul.

Hebrews 11:1-3

*“1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
2. For by it the elders obtained a good report.
3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”*

The call to worship now follows, where the psalmist calls all to join him in worship and praise, and that is always to be our personal approach, for worship is contagious and when we sing we ought to desire others to join us, for we desire all the saints to sing aloud and defeat their own dark places by the lighting of the joy of worship within. Psalms 105:3-7, 107:1-2, 115:11-13, 135:19-20, 145:19, Isaiah 61:3.

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

*“15. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.
16. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.
17. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.
18. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.
19. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?
20. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

APPLICATION

- Let us name what is not as if it is; let us name peace within and so defeat doubt and despair. Let us by faith, through prayer speak the victory and peace of the Lord into our troubled soul. Let us defeat doubt and despair by worship and praise in the midst of the congregation, for by our witness to truth we rest in that truth more securely.
- Let joy be contagious amongst the saints. When you have joy in the Lord share that joy and worship with others in the joy of the Lord. O Let us praise Him for his great salvation and grace which is renewed every morning, and so let us focus forward in His Plan for our lives with the only hope there is – in Him alone.

DOCTRINES**CHURCH****BIBLE – INSPIRATION**

Psalm 22:24

“For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.”

REFLECTION

Christ suffered judgment for sin and as such was separated from the Father to win our salvation, but his prayer was still heard, and answered when the job was done. We see this as we read Christ’s prayer in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37-39; Mark 14:32-39; Luke 22:44; see also Hebrews 5:7), and then we turn to the account of the Cross in a passage like John 19, as John looks back sixty years to the event and sees the victory and the answers to all the prayers of the ages.

The Father heard the Lord Jesus, and the Father hears us today as we pour our heart out to him in our night time anguish. There is no disdain, contempt, detesting or embarrassment with our pain being expressed to the Lord our God. He seeks our focused prayer and our passionate communication of our pain. He wants us to share the burdens we carry with him, for they are His and as he has given them to us for our walk, so he will help us carry them to greater victory than we can even imagine at this point.

Psalm 5:9-10

*“9. And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.
10. All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?”*

God has not hidden his face from us, it just felt like a long delay, but as in all aspects of his plan, the details are perfect, for the author of the plan is perfect. We are loved, provided for, and we are heard. If we feel delay we take that to our Lord and rest in his timing as we rest in his power to provide.

Psalm 116:1-9

*“1. I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.
2. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.
3. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.
4. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
5. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.
6. The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.
7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
8. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
9. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.”*

APPLICATION

1. The Lord wasn’t “hidden” from the Father, even on the Cross; there was only a delay in the answer to his prayer until the task of winning our salvation was completed. We may feel “hidden” in the dark hours around 3am but we are not hidden, and our prayers are heard, and will be answered in accordance with the amazing and perfect plan of God for our life.

2. Our cries in the night are not despised or an embarrassment to the Lord our God. He knows our frame and remembers that we are dust! Psalm 103. Let us cry to the Lord, and in worship settle our troubled and fractured soul. In his presence and in his plan there is healing for our hurt and restoration of our peace.

DOCTRINES**CHRIST – CRIES OF CHRIST FROM THE CROSS****CHRIST – ISAIAH CHAPTER 53: SUFFERING OF JESUS CHRIST****Psalm 22:25**

“My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.”

REFLECTION

The one we praise is the one who saved, who saves, and who will save to the uttermost. Hebrews 7:25. When we go through great trials of faith we can take comfort and encouragement from the fact that we will have a great testimony in the eyes of the “great congregation” of saints in heaven. David thought of the great crowds that gathered for the national feast days, but in the Lord’s grace the congregation to sing praises before, is even larger than he could ever have comprehended.

When we suffer great distress we will often appeal to the Lord and make a promise to the Lord of service to be later offered in grateful thanks. Such vows are always to be repaid in full. David’s vow involved public worship and that is a good promise to make to the Lord and fulfil in joy. David also notes who the “great congregation of saints” truly comprises; it is made up of those who reverence/fear the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. Let us praise the Lord indeed, and honour his deliverances with praise and worship that honours his grace, love and mercy received. As we have received so let us worship and praise his holy name.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

Psalm 22:26

“The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live forever.”

REFLECTION

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:30, that the “meek” would inherit the earth, and they will. Be sure of the biblical definition of meek however. They are the humble who correctly and righteously bow before the Lord as their King. They are “afflicted” by the true understanding of the status and curse upon man, and they are also fully accepting of God’s remedy to that curse.

By correctly assessing the reality of our place before the Lord and bowing before him we come to the redeemed place of love and inner peace. We find the satisfaction that the Lord is able to give his saints in the worst possible (from a human perspective) situations. We learn a spiritually powerful “contentment” in Christ Jesus and the Lord keeps us in impossible places and blesses us in the very presence of our enemies. Philippians 4:4, 10-13, 1 Timothy 6:6-8.

Philippians 4:10-13

“10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

APPLICATION

1. Meekness is not weakness; it is the correct mental attitude towards our position on this fallen earth. Let us humbly seek the Lord’s face each and every day, and rejoice in his grace, mercy, and love towards us.

2. Let us rejoice in the Lord greatly, for we are in the place of the redeemed and we are delivered by his power and majesty. Let us be content in the plan and in his provisions for us on the path.

Psalm 22:27

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.”

REFLECTION

Isaiah 45:22ff

*"22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.
 23. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.
 24. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.
 25. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory"*

The day is coming when the "ends of the earth" will indeed praise the Lord their God. As a servant of the Lord who lives at "the ends of the earth" (the furthest countries from Israel) I rejoice in scriptures like those above, for it reminds me that the plan of God for us all is more marvellous than we could ever think, and that victory is certain, and that our far flung nations have a key part to play as the days darken towards the end.

In the end there is no nation not represented before the throne of the Lord their God. All the family of mankind is represented in heaven and from all the sons of Adam there are those that worship before the throne of grace. This verse does not teach universalism, but a universal gospel response. All mankind is certainly not saved, and we have the "Lake of Fire" as evidence of that, but the message is for all nations and from all of them sons and daughters will arise in the Spirit to serve their God. John 3:16, 36, 3 Peter 3:9, 1 John 2:1-2, Revelation 7:9-12, 15:4, 20:10-15.

APPLICATION

1. We are working and worshipping now upon this fallen world as the Lord's witnesses, and so let us take the truth to every corner and preach with Holy Spirit filled power and with focused attention on the truth.
2. As the darkness deepens as we approach the end of this age we can get discouraged by the triumphs of evil and the power of the evil dominated international political machine. It is vital we keep remembering the victory of the Lord is sure and certain. The ends of the earth will praise him and people from all nations will be represented before his throne, even though some are entered into other nations in salvation. Zechariah 14:16-21.

DOCTRINES

NIMROD – INTERNATIONALISM

NATIONS – DESTINY OF NATIONS

Psalm 22:28

"For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations."

REFLECTION

There is a rulership of the Lord over this earth and it is called the "Millennial Kingdom", Revelation 20:4-6. His kingdom will indeed "come". Matthew 6:10. The Lord Jesus will rule as King over this earth and he will be the governor of the nations. He will rule in righteousness. Refer below to the doctrines that refer to this prophetic fact. And every time you lift your communion cup and take the emblems do so truly, "until he comes" to rule. 1 Corinthians 11:26.

APPLICATION

1. He comes and he comes to rule this earth one day. The rule of righteousness will arrive with the Lord's Second Advent, but not before. Let us seek the salvation of the lost and look with hope rather than despair upon this sin and evil blighted earth. Let us praise him for the victory that shall surely be won one day.

DOCTRINES

CHRIST – TRANSFIGURATION

KINGDOM – MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

KINGDOM

Psalm 22:29

"All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul."

REFLECTION

Here we have a three-fold description of the representatives of the nations and their grasp of reality in that day when Jesus rules the earth.

1. "All *they that be* fat upon earth shall eat and worship". In that day the rich and prosperous will eat with gusto and will worship the Lord as they do so. This is not gluttony or sinful extravagance but the joy of celebrating food in the presence of the King who has given it to be enjoyed without sin. In all things give thanks, for this is the will of the Lord concerning you. Even today we sanctify all food with grace over it. Philippians 4:4. Thankfulness is to be our normal mental attitude today, but it will be universal in the Kingdom of the Lord.

2. "All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him". Many people bowed their heads and prostrated themselves to the dust in front of dignitaries in that day, but in the future day of the Lord's rulership, all will go to the dust in prostration before the true King and it will be heart felt. Romans 14:11, Ephesians 3:14, Philippians 2:10.

3. "None can keep alive his own soul". There will be the absolute recognition in that day of the total dependence of all life upon the Lord. Today some of us walk with reverence upon the earth, realising that we are his own and in his hands, but few do this. In that day all who live upon the earth will recognise that truly in Him we move and live and have our being. Acts 17:28.

APPLICATION

1. Let us honour the Lord now, as all will one day honour and praise Him as King.

Psalm 22:30-31

"A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*."

REFLECTION

It is important that we don't make the mistake some early commentators made in these last verses and use too much figurative language here. While the term "seed" has been used to refer to Christ in both Galatians and Romans, it is not a reference here to the Lord, for the Lord is ruling in this context. Let us see David's point, not make our own. The earth is cursed as a result of the Fall of Adam and all the seeds of the earth carry the genetic flaws that flow from the Fall, but all that is transformed when Jesus rules, for the earth is then restored to how it was made to be before the fall. In that day every generation of seeds is as it was made to be and brings glory to the Lord their creator and king.

The glory that is pictured by David is the restoration of the entire earth to how the Garden of Eden was. Genesis 1-3. It is the glory that Isaiah would later glimpse also, Isaiah 61-63, and the glory of it is wonderful beyond all present words. We get a glimpse of this on a really lovely day, but just beneath the visible surface evil lurks in the heart of every cell. It is the removal of the curse totally and universally that David gets excited about, for it leads to a total restoration of Eden; of a perfect environment that men dream of today.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord's promise, as the Second Adam, is that he will reverse the curse upon the creation that the first Adam brought about. This earth will be as it was made to be for 1000 years of perfect environment and perfect rule. Let us praise the Lord that he can restore this earth, and let us not be deceived by the modern "greenies" that the job can be done beforehand.

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.

The Chief and Good Shepherd Leads His Own Through to Victory

This is a poem that reveals, in the most sublime way, the “*peace of God that passeth all understanding*”; a peace that comes from knowing God as the great Chief Shepherd of our souls (John 10:11-14; 1 Peter 2:25 c.f. John 14: 26-27). It is the Lord’s promise prophetically through the psalmist that his character, power and plan can be depended upon, for he is the “chief shepherd of our souls, and he will appear to receive us and rule here”. 1 Peter 5:4. He is the “great shepherd of the sheep”, and as we saw in the previous psalm, he will exercise this role fully over the entire earth one day. Hebrews 13:20.

1 Peter 2:21-25

“21. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

Psalm 23:1

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

REFLECTION

What wonderful words these are to the soul of every believer and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. These words are the reminder that we are more than loved, we are protected, kept, guarded and directed by the one who is the shepherd of our soul and protector of our body. We cannot be more safe than in the caring arms of Jesus, and we are there forever. Matthew 28:20, Philipians 4:7, 2 Thessalonians 3:3.

Let us affirm David’s faith in this verse before us. Let us by faith claim this precious promise in our time of want and pressure, calling what is not before our eyes at this point, as it eternally is. The Lord has called us, and we are members of his flock, and so we can confidently claim the provisions of the shepherd for his flock member. We are his and he is responsible for our provisions as the shepherd takes responsibility for the sheep. John 10:9-11.

I shall not want for any thing that is needed to fulfil my commission here as the Lord’s servant. Even if I have made disastrous decisions in the past, if they are confessed they are forgiven, and I am restored, and the Lord will provide, guide and direct my paths! At times I will cry out for provisions and wonder when they will arrive, but by faith I claim them. Hebrews 11:1. His provisions will always be there in abundance on his path for us. Psalm 16:11, 139:3, 142:3.

John 10:11-16

“11. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd”.

Jude 24-25

“24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Hebrews 13:5-6

"5. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

APPLICATION

1. We are kept by the shepherd who loves the sheep and gave himself for them all. We cannot be more secure than we are in Christ Jesus. What He promises is to be more real to us than what we see presently in pressures.

2. "I shall not want for any thing that is needed to fulfil my mission here upon the earth". Affirm it believer this day, and shout aloud thanks in advance of receipt of provisions, for they will come.

DOCTRINE

CHRIST – HYPOSTATIC UNION: GOD-MAN

Psalm 23:2

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."

REFLECTION

This lovely image reminds us that the Lord's care and concern over us is to ensure we have the food and drink we need to accomplish our purposes here upon the earth. We are able to confidently claim these provisions from our Chief Shepherd, for he ever lives to make intercession and provision for us. Hebrews 7:25.

The Lord leads us to the best grass to feed upon, and the still waters that are fresh, sweet and pure for us to drink deeply from. We may face great battles and deep waters at times, but he will always lead us to the places of refreshment to recharge our depleted batteries again and again. He does not do these things once, but again and again in our life time of faith and service. There are dark days and thorn covered paths, but there are the green meadows also.

The Lord's concern for us is our productivity upon this earth, for we are left here for a reason, and that reason is service and worship related. It is vital for sheep to be fed and watered properly or they do not produce the milk and wool that makes the shepherd's livelihood. We are not saved just to go to heaven, but to witness to the Lord here and now as part of the father's plan. The Lord keeps us safe and provides that we might be "fruitful" in our work for him, just as the shepherd looks after the sheep for their "return on investment". Jesus makes this point in John 15:4-8.

APPLICATION

1. We are here to serve and bear fruit to the glory of the Lord and the blessing of others. The Lord's purpose is to move us to the place where we are productive, and he will always feed and water us to achieve the goals the Plan calls for. Let us take in the food provided and so bring the glory to the Lord that we are asked to.

2. You can lead a horse to water but it must drink, and so it is with us. The Lord provides spiritual food and we must take advantage of it and eat it daily. Let us make sure we are feeding upon the Word daily and utilising all the spiritual resources we have to serve the Lord.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSED IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING OF THE BELIEVER

Psalm 23:3

"He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

REFLECTION

In the most difficult places the Lord restores, refreshes and rebuilds our shattered soul and body, by strengthening our spirit in the Word of God through the Holy Spirit. We must keep in mind that the shepherd of the ancient world had many

challenges in his role, for other shepherds, or bandits, could try to steal the sheep and kill him, as well as the threat from wild lions and bears and the jackals and foxes who preyed on the youngest. The shepherd alone could defend the flock from such dangers, by guiding them into only safe pastures, and by being alert and fully armed to defeat any threat, or avoid it by stealth.

The shepherd also had the challenge to keep the flock as strong and healthy as possible, for only then were they resistant to disease. He kept them fit and healthy by not over driving them, and ensuring they had adequate food and water and shelter at all times. Reflect upon the care of the shepherd and then recognise the key fact that flows from the image of this psalm, that it is the shepherd who must do 100% of the care for the sheep; all they do is follow the shepherd with absolute obedience and devotion. His job is their health and safety. Just so it is with us!

It is the Lord alone who guides, directs, protects, restores, refreshes, feeds and waters through the Word and ever present indwelling Holy Spirit. It is the Lord's provision that we live and move in and have our being and service within, but we must daily take advantage of the provisions of the Lord. We must obediently walk on the "narrow path" of his righteousness that he calls us to walk.

Matthew 7:7-14.

- "7. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*
- 8. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*
- 9. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*
- 10. Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*
- 11. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*
- 12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*
- 13. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*
- 14. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*

Ian B Yates, in his sermon on this Psalm, points out the following:

For His Name's Sake

Yahweh Ro-Ee: Yahweh My Shepherd

The LORD *is* my shepherd

Yahweh Yireh: Yahweh Will Provide

I shall not want.

Yahweh Shalom: Yahweh Is Peace

He makes me to lie down in green pastures

He leads me beside the still waters

Yahweh Rofeka: Yahweh Your Healer

He restores my soul

Yahweh Tsidkaynu: Yahweh Our Righteousness

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name's sake

Yahweh Shammah: Yahweh Is There

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;

For You *are* with me

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me

Yahweh Nissi: Yahweh My Banner

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies

Yahweh M'qadesh: Yahweh Sanctifies

You anoint my head with oil

APPLICATION

1. Let us give thanks for the provisions of the Lord and consciously and deliberately pray daily to receive the things the Lord has for us. Let us not go through this world by "auto-pilot" but by deliberate and consistent prayer fellowship with the Great Shepherd!
2. No worries are to be held that are not cast at his feet daily. 1 Peter 5:5-10. The shepherd's job is to protect, refresh, direct and guide. Our "Health and Safety" is the Lord's concern alone; our task is humble obedience.

Psalm 23:4

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

REFLECTION

"Though I walk through the valley". In this world there are dark places and we must walk through the deep rocky and dangerous ravines as well as the gentle slopes and wide and soft surfaced plains. There will be dark places in your life believer, and for those of us who have walked long with the Lord we can look back and see his care and protection as we walked through some horrifically scary places. Death is the "weirdest" thing we face in this life; that a living breathing and articulate person is suddenly gone, and all that remains is a lifeless shell that starts to smell of death within hours.

"The shadow of death." The "shadow" here is best seen in terms of the soul feeling that the psalmist has been discussing in each of these psalms in this collection. We all understand the concept of a "shadow" passing over our heart, with deep fear and anguish replacing our previous lightness and joy. It is this shadow that David is referring to as he faces the very real prospect of the end of his life and the black hole of death, separated from all those he loves. Only in Christ is there any meaning that can be drawn from death, for all else is satanic deception. Death enters the world through sin, and both are the result of evil's entry into the garden in the presence of Satan.

Through the trials and hardships of life, and as the shadow of fear crosses the soul David affirms – "I will fear no evil". He is quite right to speak of evil in the next breath to death, for evil opens death's door and the final judgment of Satan will banish evil and death forever at the end of time. Revelation 20-22. Until that day the shepherd is with us in the dark places we must walk through in this fallen world! Let us keep remembering that the darkness has its origin in Satan's work, and that evil work is for, "a limited time only".

God has said that death for the believer is "to be absent from this body and so to be present with the Lord" (Psalm 17:15; 2Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:20-24; John 14:3). This present fallen world is doomed. It will be restored briefly by the Lord (for 1000 years) but it then is "put away" and replaced by a new creation that is without evil in it. 2 Peter 3:10-18, Revelation 20-22.

Lewis Sperry Chafer, in his Systematic Theology, Volume 2 page 100, speaks of the present fallen world as "*cosmos diabolicus*", an apt description of a world which is affected by the impact of Satan's work of evil and its legacy, man's sinfulness. Chafer writes:

"Next to the lie itself (that we too can be like God), the greatest delusion Satan imposes – reaching to all unsaved and to a large proportion of Christians – is the supposition that only such things as society considers evil could originate with the Devil – if, indeed, there be any devil to originate anything.

It is not the reason of man, but the revelation of God, which points out that governments, morals, education, art, commercialism, vast enterprises and organizations, and much religious activity are included in the cosmos diabolicus."

Chafer continues:

"A serious question arises whether the presence of gross evil in the world is due to Satan's intentions to have it so, or whether it indicates Satan's inability to execute all he has designed. The probability is great that Satan's ambition has led him to undertake more than any creature could ever administer."

The ultimate deception of "evil" (deliberate and wilful rebellion against the plan and purpose of God) is that those rebelling have the capacity to do what they in their arrogance believe is possible. The contrast to the satanic deception of evil, in these verses before us, God's holy alternative is starkly drawn through the metaphor of the shepherd and the sheep. We are to be like obedient sheep, and keep our eyes on the shepherd, for he alone is capable of leading us through the dark places of this presently fallen world and through into eternity.

We are exhorted to "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world*" (1 John 2:15-16). This is comparable to 1Timothy 6:10 where Paul writes, "*For the love of money is the root of all evil*", and is further referred to by the departure of Demas from the apostle at a key time, 2 Timothy 4:9, as Paul sadly notes, "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world". The sheep are called to love the shepherd, not the world he walks them through.

"For thou art with me". The Lord Jesus Christ tells the disciples and so, through John reminds us, that in his physical absence the Holy Spirit is always with us (John 14:26). Matthew 28:20 reminds us that the Lord is alongside us to assist also, as well as being at the "right hand" to intercede in prayer for us. We cannot be better protected and comforted than we are, even possibly having a guardian angel assigned to each of us to, as it were "guard our back". Hebrews 1:14.

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me". The shepherd's staff is the shepherd's tool of trade and badge of office, and is still used by shepherds in the high country of New Zealand where I presently live. It has a crook at the top that will fit snugly around the neck of a sheep and "hook" them out of a dangerous place without harm, and it acts also as a weapon to fend off snakes or annoying smaller wild animals. The Staff refers to the tenderness, the protective and caring love and guidance of the LORD for his sheep. It is the tool of correction only as much as the shepherd will use it to extract the sheep from a place it should not have gone, and that is a good way to see the "Divine Discipline" of the Lord over us. Hebrews 12:1-12.

The *rod shebet* was the shorter very individually crafted staff that was carried in the ancient world by those who were property owners or officials as a symbol of tribal authority, and so it refers most likely to God's authority over us as his sheep; his righteous demands, his just demand for our total and complete obedience. There is true comfort in both the

Lord's care and the Lord's absolute authority – for we are sheep of the Great Shepherd and there is no other who has the right to that title.

Vine's has the 'rod', which is used by the shepherd (Leviticus 27:32) and the teacher (2 Samuel 7:14). "It is a symbol of authority in the hands of a ruler, whether it is a sceptre (Amos 1:5,8) or an instrument of warfare and oppression *"thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel"* (Psalm 2:9 c.f. Zechariah 10:11)." Paul writes, *"if God be for us who can be against us"*. (Romans 8:31 and context).

APPLICATION

1. Fear will flow over us at times like a dark shadow over the soul. That is simply the legacy of the fall of Man, so do not despair believer but rather get to your knees and pray to the one who stands beside you as the Great Shepherd of our soul. By prayer and worship you reconnect spiritual power, that will turn the light of God's presence back on, and shine into the darkness. Death will always be "weird" to us as men, but it is simply a doorway for us through to Jesus. Remember his precious promise, recorded in John 8:51-53. We do not see death, we see Jesus.

2. The Lord is our protector and our guide on the journey through this life, and so when the ravines are rocky and dark do not despair, for if this is his path, then it is a path of righteousness, and there is glory in it somewhere. Keep your eyes upon Jesus and so discover the glory in the midst of the darkness. Draw closer to Him and draw the strength he always gives in dark places.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

Psalm 23:5

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

REFLECTION

"Thou preparest a table before me". Keep the context of the entire Psalm in view as we go through these last verses, for we still speak of a flock that has just been led through the "valley of the shadow of death" and now is being fed at a banqueting table. Once again we are confronted with the direct work of the shepherd for the sheep. It is the Lord who has prepared the table and furnished it with the banquet. We are provided for by grace, for we are the Lord's and it is his good pleasure to prepare all things for us. Ephesians 1:5-9.

Psalm 31:19-22

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

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

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

22. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee."

Psalm 78:12-20 relates the historical reality of the daily provision of the Lord during the wilderness wanderings of the nation of Israel, yet the nation, by their complaints, showed their refusal to recognise God's abilities and providence. David does not make the same mistake. The nation was an example of disbelief and subsequent toil, David an example of faith and rest (Hebrews 3:17 – 4:12).

"In the presence of mine enemies". The Lord's provision is always in the presence of the enemies of mankind, both the demonic and the human. When God blesses the believer in the midst of this present evil world it is the Lord's way of reminding Satan he is beaten and unable to stop the unfolding drama of redemption. We are those who the Lord uses to prove Satan's doom to him every day. He hates us, but he is unable to stop the Lord blessing us in the midst of the battlefield. God delights in blessing us, for every time he does he challenges unsaved men and the demons that presently enslave them.

"Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." David had been anointed as King and the High Priest was always anointed with oil in such a way that it flowed down his beard and covered his garments with sweet smelling perfume. This is another picture of God's obvious and sweet smelling blessings that flow over the believer at specific times. Anointing oil was not used every day, but we are "anointed in the Spirit" every day. We are blessed beyond measure in Christ Jesus, and we are meant to be "sweet smelling" to the world around us, a witness to God's transforming power upon us. 1 John 2:20-29.

2 Corinthians 1:20-22

"20. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

21. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;

22. Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

APPLICATION

1. The Lord sets the table of blessing for us whenever he calls for it in accordance with his plan for us. Whenever we are called to celebrate at the Lord's Table, let us do so with joy. The Lord will bless us in the presence of our enemies, and so let us celebrate his victory over them by praising his holy name in their presence. Let us remember to celebrate the victory of the Lord every time we meet together.

2. We are sealed, secure, stable and blessed in Christ Jesus. He provides and he protects us on the journey and he refreshes us on the way. Let us rejoice in the table of blessing in equal measure to the victories of the battlefield over satanic forces. Let us praise the Lord for all things received on the journey. Philippians 4:4.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE – CAPACITY FOR LIFE****Psalm 23:6**

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

REFLECTION

There is one clear certainty here that we can all claim and stand upon like the great bedrock promise that it is. The goodness of the Lord is with us and around us at all times. Psalm 30:11-12. There is no separation from the goodness and grace of the Lord our Saviour. Romans 8:28ff. God's goodness is an essential aspect of God's holy Character and so there is no separation possible from this great truth about our Saviour. If we are walking through dark places, let us recall the truths of this psalm and draw closer in prayerful fellowship to our Saviour and King.

Romans 8:34-39

"34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

2 Timothy 4:17-18

"17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

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

God's mercy is always pursuing after us and catches us whenever we need it. It is a wonderful picture here, that God's saving and delivering power is always just behind us ready to catch us and bring us through to glory and praise and worship. The last promise of this psalm adds to this assurance. It is the reminder of eternal security in Christ Jesus; that we dwell in the temple of the Lord forever. John 3:16.

APPLICATION

1. Let us bring the eternal life perspective into time, every time we face great pressures. The Lord is with us in his goodness. The Lord never intends ill for us, for that is the satanic viewpoint, never His. God's nature is intrinsic goodness, and we must meet fear with faith every time we face these things.

DOCTRINE

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Psalm 24**The Ascension and Return of the King to His City to Rule there****A Psalm of David.**

The occasion for which this psalm was written, is thought by many writers (including Jewish scholars) to have been in celebration of the ark being brought from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David (2 Samuel 6:17). It has an imposing formality about it that suggests it was for some *“public occasion of great solemnity”* and from the record of Scripture this event is the most likely. In 2 Samuel 6:16-17 we see that the Ark of the LORD was brought into Jerusalem (the city of David), and was set in the centre of the temporary tabernacle that David had pitched for it.

Many of the Psalms were written for the tabernacle/temple services, and there were different psalms for each day of the week. The Sabbath/Saturday Psalm for morning worship was Psalm 42, and the Psalm before us was written for Sunday morning service. This makes it especially precious to the Church, for Sunday is resurrection day and the day the early church met, rather than the Sabbath. It therefore becomes a psalm for the early church to remember the plan of God that has changed, and stepped up a pace heading now towards the Second Advent of the Lord and his rulership over Jerusalem.

The psalm was written to celebrate the coming of the Ark into the City of David, and for its first 1000 year usage that is what it looked back to, but its application for the last 2000 years has been to celebrate the soon coming of the Lord (of whom the Ark spoke) to be ruler over his city, and his entire world. As we will see, prophetically David felt the greater significance, and glimpsed the fact that the “best was yet to come”, and even for us that is still true.

Psalm 24:1

“The earth is the LORD’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.”

REFLECTION

The earth is indeed the Lords. Exodus 9:29, 19:5, Deuteronomy 10:14, Psalm 50:12. Let us not be like King Nebuchadnezzar who needed to be made mad for seven years to learn that God indeed was king and he was but his vassal. Daniel 4:25ff. All that the world contains is the Lords, and the usurping “prince of this world” has no power over the earth’s assets, for they remain the Lords. Let us not give Satan too much credit or believe of him that he has too much power. He has not! 1 John 4:4.

Even after the Fall of Man the earth remains the Lords, and that is why after the fall the Lord set the new rules for the operation and destiny of the earth. Genesis 3:14ff. Satan’s destiny is certain and so is the earth’s destiny. It will be “folded up and put away”, 2 Peter 3:10-18. Until that day it is the Lord’s asset base, and he gives us what we need to fulfil his purposes until he comes for us, and then with us to rule.

All who dwell upon the earth are the Lord’s and are responsible to the Lord. This doesn’t mean all men are saved in the end, but that all are creatures of the creator, and until they die they are written in the “Lamb’s Book of Life”. Only those who die unsaved have their names removed from that book and must stand in their own works before their maker and saviour. Revelation 20:10-15, 21:27. Even Satan and the demons who followed him are responsible to the Lord and will finally be judged by Him. Even now Satan cannot overstep the boundaries God has set for him and his evil team. Job 1:12, 2:4-6.

APPLICATION

1. If we are feeling short of resources we are to go to our knees in believing prayer, for the Lord has the assets and we must seek their appropriate and powerful release into the Lord’s work. That is his order; we are to ask and so receive. John 11:22, 14:13-14, 15:7-16, 16:19-30.

2. The Lord is still in authority. The enemy does not have the power he pretends he has. Let us not be fearful of the enemy forces, for greater is He within us than he that is in this evil saturated world. Remember it is only evil saturated for a time; the Lord is coming and he will restore this world and it will be one day as it was made to be.

DOCTRINE**ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT****Psalm 24:2**

“For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.”

REFLECTION

This may be a simple reference back to Genesis 1:1-5, and that is the best explanation of this verse. It may simply remind us that the earth when it was formed was in incredible chaos, as far as man’s comprehension is concerned, but the Holy Spirit brings the order we see out of the primeval soup of the ocean covered earth. The scientists today speak of this primeval ocean as the incubator of life but we simply stick to the scriptures and refer to it as the great chaotic ocean that God brought order and life from. Let us not worship the creation, nor the false gods of paganism or materialism.

The great “floods” of raging water are often awesome destructive forces and yet they have been used to form the great river valleys over time. If you are caught in the wrong place and time close to a raging flood (read river, flash-flood, tidal surge, tsunami....) you are dead, but its effect may be creative in the right place and time, as in the Grand Canyon in the USA. The raging floods are still dangerous and fatal to mankind, but the power of them is the reminder that we are creatures only and cannot rule this earth. We are tenant farmers here and need to remember it and worship the one who does rule over the details of our life.

Jeremiah 10:10-15

“11. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

12. He (The Lord) hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

13. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

14. Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.

15. They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.”

APPLICATION

1. God brings order out of apparent chaos, for there is no real chaos, only the creative and baffling (to limited mankind) work of almighty God. Let us look past the “chaos” of our present distress and see that the Lord has delighted since the creation of this universe to bring order out of the chaos. Seek his order today believer, for it is there in his plan and in his arms.

2. Let us never lose our sense of awe at the raging floods of various sorts in this world. In past ages they have been used by God to form the valleys, but they may still be used to sweep away all man has built. We take ourselves way too seriously and we need to recall and humbly recognise that we are tenants here and owe the Creator/Maker reverent fear and awesome praise and worship.

Psalm 24:3

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?”

REFLECTION

Who is worthy to ascend the holy hill of the Lord? To approach the hill upon which the tabernacle was set, and later where the temple would stand was a serious matter for the believer of the Old Testament period. There was a holiness and special character to worship and this is a reflection we need to make today in our all too casual age. I have sat in church services and they have begun with chaotic noise and people slapping each other on the back and speaking of their weeks for all to hear. There is no spirit of worship or holiness, and there must be, for we approach the “holy hill” of Calvary when we worship, for everything that we celebrate remembers his death and resurrection, and his work reminds us to be holy before him.

No-one is worthy to worship the Lord in their own strength, for as Cain discovered, Genesis 4, all man’s works are worthless in God’s sight, only the blood sacrifice will cleanse our sins of the guilt of sin and evil that man brought upon the world. In answer to David’s first question, none is worthy in himself to approach the tabernacle of the Lord and

worship his holiness. All worshippers came with an offering in their arms, and we today come with a sense of forgiveness in our hearts through Christ who died for us. Romans 5:6-8, 6:10, 14:9ff.

The purpose of the sacrificial system, and of the perfect sacrifice of Christ, is that the believer might become a holy worshipper with sin dealt with a life lived from then to the glory of God. 2 Corinthians 5:13-20. This is behind David's prayerful question; he seeks for all men to examine themselves, 2 Corinthians 13:5, and come before the Lord to worship in a spirit of holiness and solemn awareness of the awfulness of sin and the wonder of forgiveness. Psalm 103:10-17, 1 John 1:5-2:2. The "holy place" is now the blood soaked ground of the Cross where all who come will find salvation and restoration to fellowship through confession of sin.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be far more reverent than we are as we enter the church services on a Sunday. Let us remember this psalm, sung at the morning worship service to remind the believers present to be humble, holy and careful in their worship, not casual and flippant. We have lost something when we become flippant in our worship. Let us come before the Lord and reflect upon Him and his work.

2. The Lord seeks for holiness before Him in worship. Let us begin our services with quietness. Let us pause and reflect upon the need for salvation for the lost, and the need for confession for the sinner, and the certainty of both for all who come to the blood soaked ground of Calvary.

Psalm 24:4

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

REFLECTION

It is crucial that people take sin seriously, and also take the signs of evil in a life seriously, for both must be dealt with before people may approach the Lord and worship. For the carnal believer sin must be confessed, and if it is, the Lord's Word is clear, it will be forgiven. 1 Corinthians 3:12-23, 1 John 1:5-10, Psalm 51:1ff, 103:10-17.

For the "make-believer" evil must be recognised, and that individual who is actually a religious unbeliever, must get on their knees before the Lord and meet the Lord. The fruit of evil in a life makes it clear that the person who has these traits/behaviours is not of Christ at all! Read the Lord's words below very carefully and remember the list of evil fruits that Paul gives us in Galatians 6:19-21. No-one manifesting such fruits is to approach the Lord to worship, they are to bow before the Cross to meet him, for their life "fruit" tells us that they do not know Jesus.

To know Jesus is to be transformed by him. Now we are all "works in progress" but those who habitually are manifesting evil are evil! James is very clear about this, and with Jewish humour invites us to be more productive than the demons. There is no escaping the conclusion of the three passages below, and that is that those whose lives are consistently evil in their fruit do not know God, nor Jesus at all, no matter what their claims to work miracles in his name. Let us be holy for he is holy, and let us be fearful and prayerful if we are not! Ephesians 1:4, 5:27.

Matthew 7:15-23

"15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

James 2:18-23

"18. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

20. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22. Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

1 Peter 1:12-16

"12. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

APPLICATION

1. There is absolute consistency between David's words here and the words of the Lord Jesus, James and Peter. We are to approach our worship with humility and deep reverence, for the Lord has no time for hypocrisy with those who claim to be spiritual but do evil and ignore sin. Let us deeply examine ourselves as we come before Him and let us do business with God in spirit and in truth.

2. Holiness is demanded and through the blood of Christ it is provided to all who bow their knee to the lordship of Christ. Let us call the people of God to holy worship and let us ban hypocrisy and any casual attitude from our services.

DOCTRINES**CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY****Psalm 24:5**

"He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

REFLECTION

All who come before the Lord and bow their knee will receive his blessings, for it is only pride that stops us being blessed. All our works of self-righteousness is as filthy rags in his sight. Isaiah 64:6. Let us get God's perspective clearly in our minds and never sway from his holy standards into the hypocrisy and play acting of stupid religious men. The only path to blessing is the blood soaked ground that leads to forgiveness. It is blood soaked and all who seek the Lords blessing must walk where his blood fell and accept humbly that this was for them before the blessing can be received.

God wants to declare us righteous in Christ Jesus, and we can accept this by grace, through his love and mercy, but we must bow before him. I am very repetitive here, but I am in good company for David is also repeating this again and again, as he doesn't want us to miss the point here. The free gift of God's approval is available, as his righteousness, but it is by grace through faith in the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. God's righteousness is a free gift, and it comes with the "salvation package".

APPLICATION

1. God wants to bless us, and only our pride and arrogance, or unfaced fears and doubts, stops this process. Let us bow before the Lord and in humility find what we can never get by arrogant self righteousness.

2. Let us preach the true gospel to all who will hear us, and let us remind people that God gives by grace, but it is by faith in Christ alone. Tell the truth pastors and live the truth believers.

Psalm 24:6

"This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah."

REFLECTION

It is great to be in a generation that seeks the Lord and honours God. David was at a turning point in Israel's history and he would see their greatest days. I had the great privilege of experiencing this in my own teenage years. I was saved in the mid-60s and with many of my friends we had a passion for the Lord that produced church growth and results in our community and nation that were amazing. It was as some refer to it looking back as a "purple patch", but it only lasted a decade or two and was gone.

Each generation needs to make its own "revival" by saturating the people in the Word of God and allowing the Holy Spirit free reign amongst God's people. My sadness as I look back was that we didn't get the saturation in Bible teaching that

was needed and the boring three point sermons of the old pastors, and the declining prayer life of the local churches, slowly but steadily killed the revival over time.

David struck a “purple patch”, with Samuel and Saul gone, but the tabernacle restored to its centre and a new capital and worship centre being prepared, and with the Lord giving them victory over their enemies. There was a sense of what the Lord was doing in the air and an excitement about what would unfold in years to come. The psalms were written and sung by the singers of the tabernacle and prayer was central to the nation for the first time in years. People could see God’s hand moving under David, and then the great sin of David with Bathsheba occurred, and the Great Rebellion flowed from that, and by the end only the ready to be built temple was left.

Under Solomon the army was still victorious, and the money would flow more powerfully, and there would be great buildings built, but the spiritual high water mark was the rule of David. The next great positive “turning point” in the nation Israel’s history would be under those leading the Exiles back from Babylonian Captivity, and the last was the arrival of the church. 1 Peter 2:9, 2 Peter 3:9.

APPLICATION

1. Let us pray and work for revival amongst our own generation. It is prayer that begins great work and so let us pray for the Lord’s work upon his people in power and open up the preaching of the Word in the Holy Spirit’s power.
2. Let us seek for prayerfulness in the church for it is that deep and passionate desire for God to move that casts people upon their knees and sees great things happen. Pastors, let us step out to preach and teach with passion and power, and let us expect the Holy Spirit to do great things within the Lord’s people, for he will.

DOCTRINES

ISRAEL

ISRAEL – JACOB AS A TYPE OF ISRAEL

ISRAEL – NATIONAL DIVINE DISCIPLINE

Psalm 24:7

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.”

REFLECTION

The big question of most commentators over this verse is, “What is David actually asking for here?” To ask for the top of the gate to be “lifted up”, or taken away is to ask for the whole gate structure to be exposed from the top or blown away altogether. It is a thing that is incredible, and yet may have two very specific meanings; one David’s own deep and passionate desire to “lift the roof” in worship, the second prophetic for the Second Advent arrival of the Lord in Jerusalem. Psalm 118:19-20, 68:16-18, Ephesians 4:8-10.

May I suggest that David is seeking for the passionate worship of God’s people that will literally or figuratively “raise the roof”, and blow the great doors off their hinges and blow away the great stones above them that seat the great gates in the stone work. He wants to feel the building shake with the joy of God’s people. The second and very serious prophetic meaning of this verse is possibly related to the great earthquake just before the Lord’s Second Advent.

It is described most fully in Revelation, although prophetically referred to in passages like the Isaiah and Haggai ones below. What is described is a great earthquake that will certainly expose the very foundations of the gates of the city of Jerusalem and destroy most standing structures, and this is after the great earthquake of Ezekiel 38-39. It may be this that leads to this psalm being sung, for the Lord has blown away the tribulation temple and the mosques (if they are there after Ezekiel 38-39) and rides again into the blasted city to rebuild its gates, temple and walls himself.

Revelation 16:17-21

“17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.”

Isaiah 26:1-5

- “1. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.
2. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.
3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.
4. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:
5. For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.”*

Haggai 2:5-9

- “5. According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.
6. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;
7. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.
8. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.
9. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

As my friend and colleague Brian Huggett recognises in his volume on this psalm, the King of glory is Creator of all things and therefore all things, animate and inanimate, should, and will recognise and revere him and be “lifted up” in some manner when he comes to reign upon this earth. There is joy here in the entire creation, but there is also an awesome fearful recognition that everything on earth, physical and spiritual is changed also. See Isaiah 14:8, Isaiah 35:1, Isaiah 35:2, Isaiah 42:10, Isaiah 42:11, Isaiah 44:23, Isaiah 49:13; Psalm 65:13, Psalm 96:11-13, Psalm 98:7-9; Psalm 148:4-13.

APPLICATION

1. He is coming again and nothing will stop his progress towards this time. He will be the hope of the genuine believer, but will be mocked by the majority until he arrives. He will blast man’s fallen world and bring in his kingdom and there will be righteousness upon this earth. Let us sing this psalm and lift the roof locally, but also look forward to the Lord’s return. Let us not be attached to any building here, for all will be swept away by his coming.
2. Let us pray for the revival that every generation needs and let us pray passionately, for it is only in prayer that power will return to the local churches. I recall the dying words of C H Spurgeon, “Pray more, believe more, and so receive more”.

Psalm 24:8-10

“Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.”

REFLECTION

Who is the king of glory who will blow the gates away? He is the King of kings, the Lord of all lords, and he is coming to rule over this earth. His throne is forever and his return restores the earth to the glory that he intended and intends for it. Satan gained control of man and the earth only by sin and acceptance of his evil policy, but every time a person accepts the Lord the satanic hold is broken over them. When the last great revival breaks out on the earth and the Jewish people ask for their messiah to come back, the Lord’s return is powerful and breaks upon mankind, and he takes back this world fully and in glory. Revelation 19-20.

The gates of Jerusalem will be blown off their hinges, and the walls toppled, and the evil tribulational temple levelled by the last great earthquake. The very Mount of Olives is split in two for the believing remnant of Jewish fighters in Jerusalem to escape to the East to hide until the Lord blasts the last evil men from the city. Zechariah 14:1-5, Revelation 19. All the saved survivors of that last great day will be singing this psalm and the others on that great day. Amidst the ruins of mankind’s cities and in the wild places where they have hidden from Anti-Christ’s wrath, the saved will emerge singing these songs of glory.

APPLICATION

1. God’s great songs will be sung over the ruins of man’s kingdoms and mankind will see righteousness rule on the earth. Let us give the Lord the glory and celebrate his victory in advance this very day by singing these songs.

Psalm 25

The Cry of the Lord's People in Jerusalem as they Await His Second Advent

A Psalm of David.

"This is the first of the psalms, which is written in an alphabetical order, or in which the first word of every verse begins with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order, though it is not strictly and regularly observed." Gill

"One design of this mode of composition may have been to assist the memory; but it is probable that the prevailing reason was that it was regarded as a poetic beauty thus to arrange the letters of the alphabet. Such arts of poetry are common in all languages." Barnes

We all have the great 'enemy of our souls' to contend with (Luke 22:31; 2Corinthians 2:11), and the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (Galatians 5:16-25; 1John 2:16), but this psalm reflects an anticipation of a great victory moment that is well beyond the standard ones we can have daily. We may use this psalm every day to celebrate victory over the evil one and his viewpoint, but we need to see the greater prophetic day when the believers of Jerusalem fighting their last stand against Anti-Christ's forces of evil hold out against him and sing this psalm to strengthen themselves until the great earthquake splits the Mt of Olives and they can escape and welcome the Lord back on the other side of that then blasted hillside. Zechariah 13:8 – 14:7, Acts 1:9-12.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS – SATANIC ATTACK ON BELIEVERS

1. As believers we battle two enemies; the Old Sin Nature from within (Romans 7:18, 8:8, Galatians 5:16-19) and Satan without. (John 8:44, 1 John 3:8)
2. We must know what Satan is up to and learn his strategies so that we might be ready and alert. (2 Corinthians 2:11)
3. Satan's most potent attack is to install false pastor teachers within the church who teach just enough false doctrine to sidetrack foolish believers. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
4. Satan attacks believer's assurance of salvation.
5. He also accuses believers of sin both to God and to the believer in the form of guilt. (Revelation 12:9-10)
6. Satan wants us to trust our feelings; God wants us to trust His Word. (Romans 8:1)
7. Satan lures believers away from the Word (Genesis 3:4) whilst God wants believers stabilised upon His Word. (Isaiah 26:3)
8. Satan hinders believers from doing the geographical and operational will of God.
9. Satan will do all he can to hinder the believer's growth: (2 Peter 5:18)
 - a) by getting the believer's eyes off Christ and onto self, others or circumstances
 - b) by encouraging lust for material things over spiritual growth
 - c) by encouraging mental attitude sins.
10. Satan is the author of sin and the founder of fear. We are not called to fear but to faith. (2 Timothy 1:7)

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH – OVERCOMING BY FAITH

1. By faith learn to accept conditions as God's will for life and be thankful - Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 5:18

2. By faith maintain fellowship with God, walking in the light - 1 John 1:7
3. By faith consistently day by day examine your conduct, confessing all known sins - 1 Corinthians 11:28, 31 1 John 1:9
4. By faith receive the Word of God daily as being more necessary than daily food. - Matthew 4:4; 5:6, 2 Peter 3:18
5. By faith approach the throne of grace boldly in every case of need, requesting aid, casting every care on Him. - Hebrews 4:15-16; 1 Peter 5:7
6. By faith resist the attempts of Satan and he will flee from you. - Ephesians 6:10-13, 1 Peter 5:8
7. By faith maintain the habit of thinking and meditating on spiritual values and priorities - Philippians 4:6-9
8. Walk by faith and not by sight - 2 Corinthians 5:7

Psalm 25:1-2

“Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.”

REFLECTION

These verses have been my song and prayer as I have walked through the deep valley of pressure over recent months. I have seen and felt the deep fear that co-exists with faith and doesn't interfere with obedience to the Lord's will and purpose for our life, but grips the soul at times. This is the deep fear, but more sadness, that all the physical things will be lost around you, and that all that is familiar will be lost to you, but that the Lord will still be with you. It is the sadness of the soldier in combat as he walks through an increasing wasteland and knows that he is following the right and the only true orders, but sees such waste and loss that sadness overwhelms at times. Psalm 86:4-7, 146:1-5.

In the midst of loss and changed circumstances we cry to the Lord alone, for we see that the Lord alone can deliver in a way that honours his holy name and lifts us up to the place of service and power. It is our soul and body that needs lifting up in these terrible times of testing and battle against evil strongholds. We get depressed (pressed down) by the power of the enemy at times, but if David is our mentor we focus upon the things he does here. The soldier is called to focus upon the Lord his Commanding Officer, not the enemy (for they are to be knocked over). The soldier has one fear, and that is always looking foolish and being ashamed of his performance in the eyes of his Commander. Psalm 34:8-9, 37:39-40, 71:1-2.

As I have faced the potential loss of every physical thing I own for over eleven hard years now, I have felt David's anguish here properly for the first time in my life and understood his words and the passionate desire of his heart, and it has become truly mine in this extreme. It is one thing to know that the “cities of man shall fall”, Revelation 16:19, but it is quite another thing to cast away confidence and trust for older years in money and property, and rest upon the Lord's provision alone for your frail years. As we face the Lord's present and future battles that we are called to fight, let us focus upon Him as David does here and trust Him alone to bring victory to us, and depend upon his power to deny the enemy any victory celebration over our heads.

APPLICATION

1. There is hope for victory in the Lord alone, and so let us depend upon our Commanding Officer to fight our battles on our behalf, for that is his promise to us as his soldiers. Let us look to Him to bring victory.
2. Let us be challenged to get our eyes off the physical things that the “retirement commissioners” of our world call us to think upon, but let us rather focus upon the work of the Lord and “just do it” as unto Him, for in obedient service there is the path forward for us.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

FEAR

Psalm 25:3

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

REFLECTION

"Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed." This same passionate trust is seen in Isaiah 40:31, *"But they that wait (qavah) upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint"* (see also Psalm 25:5, Psalm 27:14, Psalm 40:1, Isaiah 26:3-4, 49:23, 64:6).

This prayer is David's daily cry as he faces great evils in attacks upon his kingdom by satanic forces from all sides, and for the defenders of Jerusalem in the last days of the Great Tribulation this prayer will be their daily cry also, but also for ourselves as we face great pressures, we also are entitled and encouraged to shout these words aloud. It is right and proper that the satanic forces we stand against in Jesus name have no opportunity to celebrate any victories over us, and in recent days I have seriously gone on the "offensive" in prayer to claim this verse, that the enemies might be defeated and brought to their knees, that grace may then be seen and accepted.

Deceit and treachery has always been the satanic methodology and his hatred against us is to be remembered. John 15:18-27. The Holy Spirit is the "comforter" in this context, for he comforts us in our distress as we face such evil malice and his power, with the Lord's, ensures victory over evil forces and shame for them, but not for those who stand with the Lord. We wait upon the Lord for his power to be revealed. Psalm 27:14, 33:20, 37:34, 40:1-3.

APPLICATION

1. Let the following be our daily prayers. "Lord, let us not be ashamed in the eyes of the enemy. Lord deliver us as we stand for truth against the evil forces of this world. Lord let us see your victory in our circumstances and let us see your salvation upon your people."

2. "Lord do not give any evil people the opportunity to bring victory against us and celebrate such things over us. We have no hope in anything other than you Lord, come to our aid in a way that brings glory and honour to your holy name." In the Great Tribulation period these prayers will be answered by the Second Advent, but only for all who are obedient right until the every end. That is our challenge today. "Lord strengthen us to be obedient and strong in your Holy Spirit's power and in the truth of your Holy Word until the end of our short walk through space and time".

Psalm 25:4-5

"Show me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day."

REFLECTION

As we face the malice filled enemy forces that are ranged against us at times we must draw strength from the Lord's holy Word, and from the certainty that we are on the right path at this point. We must walk in the right place, under the Lord's direct orders, in order to claim the Lord's provisions. We are called to fight the battles we are called to fight, not other people's battles! Each of us has a place to stand on the battlefield of the Angelic Conflict, and so let us find our place and stand and fight there. Ephesians 6:10-18.

It is the Lord's "ways and path" alone that give security and stability as we advance, and we must not be guilty of "presumption" and "step out in faith" when such steps are foolishness. I have done this in the past and great financial loss has been the result, and I kidded myself that my "heart was in the right place", but if I overstepped the Lord's leading then my body was not in the right place, and that is disaster! Let us be as cautious as the psalmist is here and as the defenders of Jerusalem will need to be in those last terrible days. The Lord's will or nothing! Psalm 119:25-28.

Note David's prayer here in verse five; "on thee I wait all day long". David seeks the Lord's clear direction and waits for it until it comes. I have sat and waited and then been like King Saul and usurped the will of the Lord and stepped out, and I was wrong 100%. If we are unsure we must wait upon the Lord until we are and trust in his deliverance to achieve the things we need. It is his battlefield, and we are his soldiers, under his orders, and we wait until we receive new ones, and focus upon completing the ones we have.

Psalm 143:4-12

"4. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.

5. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.

6. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsts after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.

7. Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit fails: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

8. Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

9. Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.

10. Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

11. Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

12. And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant."

APPLICATION

1. These words are my prayer this morning under great pressures, and I affirm aloud that my prayer will be answered with the same certainty that David was answered, and the believers of the Great Tribulation will be answered, for we serve the same God and his character is holy and sure.
2. There is no point in advancing into any work or way unless the Lord opens the door and we have his clear direction in all things. We seek his path and power and the fellowship of his person. We are called to plough the furrow of his calling, not another man's field. Let us seek the Lord's path alone for our lives.

DOCTRINE**CHURCH – PASTORAL AUTHORITY****Psalm 25:6**

“Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old.”

REFLECTION

We speak of “boldly approaching the throne of grace” today, taking our lead from the author of Hebrews. Hebrews 4:16. This verse of the Psalms is a reminder that 1000 years before Hebrews was written the throne of God was still known as the “throne of grace”, and it reminds us that the whole sacrificial system of Israel spoke of God's grace, not ever legalism. God's revelation was perverted into a legalistic system, but it was always different, and pointed to grace, mercy, and truth.

The Lord's loving tender mercies, and his great and abundant kindness towards mankind is the consistent message of the scriptures from the Garden of Eden to the last book of the New Testament written, the Gospel of John and its commentary the First Letter of John. Psalm 98:1-3, 106:45, 136:23. From “oldest times” the mercy of the Lord “endures forever”.

APPLICATION

1. God is merciful and man needs to know that wonderful fact, for we all stand in need of mercy and grace. Let us trumpet aloud the grace and mercy of the God who developed the plan of the Cross.
2. Let us always remember that the Lord deals with us in mercy, not judgment, for through confession we are forgiven and cleansed, and since David's day that could be celebrated with Psalm 103:10-17.

DOCTRINE**GRACE****Psalm 25:7**

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

REFLECTION

Hopefully we are “growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord”, 2 Peter 3:18, and so the “sins of our immaturity” are the ones whose guilt we need to deal with. Sadly many never learn from their experiences and so they repeat the same sin again and again in life. 2 Timothy 3:7.

David had grown up, and except for his great sin with Bathsheba, he grew in grace and mercy before the Lord. His life however is a warning about not resting on one's laurels and considering yourself above temptation. David fell because he was where he should not have been, and then he lusted and did not walk away, but sought to meet his lust. Once on the slippery slope of sin he kept sliding. 2 Samuel 11:1ff.

The great thing about God is that, unlike most people, he does not “keep accounts” of things forgiven and run a “credit list”. When God forgives we are forgiven by grace and mercy and the sins are remembered no more. Psalm 103:10-17. We may feel guilt and wonder at times whether we have been forgiven, but if the sin is confessed and forsaken, then we are forgiven. The Lord recalls them no more, and sees us as a blood covered saint, not a dirty rotten scoundrel!

APPLICATION

1. We are not seen as sinners, but as God's family through the sacrifice of Christ for us. Let us not see ourselves as the pagans see themselves, but as God sees us. Forgiven by God is forgiven, and so let us rejoice in his grace, not sloth about in our time wasting guilt.
2. Let us get a really powerful grasp of forgiveness, for it is the heart of the Gospel and of our eternal security.

DOCTRINE

JUSTICE

Psalm 25:8

“Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.”

REFLECTION

The Lord's holy character is perfectly dependable in all things relating to his dealings with his children, for he will always act in accordance with his holy character. What this means for the believer is absolute faith is possible in every situation we find ourselves in while filled with the Holy Spirit. If we are Holy Spirit filled, with no unconfessed sin in our life, we can claim the mercy, grace, and “good and upright” nature of God to assist us.

We are always under the “much more care” of the love, for if the Lord died for us while we were his enemies then we cannot expect less from him now as his friends! Read in sequence these four passages and see the logic of grace clearly expressed in the New Testament, backing David's words here 100%. Matthew 6:25-34, Romans 5:9-20, Hebrews 8:6, 9:14, 1 Peter 1:3-9.

The late Dr J Vernon McGee, one of my great mentors through his ministry “Thru the Bible Radio”, used to say of the word “therefore”, “If you find “therefore in the text, ask yourself what it's there for”. The “therefore” half way through this verse draws directly on the reference to the character of God. Because the character of God is so dependable the believer may draw conclusions in his own and other's lives. The first is as we have seen in earlier verses, safety, the second is eternal security, and the third is educational and personal development through the direct teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. John 14:16-26, 15:26-27, 16:7-15.

God will always direct the humble and sincere soul in the path they should walk, for the Father's Plan exists for every believer and is always available to be used. Psalm 139:1-3, 142:1-3, Proverbs 4:14-18. The key issue for us is humility and patient obedience to what has been revealed, and as we walk forwards, the Lord will direct our paths forward further.

APPLICATION

1. We rest upon the Plan of Almighty God for our security and direction in this brief life. Let us seek the true path of God for our life and accept no other alternative. We can rest in his holy and consistent goodness, uprightness, love and mercy towards us. Let us praise Him for his great love wherewith he has loved us. As we walk with God through the dark valleys of this present world we will discover that the nourishment of the fruit of the Holy Spirit will keep us on the path.

DOCTRINE

GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Psalm 25:9

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

REFLECTION

The meek of the earth are despised by the wealthy and powerful of this present cosmos system of Satan. We have the Lord's word on it that they will be blessed however, and not just blessed, but that they will inherit the earth. Matthew 5:3-12. The Lord identifies the characteristic “meekness” as clearly a genuine “fruit of the Holy Spirit”, and further, it is an indication that the Lord is dealing with that person in righteousness and truth. Psalm 23:4-6, Isaiah 61:1-3.

Psalm 76:7-12

“7 Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?

8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,

9 When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.

12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.”

God not only teaches the “meek”, He protects them and judges those who abuse them. Note carefully the biblical definition of “meekness”, for it is not weakness, but strength of character. It means to correctly assess your spiritual poverty and need for the Saviour's help. As believers recognise their absolute dependence upon the Lord and seek the Lord's path only, so they enter the category of “meek”, for it means simply those who are humbly and rightly related to the Almighty God and do not arrogantly claim or usurp his divine prerogatives. Meekness is a major characteristic of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is at the heart of all who walk rightly before the Lord, and so they are taught by the Holy Spirit all they need to know as they advance to serve Him in spirit and in truth.

Isaiah 11:1-5

“1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.”

Proverbs 3:1-8

“1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.”

APPLICATION

1. Meekness is our call, and it means to be rightly related to the character of the Lord our God as King and absolute Lord over all the details of daily life. Let us be humble before the Lord today and seek his direction, deliverance and destiny.

2. Let us be teachable this day, ready to learn all that the Lord has for us, so that we might serve the Lord as he directs us to.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE – HUMILITY**

Psalm 25:10

“All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.”

REFLECTION

Jesus said very directly to his disciples on his last night before the Cross, that if they wanted to be considered and treated as his “friends” that they would be obedient to his words. John 15:6-15. We show our right relationship with the Lord by our obedient lives before Him. If we do not “keep” his words and value his witness to the truth, then we certainly cannot claim to be his friends, or even his servants. There will be no mercy shown to those who have shown no mercy. James 2:13.

All the Lord’s paths are “mercy and truth”, and anyone claiming to speak in the Lord’s name is a fake if their lives are not characterised by mercy and truth! James 2:14-26. If the “Fruit of the Holy Spirit” is not present in a life, then that person is not God’s servant or son/daughter at all, but is a fake, a hypocrite, a servant of the enemy in disguise as a believer. Matthew 7:15-23.

APPLICATION

1. Do not be deceived by those who use the name of the Lord, and yet whose lives are characterised by evil works, for their works betray their origin and it is not God. The Lord’s words are harsh towards those who do not do the work of the Lord in mercy and truth.
2. Let us be assured that the paths of the Lord are pure and positive, and they are filled with mercy and truth, for all who keep the Lord’s Word and heed his heart for the lost and the spiritually needy.

DOCTRINES**MERCY****BIBLE – WORD OF GOD – HEBREWS 4:12****Psalm 25:11**

“For thy name’s sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.”

REFLECTION

There is only one ground on which we stand and ask for forgiveness, and that is the blood soaked ground of the Cross, and so let us stand upon that ground and serve the Lord in spirit and in truth. For the Lord’s name’s sake he will forgive, because his holy reputation depends upon it, for he has promised so to do. It is the holy Word of God that gives us our stability as we ask for forgiveness, for the Lord’s Character backs His Word and we can rest upon these two great pillars of truth; his Holy Character and his Holy Word. Psalm 51:1ff, 103:10-17, 1 John 1:5-2:2.

David’s sin with Bathsheba and Uriah was indeed “great”, but so was his arrogant numbering of the people later in his reign, 2 Samuel 11, 24. He had ignored the Lord’s Word, walked away from divine guidance, and then followed his Old Sin Nature. In both situations he was severely judged, and thoroughly repented, and so was completely restored. When God restores us after confession of sin we are completely restored; he does not just restore us to a lower level of operation and blessing. When the Holy Spirit returns to full power within it is “full power” within the person.

The only thing in this area of restoration that we must note at this point is relevant only for pastor-teachers and other authority gifts within the church. All sin that is confessed and forsaken is forgiven 100%, but it is clear from the qualifications for authority gifts in the church that certain patterns of sin must be taken very seriously by the church. It is clearly stated that certain great sins do disqualify from authority gift service, simply because they destroy the witness before the unbelievers and destroy trust amongst the Lord’s people. 1 Timothy 3:2-10, Titus 1:7-11.

APPLICATION

1. It is never about us; it is always about Him. It is not about the greatness of our sins, but the greatness of his grace to meet our sins. Let us boldly approach the throne of his grace, for we will always find grace and forgiveness to meet every need we have.

2. It does not matter what the sin, if a man or woman is still alive, and not placed under the “sin unto death”, then they can face it, forsake it and confess it to the Lord, then they can be 100% sure that they are forgiven of it. Even if the sin unto death is pronounced (as it was with Moses and Aaron) they are absolutely sure of God’s forgiveness. Some sins disqualify for pastoral roles, but they do not end service for the Lord, they just alter where it can be for a time.

Psalm 25:12-13

“What man is he that fears the LORD? Him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.”

REFLECTION

Forgiveness is freely available, but what is so wonderful will often be directly attacked by the great liar and perverter of the truth - Satan. God’s great grace and mercy has been abused by many satanic thinkers down the centuries who argue that we can therefore sin with impunity and always be forgiven, even perversely arguing that the more we sin the more grace we receive! Romans 5:20 – 6:5. Those who love the Lord hate sin and evil, for it placed the Lord on the Cross, and so all that is associated with sinful rebellion against the will of the Father is hated by the genuine believer.

The key to holy living and powerful witness has always been the “fear of the Lord”. This concept means that we have a reverence and holy devotion to the Lord’s will for us and the Lord’s purposes over our own. Everything on this earth is about our daily exercise of free will, and if we exercise it for the Lord, we enter into his paths for our life and the blessing associated with his service.

We must “choose” the path of life! There is always the Old Sin Nature and demonic alternative to every good choice.

Deuteronomy 30:11-20

“11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

Verse thirteen is not a “prosperity gospel” message as the modern preachers of that lie preach it, but it does teach God’s blessing upon his obedient people, now in time, later in time, and eternally. The place we dwell will be in “ease”, but note the biblical meaning of this term, for it does not mean a deck chair relaxing in the gentle sun. It is a word that takes us to the Lord’s words in Matthew 11:29-30. We are here to worship in the very presence of the enemy, and serve the Lord in Satan’s face, and the “ease” that David speaks of is the relaxed assurance of our resources and position in our work. “Ease” means we are relaxed in the battle, for we know that it is “his”, and that we are in his hands. 1 Samuel 17:47, Psalm 55:18, Ecclesiastes 9:11, Hosea 1:7.

Matthew 11:28-30

“28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

APPLICATION

1. God's yoke of service is "easy" in that it fits perfectly, and is exactly made for us to use as we plough the Lord's furrows in this life. We are here to work hard for the Lord and he has provided everything we need to do so. Let us seek the Lord's provisions today and focus all our energies forward to achieve his will in our life.
2. Be in holy reverent fear of the Lord and choose life every day by choosing the Lord's path of obedience through this life.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CAPACITY FOR LIFE

Psalm 25:14

"The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant."

REFLECTION

God's counsel is always open to those who reverence Him. There are no "secret" truths in the doctrines of the Word of God; all truths are open to those who reverence and love the Lord. John 18:20. The Lord had no "secret" truths, for all was transparent and clearly available to all who would come to him in spirit and in truth. John 4:24.

All that we need to know is available to us in and through our living fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. John 17:16-26. The Lord's last great prayer is fully answered and we are fully provided with all truth that we need to walk through this life and serve the Lord in holiness and focused love.

The Lord reveals his holy covenants to us in our living relationship with Him. God's solemn promises/covenants are openly announced in scripture, and because they rest upon his plan and person they are absolutely trustworthy. All is revealed to those who walk closely with the Lord, for the Lord shares all things with his beloved ones. There is no good thing hidden from those who serve and worship Him. Deuteronomy 30:11, Revelation 2:17.

APPLICATION

1. All we need to know will be revealed to us on our walk through time with the Lord. Let us draw closer to our saviour on our walk, for then we will be told all things that will help our walk.
2. We need the truth of God, for only in His Plan will we find the help we need to rest upon as we march through the battlefields of this present world. We will always be told all we "need to know" to fight in the Lord's Army. Draw closer in fellowship believer; the darker the days the closer to the one who is "The Light of the World" we need to be.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION – SIN: BARRIER BETWEEN MAN AND GOD

Psalm 25:15

"Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net."

REFLECTION

How focused are we upon the Lord each day? It is this that David challenges us with here. David's eyes were towards the Lord alone for direction and guidance in all matters, and his eyes were ever towards the Lord. It is this whole hearted devotion to the Lord's path that we seek if we love the Lord, for it is his eternal "well done" that we seek. Matthew 25:21-23.

Psalm 121:1-3

- "1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.
3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber."*

Psalm 124:4-8

- "4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:
5 Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
6 Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth."*

7 *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.*
 8 *Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth."*

The Lord alone can lift us out of dangers that we cannot even see in advance. We walk through a dangerous world, but with God we are protected and the Lord will move to protect, and "pluck us out of the midst of" traps, nets, and snares that are laid for us by evil men to destroy us. God's hand is over us in power to protect and lift us from the traps of evil. Our job is to walk closely with our God and trust Him, and obey his words to us. His job is our protection and He will always do it well. Mark 7:37.

Ecclesiastes 9:7-12

*"7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.
 8 Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.
 9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.
 10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.
 11 I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.
 12 For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."*

APPLICATION

1. Keep your eyes upon Jesus, think often of him and his work for you, and be stabilised in your mind in his person, plan and power.
2. The Lord will protect us and keep us from the plans of evil men. Trust, obey and keep focused upon Him.

DOCTRINES

GENESIS 1:1

PHILOSOPHY

Psalm 25:16

"Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I *am* desolate and afflicted."

REFLECTION

Psalm 69:14-20

*"14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.
 15 Let not the water flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.
 16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy loving kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.
 17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.
 18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.
 19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.
 20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none."*

Many foolishly believe that the great saints of old had no real worries, and that their lives were a series of triumphs with joy between the victories. Read the words of David for a short time and you see that he agonised at many times, and faced great depression and distress at significant times. He truly walked through dark valleys and knew "the valley of the shadow of death".

I say this many times in my preaching and teaching work, and I must keep on saying it, for it is God's truth and God's people need to be reminded of this truth. The truth I refer to is that spoken by the Lord. "In this world you will have trouble/tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." John 16:33, 1 Peter 1:5-9.

We will often find ourselves in desperate need of the Lord's loving kindness and tender mercies in the dark days we will experience on our walk through the evil paths of this present world. The Lord hears and answers our prayers for help on

the path that He has called us to walk. 1 Peter 5:5-10. He will never call us to walk a path that he has not already provided all assets to walk it.

All that we need is provided to achieve the plan, and it has been available since eternity past, for that is where the plan comes from. We will be alone at times, separated from fellowship of men, but we are never away from the Lord. Matthew 28:18-20. We are often desolate of human comfort on the battlefields of life, but we are never without hope in the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord has provided for us from eternity past, and his provision is always going to be perfect because he is perfect. The end is sure, and the provision of the Lord is always going to be perfect for us.
2. We will be desolate and afflicted to death at times in some paths we may be called to walk, but if we are alive we can be assured that the Lord has a plan and our challenge is to find it and walk it.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH – OVERCOMING BY FAITH

Psalm 25:17-18

“The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.”

REFLECTION

This is a man who is feeling overwhelmed, and remember this is the great psalmist of Israel. Draw strength and encouragement from these words, for the great and good are depressed and overwhelmed at times; it is a part of the human condition in the Post-Fall world we live in, and especially with the malice of the Devil towards us as God’s people. John 15:18ff.

We will find ourselves in “narrow” places at times, where the constraints of evil’s attack, financial pressures, hatred of the enemy, health crises, and many other circumstances can constrict and afflict us. The Lord will “bring us out of” our distresses. If we are on his path then anything happening is in his will, and we are to seek his path through and out the other side of them. The Lord will bring us “through them all”.

It is good to ask the Lord to “look upon our pain”, for the Lord wants us to take all things to him in prayer, and our pain is precious in his sight as we focus upon his will in the midst of it. He suffered for us and when we suffer we do not come to one who does not know far worse on our behalf. Hebrews 4:14-16, 7:26-27, 8:6ff. David also recognises that any unconfessed sin may be the cause of some pain and distress and so he deals with that issue to ensure there is nothing in his life that is creating any misery for himself. 1 John 1:5-10.

APPLICATION

1. When our troubles expand and overwhelm let us always take them to the Lord in prayer, for in Jesus there is hope and great confidence for assistance and strength.
2. The Lord will bring us through the deep waters that can flow over our heads at times. He will carry us through. Psalm 144:7, Jonah 2:5ff.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DOUBT

CHRISTIAN LIFE – STABILITY

Psalm 25:19

“Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.”

REFLECTION

The sheer malice of evil men and women will always surprise you when you lack any towards others. The hatred of the devil's children is deep and powerful towards all who stand for Jesus in this world. Some will mock with cruel and bitter words, but others will attack physically and tear and kill if they may. Great hatred is a sign of great evil in the soul and in our present world many allow their lives to be captured by the evil one. Psalm 56:2-4, 57:4, 138:7, 143:3, Luke 23:18-23.

When facing great satanic evils we can only cry out to the Lord to deliver us. I have gone through this over the last ten days with a vicious and hate filled assault upon me and my family but we have found great peace in casting their evils upon the Lord for his remedy and his defeating of the malice. The Lord always does such a better job of dealing with evil than we can ever do. Let us leave our case in the Lord's hands. He will deliver our body and soul.

APPLICATION

1. Hatred is a scary thing, and satanic fury at truth and goodness is always baffling to those who only seek the good of others, but it must be accepted as part of the devil's world. Deliberately cast evil men and women at the Lord's feet and ask Him to deal with them, for there is the opportunity then for their salvation.

2. Do not be rattled in your mind by evil's malice towards goodness; remember the Cross and the satanic fury of the people who cried out to have the Lord crucified. Rest in the Lord's protection and secure your mind in his character and plan.

Psalm 25:20-21

“O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.”

REFLECTION

It is not wrong, nor does it reflect lack of faith, to keep on asking the Lord for these things, as David does here. It has been my constant prayer through recent months for the Lord to keep my soul, and stabilise my mind. I have felt my sanity slipping under the pressures at times, but the Lord has stabilised me through the promises of his Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are kept as we walk with Him and allow the Holy Spirit to work within us, to convict of sin, stabilise our thinking in doctrines, and strengthen us for the fight.

The Lord will deliver us out of impossible situations, and he will not let the pagans embarrass the truth through our defeat. The Lord cannot let us be ashamed in Him, for then his name is a shame. The Lord's reputation rests upon his care of his people. The Lord's promises are to be rested upon here. Isaiah 26:3-4, 43:1-3, 46:4, 49:23, 64:6.

We put our trust in the Lord, and with absolute integrity we focus upon his way through the dark valleys of this present world. In our prayer for deliverance there is the commitment to walk in moral uprightness and in moral integrity. There is no answer to any prayer for those who harbour and nurture any secret sins that they would rather have at the centre of their life than have the Lord's presence. 2 Corinthians 13:5, 1 John 1:5-10.

“I wait upon thee alone”. As we stand before the Lord in prayer it is vital that we “wait upon the Lord” and advance into the battlefield before us only with his clear orders to advance. Many a battle has been lost because troops committed to the fight without orders from their Commanding Officer. As I have already noted above in an earlier verse, I myself have suffered great financial loss because I committed to a course of action and stepped out in faith, but stepped out too far and without clear direction. I was wrong and great loss resulted. Only the Lord can rescue me and set the losses right, and I believe he will, but the lesson has been a sorely distressing one. Psalm 27:14, 37:7, 62:5, Proverbs 20:22, Micah 7:7.

APPLICATION

1. The just man shall live by his faith. Habakkuk 2:4. It is resting our lives in the Lord's arms that keeps us safe and secure in this world. Let us trust and obey Him in all things.
2. Pour out your deep distress to the Lord every day, and ask him to rescue you and deliver you from any embarrassment and shame that might come upon his holy name in your distress.

Psalm 25:22

“Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.”

REFLECTION

Old tricky Jacob became Israel by grace, through faith. We become the “princes of God” by his grace through our faith in and obedience to his holy Word. We will be redeemed out of all tribulations by the work of God on our behalf. We are His, having been bought with the price of the precious blood of Jesus shed on our behalf. 1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23, 1 Peter 1:18-25.

The Lord redeems his people. His reputation depends upon his work with, for, and through his people.

APPLICATION

1. Let us trust the Lord, for his love never fails us, and his care never deserts us. We are His!

Bibliography:

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