

**EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**



**PSALMS 120 - 134**  
**The Songs of Degrees**  
**(The Deuteronomy Psalms)**

**BY**

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**[BOOK 49-M]**

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### **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 (1 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 (1 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 (1 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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**PSALMS SECTION FIVE****THE DEUTERONOMY PSALMS – PSALMS 120 - 134****INTRODUCTION**

Psalms 120 – 134 have been called the “Little Psalter”, as they are a little sub-set of the psalms that form a distinct “book” within the Deuteronomy Section. They are also referred to as the “songs of degrees”, or literally from their Hebrew title, the “songs of ascent/elevation”. They are grouped by the editor of the Psalms into five groups of three psalms each. In four groups there is a Psalm assigned to David, and in the fifth one assigned to Solomon.

There is an apparent pattern to these author assigned psalms. David’s psalm is the last of group one, the central one of group two, Solomon’s psalm is the central one of group three, David’s is last in group four, and then the central one of the last group. What the pattern means is a matter of debate, but there is a pattern that indicates these psalms have been gathered early for a specific purpose at one time.

They are Psalms clearly assigned for Temple worship, and it appears that it is the first great Temple of Solomon for which they were written, and so this “Little Psalter” may have been a specific small song book from Solomon’s Temple for the priest’s and people’s use in services. They are songs that recognise the presence of an enemy to true worship, but the enemy is left vague. This is helpful for all ages of mankind upon the earth, because even in the Millennial Kingdom there is sin, and there are negative people over all periods of time. Zechariah 14:17-19.

We must remember that even though Satan is bound in the Millennial Kingdom his presence still casts a shadow through that time, for those who are not centred in their worship will finally be deceived, misled, and destroyed by Satan at the end of that time, when he is released to sift surviving mankind’s volition. Through the Millennial Kingdom the enemy of man is still referred to as a warning to all the peoples of the then perfect earth of what will unfold in the end, so that none might be without excuse when they follow the evil one. Revelation 20:7-15.

These Psalms, like many other passages in the scripture are to be central for doctrinal teaching in the Millennial Kingdom. They all have relevance today as part of our own worship, but they will truly come into their own in that marvellous future time. In such an amazing time, with Jesus on his throne, plenty and blessing is universal for mankind, but prosperity can indeed be the greatest test we all face in time.

These psalms sing of the great blessings of this period, and the blessings that we at times enjoy even today, but they call us to a simple and profound trust in the Lord, not in the things He gives us. No matter what we are given by the Lord by way of material blessing, we are to focus upon the Lord, not the material things. It is being Christ centred that stabilises us, not being centred on things, no matter how wonderful they are.

Even in perfect environment people will face distressing things at times, but they will have the Lord to directly appeal to, just as we do in prayer today. These psalms to us are a perfect song book for daily life in prayer in a still fallen world, and that will continue to be the case until the end of time for God’s people. In all ages upon this earth we face troubles as a result of The Fall, and even in perfect environment there will be troubles for people to face.

Even when they are not facing wars and major troubles there is great value in the people of that Millennial day remembering the worst of the days of the fallen earth, for in doing that they centre themselves in their contemplation of the wonderful things the Lord is doing for them upon the earth in that time. When we look back and recall the Lord’s deliverance in the past, we are encouraged in the present and made more thankful and confident in our Lord.

The explanations of the meaning of the phrase “songs of degrees” have been many and various. The most likely reference here is that this refers in some way to the broad stairs of the Temple, and that these psalms were to be sung by priests and people when they ascended the stairs to the great public court of the Temple. They form a summary of the battles for the mind of man through the centuries before the Lord’s victory, and so recall the victory of faith over fear through the ages.

One intriguing explanation has been offered regarding these psalms, that they relate to the ten degrees that the sundial went backwards in the reign of Hezekiah as a sign from the Lord of the healing of Hezekiah, the coming Messiah, and the final deliverance for Israel. Isaiah 38:20. He had fifteen years also added to his life as a part of this divine sign. This is interesting, but has more recent support for it as a theory rather than ancient testimony. Many date the collection of these psalms together into this order to the great revival of King Hezekiah’s day under Isaiah, and record that the king may be the author of the ten anonymous psalms in gratitude for the divine sign and his divinely anointed healing.

It is all interesting, but there is nothing definite about these things. These psalms remain however an amazing sub-group in the Deuteronomy section of worship psalms.

**PSALMS 120****PSALMS 120: 1-7**

- 1** In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.  
**2** Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.  
**3** What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?  
**4** Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.  
**5** Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!  
**6** My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.  
**7** I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.

**REFLECTION****1 In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.**

The psalmist is speaking from the midst of great distress and trouble. Neurosis invents troubles where none truly exist, but the psalmist faces great troubles that are real and pressing in upon him. Many believers can get through the greatest part of their life without troubles. They are born into a wonderful, loving family, and have education, wealth, loved ones, and jobs through life. Such people are not any more or less spiritual than their fellow church members; it is just that their called path through this life may be smoother than others are called to walk.

The test of prosperity and blessing is at times however even greater than the tests associated with poverty, disease, and privation. The tests associated with great wealth centre round the issue of soul trust and dependence; the wealthy and successful person may grow lukewarm towards the Lord. Their spiritual ardour, and therefore their spiritual blessing, may drop away over time, distracted and buried by the things of this world. Luke 8:4-15, 2 Timothy 4:10, Revelation 3:15-22.

The great challenge for the prosperous people of the Millennial Kingdom will be the same as that of the wealthy and prosperous believer today. Will they keep focused upon the Lord in praise, thankfulness, service, and worship, or will they be distracted by things, and open themselves to envy, jealousy, and the associated sins of the tongue? Whatever the cause of distress, there is only one proper place to take our distress, and that is to the Lord directly by prayer.

The challenge for the believer, who is the victim of sins of the tongue, or any other malicious acts, is to take their problems to the Lord and leave them there, confident of the Lord's answers to them. When we are in distress in any age of man, we are urged to call out to the Lord, for He hears our cry and answers our prayers. Jonah 2:2-8, Hebrews 5:7-10, 1 Peter 5:5-9.

- 2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.**  
**3 What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?**

When we face assault by those who lie about us it is a difficult thing to deal with. The more loudly we may protest our innocence the more we may appear to be "crazy people" and therefore guilty in other people's eyes. If we say or do nothing however people may believe the lies are true also. Lies told about us create a real problem for us. When lied about the first call for the believer is not to be to their lawyer, but to their Lord. The Lord alone can deliver us from lying tongues.

Like most in pastoral work I have experienced a couple of severe verbal lying attacks by false brethren. It is of interest to note that I have never been attacked by unbelievers in such a manner, but by false ministers and false believers. Religion is the enemy of the truth, and RELIGION remains the Devil's main tool for attack on genuine GRACE based FAITH. It was religious people who crucified the Lord and religious people today will be your main opponents if you stand for the truth.

The total frustration of the psalmist towards the false accuser is expressed well in verse three, for it is difficult to think of anything to do with those who spread lies and delight in falsehood. Do you cut the tongue out of such people so they cannot spread lies? That was the method in the Middle Ages, but such barbarism did nothing to stop the spread of lies and slander. We must win the battle against the desire for revenge.

We are called to stand for truth, honesty, integrity and love, but there will always be those who, like Satan himself, are focused upon themselves and only concern themselves with personal gain and fame. Such people may indeed do very well in their brief life in time, but they die badly and face their eternal doom in terror. Matthew 5:21-30, 16:24-26, 23:23-33, Luke 16:23-31. What will be done with the lying tongue then? Unless there is REPENTANCE the lying tongue and its owner will face Hell at death and then the Lake of Fire for eternity. Refer to the BTB study HELL AND HADES, and GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT.

- 4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.**  
**5 Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!**

There is some question as to whether the sharp arrows and burning coals of verse four are a reference to the gossip and lying words of those who have verbally assaulted the psalmist, or are they further attacks by evil men and women? Other references to these things are found in Psalms 57:4, 59:7, Proverbs 11:9, 12:18, 16:27, 18:8, 21. From this literary context the meaning of our present psalm is likely to be related to the further sins of the tongue that the evil people are venting towards the psalmist.

The reference to Kedar (the present United Arab Emirates) and to Mesech (either one of the cities of modern Turkey or southern Ukraine) is a matter of conjecture still. It may be references to places of refuge, but also places of pogroms and pressures, where malicious gossip against Israel and her peoples have been serious in times past. It may be that both these areas will be centres of intrigue through until the end, and even may be so in the Millennium.

The Bible makes it clear that the last great rebellion led by Satan begins in the Ukraine and Russian areas. Revelation 20:7-15. Other passages make it clear that the "tents of Kedar" are places of refuge in the Great Tribulation period for Israelites. Only time will make this verse clear in its MILLENNIAL KINGDOM meaning, but if it does have prophetic significance and point towards the dangers of these places, it means the people there have 1000 years of warning to walk closely with the Lord, and so are without any excuse if they join Satan in the end.

**6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.  
7 I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.**

The history of the wandering Jewish people has been the history of these verses. They have sought for a place of safety but often found persecution and distress. This has certainly been the problem through the years in the old Russian Empire (Gog, Magog, Meshech, Tubal), and through the Middle East. The people of the Lord have always been in situations where persecution could break out suddenly at any time and place, and this remains the truth today.

The Millennial Kingdom begins with believers only entering it, but over the later centuries many generations are born into the world, and it is amongst these that sin and evil can get established again, and then be "sifted" by Satan's last great rebellion before the Great White Throne Judgement ends time and the saved enter eternity. Revelation 21-22.

It is an incredible thing that people can turn away from perfect environment and the rulership of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth and turn to rebellion, and yet it is what FREE WILL involves; people can reject their creator and saviour and be totally self centred. Many people do actually "hate peace", and hate goodness, and if we do not recognise that fact then those people will do serious harm to us. Whatever others do and think, the challenge for every believer of every time period in history remains the same. We are challenged to stand for the Lord and His standards and values. Ephesians 6:11-14, 1 Thessalonians 3:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

Whether we are in the majority or the minority our challenge is to serve the Lord whatever the result for us amongst our peers. God seeks us to stand for Him and for the truth, and at the end of the Millennial Kingdom there will be the great sifting of the peoples of the earth into those who stand for the Lord and those who go after Satan. This remains the great divide between all peoples through time, and once the final judgement occurs that issue is laid to rest forever, as sin and death are then cast into the lake of Fire with the author of them both. We all pray with John the Apostle, "Roll on that day Lord!" Revelation 22:20.

### **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. When we face lying tongues, the only way to deal with them is through prayer and honest living. We cannot silence lies by cunning, but only by truth over time, and the Lord does such a better job of eliminating evil people than we can ever do. Let us cast our cares upon Him, for He truly does care for us.
2. The saddest part of the Free Will of mankind is that some will exercise it for evil. We cannot change that fact, but we can do everything possible to give that person no excuse for their evil towards us. Let us focus upon the will of the Lord for ourselves and live as He has called us to live, and recognise the fruits of evil and keep ourselves safe from them. Let us not tire in doing good.

### **DOCTRINES**

**RELIGION**

**GRACE**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – REPENTANCE**

**HELL AND HADES**

**JUDGEMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE**

**GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – FREE WILL**

## **PSALMS 121**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This psalm has very special significance to me as a retired Naval Reserve Officer, with my father being a Naval Petty Officer of WW II. This is a Psalm that was greatly loved by Naval Padres of WW II, and many of the men in action would recite it by heart as shells and bullets flew overhead and kamikaze bombers attacked their ships. My father and mother both passed away peacefully in late July and early August of this year 2009 at age 90 and 89; both resting in the Lord Jesus. My father in his last week of life recited this psalm to the visiting minister from his church and brought joy to her and peace to him self. Even though heart disease related dementia had affected his short term memory he was able to dig deeply into his soul and draw comfort from the Word of God and this psalm in particular.

It is a psalm about “the keeping God”; the one who keeps our soul in distress and delivers us in His mighty name. The evil attacks of the Assyrian Rabshakeh against the government of Judah may be the source of this psalm, and we may be reading King Hezekiah’s response to the evil things he said to the people hold up behind the besieged walls of Jerusalem. 2 Kings 18:17-37, 2 Chronicles 32:9-19, Isaiah 36:4 - 37:20.

The power of believing FAITH meets the brute force of a FEAR using evil empire, and faith wins. The confrontation between the two leaders over the Valley of the Kidron that day was a dramatic example of the confrontations that occur for many of us each and every day. We are often challenged by events and temptations to select which path we will walk this day; the “narrow way” of faith, or the “broad way” of fear or its sister escapism, that leads to death and destruction.

The psalmist calls us to stand in faith in the plan, power, and purpose of God for our life. If we have been led into a place of testing, then it is for our blessing, not our cursing. If we have been led into a place of discipline, it is for our repentance, and that will immediately turn cursing into blessing, and fear into the hope of deliverance. Hebrews 12:4-15. If we are still alive there is hope for us and the possibility of further work to be done. This psalm is a grounding psalm in adversity and pressure.

Now as a psalm of the Millennium that is a problem for some readers, for they say, “How can those people need such psalms in a perfect environment?” The answer is, firstly, there is still challenge and pressure at times even in perfect environment, but secondly they will face the last and greatest of Satanic attacks at the end of that period. At that time they need to have a psalm like this by heart in their soul, so that under the maximum pressures that come in that final satanic rebellion, they hold fast to their faith, as my father did in the last hard week of his debility before going to be with the Lord. Matthew 7:13-23, Revelation 20:7-12.

### **PSALMS 121:1-8**

- 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.**
- 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.**
- 5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.**
- 6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.**
- 7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.**
- 8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.**

### **REFLECTION**

- 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.**

Jerusalem is one of the few cities where the defences of the old citadel of the City of David were actually lower than the surrounding hills, so from the walls of the city you looked up to the Mount of Olives. The “Mount of Olives” is in fact a range of high hills that stretches south to Bethany. These are the “mountains” that David’s palace looked out onto.

It is significant that David speaks of looking up to these hills from where his help will come, for that range of hills is the one beloved of the Lord and his disciples, the place of his betrayal and capture, the place of his ascension into heaven, and the place where he will return to deliver the Jewish people at the end of the Great Tribulation period. Zechariah 14:4ff, Matthew 24:3, Luke 24:51, John 8:1, Acts 1:6-12.

When we face troubles, testing, temptation, and pressures from illness or assaults we need to ground ourselves in the power that is greater than that associated with our present difficulties. When we face trouble we face our limits as men and women who are presently restricted by our space and time based universe. We need to ground ourselves in something far more substantial than what surrounds us.

The only power we can find any hope in is the power of God who made the space-time universe and has a better one ready to replace it already. God is the creator of the heavens and the earth and has the alternative already ready for launch. John the Apostle saw it and records his first impressions in Revelation 21-22. Our help comes from the Lord,

and if it comes from the one who made the entire universe, and has already made another, then we are in secure hands! Deuteronomy 33:27-29, Psalms 46:1-3, 124:8, 146:3-6, Isaiah 40:28-31, 41:10-14.

**3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.**

**4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.**

When we walk the path that God has set before us we walk securely. Our feet will not be moved from the path, nor will we be shaken in any way. Psalm 91:11-16. This earlier psalm is directly applicable to the Lord, but it also applies to us, as the servants and children of the Lord. We are under the "much more care" of the Lord! Luke 12:44-48, Romans 5:9-20, Hebrews 8:6, 9:14, 1 Peter 1:7. God gives us "more grace" in the sphere of which we can serve Him in the very presence of our enemies. Psalm 23:5-6, James 4:6.

God does not sleep, nor ignore our prayers. We are heard and answered. His holy and perfect character is at stake in this, for He has promised that He will hear and answer. We can rest on the fact that He will not be untrue to his own word to us. Psalms 86:7, 91:15, Isaiah 65:24, Jeremiah 33:3, 42:4, Ezekiel 14:4-7. We are kept in the power and plan of Almighty God, and no-one can pluck us from His hands. John 10:28-29. Refer to the BTB study ETERNAL SECURITY, BLESSED IN HEAVENLY PLACES, GIFTS RECEIVED AT SALVATION.

**5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.**

**6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.**

We are "kept" by the power of the Lord. He is our "keeper". There is no power that can break his protective shield over us, nor any power that can wrestle us from his firm grasp. We are kept while we walk with him, and we get into danger only as we wander away from his path and fellowship. The fellowship of the Lord is the place of safety for the believer. Refer to the BTB study SPIRITUALITY.

The person working or fighting in the Middle East had all parts of their body covered by clothing or armour except their right hand that held their sword or spear. On a hot day it was the place on their body that would get blistered by sun strike. The psalmist uses the lovely picture of the Lord sheltering and shading the right hand so that the believer can work for the Lord without fear of sunburn. The ancients believed in the radiation power of the sun and the moon and the psalmist records his affirmation of faith; nothing that comes by way of rays from the universe can harm the believer who walks with God.

This verse is not a verse to quote for not wearing sun protection today, but it reminds us that when we work for the Lord, we are to forget the dangers from the unseen things that might assault us, and simply do the work we are called to do, and fight the battles we are called to fight. We are to leave the outcome of all spiritual work in the Lord's hands and trust Him for our deliverance as we fight on.

Worrying about things we cannot control is a waste of time and yet we often waste hours each day worrying about things we cannot control. Jeremiah 1:17-19, Ezekiel 3:4-11. Let us do the job and not concern ourselves about danger. We are in the Lord's hands and we are to simply "armour up", Ephesians 6, draw the sword of the spirit, the Word of God, and prayerfully advance and use our sword with full effect upon all who stand against us. Refer to the BTB study GOD CARES FOR US, COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS, FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

**7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.**

**8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.**

God preserves his people from the assaults of evil forces. We all have the indwelling Holy Spirit, and a Guardian Angel assigned to us for protection against the unseen forces of the enemy. Let us rest in God's protective power, put on our spiritual armour, and stand against the evil one in the strength that God will give his obedient servants. Refer to the BTB studies on the HOLY SPIRIT and OBEDIENCE below.

The soul is safe with the Lord. "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world". 1 John 4:4. We resist the devil and he will flee from us! No spiritual believer need ever fear supernatural forces of evil. We stand in God's provisions against them. James 4:7-8, 1 Peter 5:5-11. We have ETERNAL SECURITY and temporal security while we walk with the Lord; as we come in and go out of our dwelling we are kept safe while we walk on God's Path for us in this life. Let us walk the path we are called to walk and fear not! The Lord will bring us through to eternity in joy. Proverbs 2:8, 3:1-7, James 4:13-16.

## **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. We are to look upwards for help, never around firstly. Men may assist us, but the Lord alone can deliver us and lift us up to the heavenlies and provide for us upon the earth. God is the creator of this present universe and the next one, so with our lives in his hands, we are held safe in the right place!

2. We are called to fight, to stand against evil powers, to encourage the brethren, and to preach and teach the truth. We are not called to worry about outcomes. Outcomes are in the Lord's hands and are to be left there. We have a battle to fight and that is all we are to focus upon, nothing else.



DOCTRINES

FEAR

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH

CHRISTIAN LIFE – ETERNAL SECURITY

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSED IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIFTS RECEIVED AT SALVATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY-CARNALITY

GOD – GOD CARES FOR US

GOD – COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS

GOD – FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

HOLY SPIRIT – BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

HOLY SPIRIT – COMFORTER

HOLY SPIRIT – FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

HOLY SPIRIT – OPERATION

HOLY SPIRIT – TEACHER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OBEDIENCE

**PSALMS 122****INTRODUCTION**

A passion for worship is a really important fruit of the Holy Spirit. A love of the church and the meeting with the Lord there is another fruit of the Holy Spirit's presence within a genuine believer. If you deliver me a man or woman who claims to be a believer but they do not love worship or meeting in the church, then I will show you either a carnal believer or a make believer! To love the Lord is to love the church service and to love worship. We may get side tracked at times from the worship of the Lord by a flat choir or soloist, or an annoying preacher, but we will not be side tracked for long, for a love of the Lord leads always to a love of worship. For ancient and future Israel that love of worship will be expressed upon the Temple Mount in the Temple of the Lord thereupon. This Psalm may be a psalm from the great revival led by Isaiah and the great Passover of Hezekiah as recorded in 2 Chronicles 30. Look at this passage and see the glory and joy of the people as they rediscover worship and are delivered by the Lord.

**PSALMS 122:1-9**

- 1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.**
- 2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.**
- 3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:**
- 4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.**
- 5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.**
- 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.**
- 7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.**
- 8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.**
- 9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.**

**REFLECTION**

- 1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.**
- 2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.**

It is the instant response that gives a person's passionate desires away; hesitation betrays a mixed attitude to a thing. The psalmist is happy to be asked to go into the Temple of the Lord. Psalms 42:4, 55:14, 63:1-4, 84:1-3. Having expressed ones personal preference to worship the Lord in the Temple the psalmist then speaks to all around him and invites them also to attend the worship.

It is another Fruit of the Holy Spirit to desire others to share the joy of the Lord in worship. Worship is not ever just enjoyed alone; for all believers want to share their worship with those they love. Isaiah 2:1-3, Jeremiah 31:3-6, 50:4-5, Micah 4:1-2, Zechariah 8:21-23, John 1:46. All the feet of the believers in that wonderful Millennial Kingdom day will stand within the gates of Jerusalem. Psalms 87:1-3.

- 3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:**
- 4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.**
- 5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.**

Verse three means that Jerusalem was built, and will be again, as a city built on what is called "interior defensive lines". It means that she is built in a compact manner that enables easy defence against an enemy. The present new city built by the Israelis has been built with this in mind, and that is crucial. This city will be fought over fiercely in the last days of the Great Tribulation period and the Jewish defenders will hold out only because its new sectors have been built for ease of defence. Two thirds of the city will fall but the last third will hold out until the Lord arrives and relieves the garrison dramatically. Zechariah 13:7 – 14:7. Refer to the BTB studies on PROPHECY, TRIBULATION. The Jewish people survive and from their numbers are the Millennial judges for the nations drawn.

Jerusalem will become the place that the tribes of Israel, and all the earth, will all go up to worship following the massive clean up of the debris of the battles of the Great Tribulation. The burying of the dead of the enemy armies will take seven months with men dedicated to the task for that entire period, and for years afterwards some will be dedicated to burying stray bones found. The total clean up will take several years, and the weapons abandoned will create fuel for the power generators of the land for seven years. Ezekiel 39:9-10, 23-29, Zechariah 14:8ff.

After the terrible persecutions of the Great Tribulation the governments of the earth are in disarray for their satanic leadership is all dead. The believers who have survived the great battles and the persecutions are said to "rule with Christ for the 1000 years". Revelation 20:4-5. The survivors are both Jewish and Non Jewish converts from the Great Tribulation years of the witnessing by the Lord's faithful witnesses of that time.

From amongst the survivors of the Jewish nation ("The Twelve Tribes" of Israel) judges are drawn to rule over disputes world wide. Some of us have been brought up to believe we will rule as Church Age believers but there is major doubt

over that. I am happy either way personally, and am content if I am in heaven waiting for the last judgement, wandering the created but temporary (only 1000 years to run) universe, or equally happy if I can serve upon the earth and see it transformed under the Lord's leadership.

Notice again, the "tribes" go up to Jerusalem. This is a reminder that the Lord has preserved the remnant of all his people. The ten northern tribes were not eliminated when they went into Assyrian, and later Babylonian Captivity. There are no "ten lost tribes" of Israel today. The "twelve tribes" are spoken of after the Exiles return in 535 BC from Babylon. Cyrus gave permission for all captives of the earlier empires to return to their homelands and it would appear many of the old northern tribes did return although they may have attached themselves to Judah or Benjamin as they were the two major surviving tribes.

The Lord himself and the early church Apostles spoke however of the "twelve tribes", not the "surviving three". Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:30, Acts 26:7, James 1:1. Remember, modern genome identification will allow exact identification of membership of the twelve tribes. During the Great Tribulation John speaks of members of each tribe being sealed by the Lord as evangelists. Revelation 7:5-8. He also speaks of the elders of Israel and the church seated on twenty four thrones; twelve for each group, although all seated are Israeli. As church members we must always remember this fact; we are led by twelve apostles who are all Jewish! Our blessing comes from Israel, Romans 9-11, Revelation 4:4-10, 5:8-14, 11:16, 19:4. Refer to the EBCWA Commentary on Romans and Revelation and study these passages.

**6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.  
7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.**

Even today we are urged to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem", and there is a promise of blessing for all who pray this way for this city. This will be the daily prayer of the people of the Millennium, but should be our own, that the city may prosper today and many might find faith in the true Messiah even now. Psalms 51:17-19, 137:6-7, John 17:21, Ephesians 4:1-6, 2 Thessalonians 3:16.

The Lord is the one bringing peace, and in that final day He will bring peace to Jerusalem and there will be peace then for the entire period of his rule until the releasing of Satan again. Revelation 20:4-11. During the Millennium there will be total peace and total prosperity for expanded Israel and its much expanded capital city. The heavenly Jerusalem that John sees as part of the new heavens and the new earth has no walls, so the reference in these verses is to the earthly Jerusalem during the Millennium. It remains however a bone fide prayer today to pray for this city and her people, that they might come to the Lord Jesus as their Messiah before having to face the Great Tribulation period.

Bible believing Christians today have mixed feelings towards the present return of the Jewish people to their homeland, for they are returning as spiritually "dead bones", and unless saved in these years and entering the Church, they will enter this final period of great destruction from which only a third will survive. There will be great glory yet in that city, but it goes through more pain than we can now imagine before its millennium of glory.

**8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.  
9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.**

For the sake of the people alive at the time the psalmist will pray for the peace of Jerusalem right as he writes these words, but because of the house of the Lord there he will always seek the good of that place. The Lord has his heart upon Jerusalem and upon that hill where the two great temples stood. The Lord's choice is still over that place today, and so let us join the psalmist and pray for the peace of Jerusalem and pray with thanksgiving for the things the Lord is yet to do from that blood soaked hill. Psalms 102:13-15, 137:5-6, Nehemiah 2:10-18, 4:14-18, 8:1-6.

## **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. A major fruit of the Holy Spirit is seen in the love of a believer for the things of God, the worship of God, and the place where that worship is offered up. Let us express openly our love for the Lord and his people and their gathering together. It is good to praise the Lord together.

2. We know from scripture what is to become of Jerusalem and the temple Mount. The Lord will return with triumph to that place and rule from that very hill over all the earth. There is great suffering to come to that city, but her people will look upon Him whom they pierced and be saved by Him. We can relax about the future, and so let us pray for the salvation of the Arab, Armenian, and Jewish people of that city today that they might be saved from the wrath that is to come before the day of the Lord's victory.

## **DOCTRINES**

**KINGDOM – MILLENNIAL KINGDOM**

**JUDGEMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE**

**PROPHECY – SEQUENCE OF END TIME EVENTS**

**TRIBULATION IN MATTHEW 24**

## **TRIBULATION SIGNS**

**PSALMS 123****INTRODUCTION**

This has been referred to as the psalm of the “uplifted eyes”. The troubles that the psalmist faces are left until the end, and that is right and proper in the psalm, for he begins where he should; with the character and wonder of God. This is the only place to deal with the contempt of man. The hardest thing to face if you have worked hard and been successful is the contempt towards you of men who are not worthy of you. We all have the kernel of narcissism within us, and when we are attacked by men or women we consider inferior, we can feel great anger and outrage. It is a spiritual challenge that is a big one for many. The only way we can deal with the assaults of pride and arrogance from others is to ensure their assaults do not trigger an equal arrogance/pride based response in ourselves. The psalmist sets our example of self control and God centeredness that is the only remedy to arrogance.

**PSALMS 123:1-4**

- 1 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.**  
**2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.**  
**3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.**  
**4 Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.**

**REFLECTION**

- 1 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.**  
**2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.**

Troubles are always a bad place to start a prayer; the right place to start a prayer is with the person, power, and plan of God. In these three things the answer to the problems we face is always to be found. The Lord is beyond us but his power is always available to us. The Lord is the creator of the heavens and the earth and so is in control of the heavens and the earth. It is vital for all believers as we face difficulties that we “raise up/lift up our eyes”.

When we face difficulty the tendency of human beings is to be “cast down” and get depressed. Rather than going down under pressures, the biblical believer is to lift up their eyes, even if their body is being pressed down by the things that are occurring. By looking up we get the perspective we need. When under pressure we are urged to think of the Lord and bring the Lord into the equation we cannot otherwise truly solve! 1 Peter 5:5-12.

The bond between a master and the servant was a strong one for the ancient world. The Jewish master had a moral and religious obligation to their servant to care for all their needs and the needs of their family. Exodus 21. Leviticus 25. The servant who wished to be treated well and receive their freedom with blessing would devote their waking hours to meeting the needs of their master, just as the master would meet the daily needs of the servant.

The image was a good one for the Lord’s care for the spiritual believer and the keenness of the spiritual believer to identify the best things to do to please the master. Do we look to the Lord’s will as closely as the servant would to their master? Do we look to the Lord and his will for us with the same fervency as we ought? Psalms 40:1-3, 119:122-128, 130:5-6, Lamentations 3:25-26.

- 3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.**  
**4 Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.**

The dominant thing we need as believers who sin and fail the Lord is mercy. It was our need as unbelievers, and it remains our need as believers, for we fail as often as we succeed in our walk through this life. The need for CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS remains constant through our life. We sin because we are the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve.

We all have our own OLD SIN NATURE with all its areas of strengths and areas of weakness. These are both our inherited weaknesses and our education and experience gained problems. Our Old Sin Nature may be strengthened through life in either polarity of it. Some people strengthen their area of strength and become very moralistic and legalistic in their thinking and behaviours as they grow older. Others feed their immorality and so become more and more perverted and depraved in their behaviours through their years. Romans 1:18-32.

The “filled with contempt” feeling is one that at a younger age I would not have experienced, but now in my early sixties I understand. Many people hate success and despise achievement, and it is not because they have not achieved anything. Often those who hate you most are the people who have nothing to fear from you. You are absolutely no threat to them, but yet they are obsessed with hating and destroying you and your reputation. It is staggering to me the extent of the hatred of some “carnal fools” within the church for others in ministry.

The Lord warned us of this, but it can still be a surprise at times. John 15:18-25, Hebrews 11:32-40, 12:1-3, 1 John 3:1, 13-14, 4:1-6. These are people who are often "at ease" in their wealth and power, and yet cannot stand anyone who they imagine threatens them. I have seen multi-millionaires fight legally and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to protect a few thousand that should really go to a poorer person, but they cannot let it go.

Where does this come from? The answer is that it comes from the pit of hell itself; these evil people prove by their hatred their origin in the family of Satan himself. Galatians 5:19-21. They are walking steadily towards the lake of fire, and yet they act as fools and squabble!

### **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. Let us be careful of our friends and associates, for if we fellowship with the wicked men of this world we will experience their hatred when we are successful. Evil cannot stand anything that threatens it and their imagination runs riot in this area. Let us be careful to check always for the fruit of evil in the lives of associates, for if they are evil they will do us severe harm when they can. Let us not die or suffer as fools, not spotting the evil that we should have.

2. When we face troubles let us spend more time looking up for our help than around to bemoan our problems. We need to look at our problems long enough to identify them for intelligent prayer, but not long enough to become depressed. Let us look up not around when under pressure, for the Lord is our help in times of pressure.

### **DOCTRINES**

#### **CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

#### **SIN – OLD SIN NATURE**

**PSALMS 124****INTRODUCTION**

This psalm is assigned to David and there is no reason to doubt this. It is a passionate psalm that remembers the great mercy the Lord has given the psalmist. He still feels the power of the dangers he had been in and the glory of the Lord's deliverance of him. It is a psalm that recalls an incident, or period of testing times, in David's life, and yet it will be sung in the wonderful days of the Millennial Kingdom, but remember that he is the king with the Lord at this time. Its presence here in the Psalter reminds us that spiritual growth does not depend only upon constant pressure upon us, but upon the application of faith to our experiences, be they prosperity or adversity.

The saints of the Millennium may not have the great pressures that David faced, but by singing of his life and learning from him and his faith, they can be strengthened, even though they do not need to walk his path. We learn and grow by the application of doctrine to experience. The experience can be our own, but it can even be remembered events of long ago. We can learn and grow through reflection upon our own and other people's life journey, but the reflection is accompanied by praise, worship, and affirmations of faith afresh. By learning from events in history we can avoid the pain of learning from our own misfortunes. All bible teaching gives people opportunity to learn from others experiences and to grow as they accept the truths and apply them into their daily life through praise and worship.

**PSALMS 124:1-8**

- 1 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say;**
- 2 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:**
- 3 Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:**
- 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.**

**REFLECTION**

- 1 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say;**
- 2 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:**

These two incomplete sentences bring vividly to mind for me a picture of the passionate king sitting and reflecting upon his past and the "close runs", and near disasters he has had through the past. These sentences are incomplete because of the pain and the passion felt. The dominant thought on the psalmist's mind is the fact that the Lord was for them; He was on Israel's side. He is overwhelmed by the intensity of the traumatic memory, when he thinks of the great perils and dangers, but also when he remembers that the only reason they have come through has been because of the Lord being with them.

I have found myself praying this sort of prayer over recent months and years. A time of eleven years of intense pressure is still not lifting from me, and as I reflect upon the situations I have been led through I lift my voice and have said again and again each day, "but for you Lord we were lost!" As I have gone for my daily exercise walk I have found myself saying again and again, "Only You Lord". When men and pressures rise against us, we depend upon the Lord our God alone. Psalms 27:1-2, 46:7-11, 118:6-7. The Psalms certainly provide the hymn book to sing praise to Him. The Lord is our God and our deliverer. Psalms 2:1-6, 56:1-4. Let us affirm these truths every day of our life.

- 3 Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:**
- 4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:**

The malice of the enemies is intense towards the believers through all of history. Satanic hatred is at a high level towards us as the followers of Jesus. Pause for a minute and realise why. Satan is condemned because he has refused to bow his knee to God, and it would appear that his argument to God is, that this was the way the Lord had made him, and so he cannot help it. How can God condemn Satan when He made him knowing he was going to rebel?

This is a good Calvinist theological argument, but it completely falls over if an inferior creature is made with FREE WILL and then some of that race turn to God and bow their knee. If an inferior creature can bow their knee, then Satan could have done the same. He hates us because we are the evidence for his prosecution. Refer back to the BTB study on the ANGELIC CONFLICT. Men and angels are judged by their WORKS. Revelation 20:11-15. If people or angels have not bowed their knee to the Lord, then it can only be because they believed they didn't need to, for they were perfect already. God gives all creatures the opportunity to prove that in the end. The Lord has stood with us against the hatred of Satan and his team of evil angels and men. Psalms 27:1-3, 35:25, 56:1-4.

David recalls that he felt like the troubles he faced were going over his head like a wave of the sea. He could not stand against it, for the tsunami of the hatred of evil swept over his body and soul. Feeling completely overwhelmed is something that many of us have felt as we get squashed by worry and distress. Jonah sums this up in his description of his literal drowning in the sea. Jonah 2:1-9.

Jeremiah also identifies the feelings of being totally crushed and as it were “eaten alive” by evil. Jeremiah 51:34-36. The feeling of the crushed believer under pressure is not just that they have had their body pressured, but that their very soul has been overwhelmed. We are overcomers through faith; the pressures that crush us will not stop our steady march forward to serve the Lord. Micah 7:7-8. Refer to the BTB study on DEPRESSION, OVERCOMER, OVERCOMING BY FAITH.

**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.**

There is a moment when you are under attack or pressure when you know the worst has passed. It is a vague sense of the coming victory and the cloud clearing above you. As you wait for the Lord’s deliverance there is that sense that the worst is over and the day of deliverance is about to dawn. At that moment the prayers of appeal to the Lord switch their emphasis and the praise of the Lord begins to dominate in the words of the saints.

All prayer is to be given with thanksgiving, but as we see the Lord’s work unfolding around us, we will find a shift in emphasis that is quite appropriate. While we feel totally overwhelmed we will be speaking of this to the Lord in our prayers, and praising His Holy Name as we do it, but when the light breaks in the bulk of our prayer is now transformed to praise, and the praises of the Lord fully break up the waters above us. We realise how close things were to be eaten alive by our enemies, and how easily the Lord could have given us over to the enemy who sought to tear us apart.

**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.**

It was as if the hunter of our soul had caught us in his evil net. Right at the last minute we feel the net break and we are free of the malice of the hunter. The escape is not just full and final, the very net is broken so that others cannot be caught in it. The Lord’s deliverance is often at the eleventh hour, but it is full and final deliverance. Psalms 25:15, 91:1-3, Proverbs 6:5. Jeremiah reflects that we are often caught in a net of our own making, and the Lord is right to catch us and bring us to our knees to deal with our sins, but He will always deliver us if we turn to Him. Jeremiah 5:25-29, 18:22-23, 2 Timothy 2:22-26.

We are escaped because we have turned to the one with the power to save us; we have turned to the creator of the universe. Once again we are encouraged as we reflect upon the graciousness of the Lord in these matters, for His powerful mercy is always more powerful than the malice of our enemies, and His mercy is always sufficient to meet the needs of our sins. Isaiah 37:15-21, 1 Peter 5:5-12.

## **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. Let the people of the Lord reflect more upon the Lord’s mercy towards us in times past, and by so doing they will stabilise themselves in the present and for the future. As we reflect we strengthen our soul, and it doesn’t matter whether we reflect upon our own past or a biblical character, the result through worship and thankfulness will be the same within. This is to be at the heart of all Bible study.

2. Praise is our weapon to break up the waves of trouble that sweep over our soul. It is praise and worship that breaks up the assaults of the enemy upon us. It is worship and praise that opens the door to blessing for us, and it is praise that celebrates the victory of the Lord for us.

3. The Lord’s mercy will always be sufficient to meet the needs of our walk through this life. The Lord has foreseen our needs and they are provided for from ETERNITY PAST. We are kept until ETERNITY FUTURE for the Lord is our helper and we need not worry about His being short of power and provision for us.

## **DOCTRINES**

**GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – FREE WILL**

**ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT**

**GOOD WORKS**

**DEPRESSION – PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH IT**

Proven Biblical techniques which you can use to successfully deal with depression in your life, REGARDLESS OF THE CAUSE:

**1. CONFESSION OF PERSONAL SIN**

Make it a spiritual habit to confess sins the moment that you become aware of them. This step toward recovery from depression is absolutely critical!! 1 John 1:9

**2. THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit fills you and controls your life when you have no unconfessed sin in your life. You can trust the Holy Spirit to reveal sin to you when you commit it, or even before. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is given in Galatians 5:22-23 it is: Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control. These 9 virtues replace depression

**3. LIVING IN THE WORD OF GOD:**

Make it a daily practice to read and study the Bible each and every day. By living in the Word of God you are constantly reminded of GOD'S viewpoint, of His Plan, of His provision, of His awareness of our spirit of heaviness; and we are reminded of what He wants to accomplish in us with the tests or trials that we are going through.

A Christian's response to the Word of God should be:

- [a] READ IT - Deuteronomy. 31:11; Isaiah. 34:16; Luke. 4:16; Ephesians. 3:4; Colossians. 3:16; 4:1; 1 Thessalonians. 5:27; 2 Timothy . 4:13; Revelation 1:3.
- [b] HEED IT - Psalm 119:9; 1 Timothy. 4:16.
- [c] SEED IT - Matthew. 28:19, 20.
- [d] DESIRE IT - 1 Peter. 2:2.
- [e] PREACH IT - 2 Timothy 4:2
- [f] RIGHTLY DIVIDE IT - 2 Timothy. 2:15.
- [g] LIVE BY IT - Matthew. 4:4
- [h] USE IT - Ephesians. 6:17.
- [i] SUFFER FOR IT, AND IF NEED BE, DIE FOR IT - Revelation 1:9; 6:9; 20:4.

THE CHILD OF GOD IS TO:-

- KNOW IT in his HEAD
- STOW IT in his HEART
- SHOW IT in his LIFE
- SOW IT in the WORLD:

Deuteronomy 4:1-10; 12:32; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 33:6; Proverbs 30:5, 6; Mark 4:24; Luke 8:12; John 12:48-50; Romans 8:7; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:1-4; Revelation 1:1-3; 20:12; 22:18; 19.

**4. APPLY THE PRINCIPLES OF GRACE:**

Depression is often caused by PEOPLE, and most of the time by people we cannot escape, or people we love, or people we cannot confront, or people we trust.

By applying the principles of grace we will develop the ability to look at people and see them as GOD sees them.

This includes the ability to let them live their lives as unto the Lord, and trusting God to make His way clear to them. This technique lets people make mistakes without your judging them. Matthew 7:1-5

**5. FOCUS ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:**

When we focus on Jesus Christ it helps to cure depression because it gets our eyes off our spouse, our children, our neighbours, our friends, ourselves and our problems. Hebrews 12:2

Instead, as we move through the day, we are thinking about the Lord Jesus Christ, His plan for our life, the Father's provision for each incident in our life, and His provision of wisdom for each decision we must make.

**6. TRUSTING AND APPLYING THE PROMISES OF GOD**

When we trust and use the promises of God we then enter into the "REST" phase of Christian living.

We need to have a good grasp of just who God is so that we will not hesitate to believe that He can do what He has promised to do. Hebrews 4:1-11 [see topic PROMISES]



We need to know Him as He reveals Himself in the Bible. We need to believe Him when He tells us what He will do for us. Cast your burden on the Lord because He really does care for you!! 1 Peter 5:7

**7. RELAX – TAKE IT EASY – BACK OFF AND LET GOD DO HIS WORK.**

A relaxed attitude is based on knowing God personally and intimately as His special child that you are. A relaxed attitude is one of the results of living in the Word of God, walking in fellowship with Him, trusting in and using His promises to you, and being focused on Jesus Christ.

If you are a Christian, YOU are His personal gift to His Son, who categorically stated that no one can ever snatch you out of His Father's hand, nor out of His John 10:27-29

You are personally being trained and groomed by God Himself to rule this entire universe with Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. God already sees you seated in heavenly places perfectly sanctified and glorified. See topic on ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD

To have the glory, you must also have some suffering for a little while on this earth. This is part of your training. See topic on CHRISTIAN LIFE - SUFFERING

**8. STRIVE FOR INNER HAPPINESS IN YOUR LIFE:**

Inner happiness is not possible for the Christian who is occupied solely with himself and his own needs. It is also not possible for the person who occupies himself solely with his own problems, his own circumstances and his own efforts.

Inner happiness is a state of happiness and joy based on knowing that God is everything He claims to be and that He can do ALL that He has promised. See topic on BEATITUDES

Inner happiness is the joy of living where every provision for physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being is being made by God in the life of a Christian who is walking in daily fellowship with Him.

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMER**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMING BY FAITH**

**CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER**

**MERCY**

**ETERNITY PAST**

**ETERNITY FUTURE**

## PSALMS 125

### INTRODUCTION

The strength that faith in the Living God gives to the believer is greater than anything Satan can launch against us. The Lord is truly our strength and our strong tower. We can cling to the promises of God's Word and be stabilised in the worst places. I give thanks as I write these words for all the greatness of God's grace and mercy towards me. This is the mental attitude that is to guide us through each day of our life, and the motivation to give the good news of the Gospel message to all others who need the same grace and mercy that saved us.

God's Word is as stable as God's character, and the believer can rest upon the PROMISES of the Word because of the stability of the character of the one who has made the promises. Let us praise the provisions of the Lord in hard places, and praise His Holy Name for His unchangeable power and person. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8, 13-15.

### PSALMS 125:1-5

- 1 They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.**
- 2 As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.**
- 3 For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.**
- 4 Do good, O LORD, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.**
- 5 As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.**

### REFLECTION

- 1 They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.**
- 2 As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.**

When we trust in the Lord we place our feet upon the ROCK that is Christ. We have stability because we are grounding ourselves in the eternal PLAN OF GOD, which is backed by the perfect and eternal CHARACTER OF GOD. The image of this is the rock of the Temple Mount itself. To be as stable as the Temple Mount brings in a number of elements to the analogy.

This is the mount from which the sacrifices were offered and so it is a mountain that speaks of the perfect provision of the Lord our God for our salvation. If we trust in the Lord for our salvation we trust and rest on the only ground that gives certainty. In this world there is no certainty except that we shall die and return to the dust from which we are made. In the battles of life there is no hope for us unless we rest in the Lord's power and protection and follow His Plan for our life.

When we seek to "make something" of our lives there is only one way we can achieve anything, and that is by basing all we do upon the person, plan and in the power of Almighty God. The Lord alone has the power to assist us to survive the battles we must fight on our journey through this life. The Plan of God for our life is the only one with God's "stamp of approval and power" upon it.

If we walk with God, doing what it is we are called to do, then and then alone, will we be successful. We stand upon the truth that is the God-Man Christ Jesus, and the "gates of hell" will not prevail against us! Our daily challenge is to stand upon the reality of the person and plan of the Lord. Matthew 16:16-18, John 3:15-16, 6:68. The only people who will "abide forever" are those who walk with God and serve the living God. Refer to the BTB study on ETERNAL LIFE.

Jerusalem is a mountain surrounded city. There are mountains all around it, and as they surround the city so the Lord's mighty presence surrounds the believers in the Lord. The stability of the mountains is like a powerful image of the immovable power of God. Deuteronomy 33:27-29, Psalms 34:7-11, 37:3-7, Isaiah 2:10-17, Zechariah 2:5, 12:10, 14:3ff.

The promise here is a "forever" promise. Israel has been hammered by her enemies at time, but she will not be destroyed until the Lord's time at the end of time, and Jerusalem will then be wound up with the entire earth. She alone will then be replaced as an eternal city. Jerusalem is the only eternal city, for it will exist in eternity in an even more glorious state! Isaiah 65:17-25, 66:22-24, Revelation 21:2ff. The description of the New Jerusalem is that of a space station; almost a planet, rather than a city of this age and universe. The Lord is around His people forever; we will never be out of the care and protection of the Lord our God. Matthew 28:18-20.

- 3 For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.**
- 4 Do good, O LORD, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.**

The rod of the wicked will always be out to try to beat the righteous but the Lord will protect his obedient people from angry retaliation towards the evil ones who assault us. There is an important principle here, and one that David had to learn from Abigail. 1 Samuel 25:26-34. David was entitled to feel aggrieved at the evil and arrogant Nabal, but in shedding blood he would have been guilty of a crime against God. The Lord was able to protect him and would do so, and David had to learn not to take the law into his own hands. We must be ready to “turn the other cheek”. Matthew 5:39, 44.

God wants us to come through this life without doing unrighteousness like the evil ones. He wants us to be pure as He is pure. He calls us to “be perfect, as your father in heaven is perfect”. Matthew 5:48. Our standards are not those of the pagans around us, and we are not to respond to them as they have acted towards us. We are to respond with God’s love being shown to those who hate us, not our own legitimate, but pointless, human anger at the injustice they do. We are not here upon the earth to bring the rule of justice and peace, but to save burning brands from the fire! Jude 20-25. The Lord will do good to us as we follow His path and fulfil our part in the plan. We can rest in the Lord’s willingness to “do good” to us, for God does nothing else.

**5 As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.**

Let us do good when we can, and do no evil, even if we have a good excuse to do so. We are to stand for goodness, and do goodness, and not turn aside from the path of the Lord onto the “broad way that leads to destruction”. Matthew 7:13ff. We are to stand fast in righteousness, living a Holy Spirit filled life, which is seeking the Lord’s path through each and every challenge we face. Psalms 40:4, Proverbs 1:10-19, 2:11-15. There is no peace for the wicked, and there is the certainty of God’s judgement. Isaiah 57:20-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Never envy the wicked, nor seek their rewards, for they are fleeing at best, and bitter in the end.

There is no hope for those who fight God and assault his precious people. Their doom is sealed unless they repent, and our role is to try to get them to see the truth before eternal night falls upon them. Proverbs 10:7, 28, 11:5-10, 21, 13:9, 15:29, 24:19. The doom of the persistently wicked is settled unless they repent, and the fate of Jerusalem is also settled in the Plan of God. Jerusalem will survive, and battered and bombed she will enter into the Millennium and become the capital city of the world. There will be peace in that city and the expanded land of Israel for 1000 years!

## **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. It is all too easy to give in to the normal human anger at injustice that can lead us to commit a criminal act for a good reason. It is easy to assault an evil man, and very easy to kill the evil and wicked when we have an opportunity, but we are called to offer them grace and mercy, not justice and righteousness in their deaths. We have a higher calling than vigilantes. As we face rising crime in our cities and increasing evils and wickedness from terrorists, it is easy to answer the call to arms to kill such people. The Lord alone will destroy the wicked and bring in the age of peace and justice. That is not our calling. We are to give the Gospel to the wicked ones! Let us do our job and not pretend righteousness when we take the Lord’s part as our own.

2. Let us challenge ourselves to be givers of truth, not vigilantes of justice. God has called us to give the truth and rescue any we can from hell fire. We are not to join them, nor envy the workers of iniquity, but preach the truth to them in any way we can. Let us seek any way of getting the truth out to all we can reach with it.

## **DOCTRINES**

### **PROMISES OF GOD**

#### **CHRIST – ROCK: CHRIST AS THE ROCK**

#### **CHRIST – STONE: CHRIST AS A STONE**

#### **GOD – PLAN OF GOD**

#### **GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD**

#### **CHRISTIAN LIFE – ETERNAL LIFE**

## PSALMS 126

### INTRODUCTION

This psalm dates most likely from the years after the return of the exiles from Babylonian captivity. It is a song of the returning exiles; a song of the re-gathering of Israel after dispersion and exile from the land. It has been a song of joy for all ages of the Jewish people, but it will have even more significance after the end of the Great Tribulation period. Even today the Jewish people sing this psalm with gusto as they celebrate being in the land of Israel again after 1900 years with only a small remnant there. For those of us who read the many other prophetic passages we weep for them as well as rejoice with them.

It is exciting to see Israelis in the land of their forefathers again, and we rejoice in their joy, but they are back in unbelief, and it will only be the terrible events of the Great Tribulation period that will restore them to the place of full blessing and lead to the full and final re-gathering of Israelis from the four corners of the world. Isaiah 60:1-14, Ezekiel 34:11-16, 23-24, Zechariah 12:10ff, 14:9-11. There is much weeping to come, but there will be joy in the end and that joy will be without limit, because the Lord will personally deliver His people.

### PSALMS 126:1-6

- 1 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.**
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.**
- 3 The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.**
- 4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.**
- 5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.**
- 6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.**

### REFLECTION

- 1 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.**
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.**

The prophet Ezekiel was given the task of announcing the re-gathering of the nation of Israel after their Assyrian and Babylonian Captivity. He spoke to the exiles in Babylon, building upon the words of the older prophet Jeremiah, who had died in exile in Egypt, and whose prophetic words were brought by his servant Baruch to Ezekiel and Daniel in Babylon. Ezekiel 16:53-63, Jeremiah 33:10-11.

Ezekiel was the one chosen by the Lord to announce the re-gathering promise, and Daniel was given the task of interpreting the prophecy of Jeremiah of the "Seventy Weeks". Jeremiah 25:11-14, 29:10-14, Daniel 9:1ff. For all great words like these, the Lord brings the testimony of one or two witness/prophets to encourage and stabilise His people in the revealed truth. Even with two prophetic voices on each subject, the reality came like a dream to the people. Refer to the BTB study DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS.

People found it difficult to believe that their captivity would be lifted. The Northern Peoples from Samaria and further north had been under Assyrian and Babylonian captivity for nearly 200 years when the order for their return came from Cyrus the Great in 535 BC. Five generations had passed in exile for the families of the ten northern tribes, and two for the southern people. It was like a dream in its unreality, and yet it was real and the initial group of exiles were organised and led by Zerubbabel, grandson of the last king, and Joshua the High Priest, grandson of the last High Priest.

They were encouraged by another pair of godly men, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. With two witnesses and cooperative leadership the people were encouraged, challenged and strengthened in the truth. Jeremiah also foretells the final re-gathering of Israel after the Great Tribulation and Zechariah fills that prophecy in with further details. Jeremiah 31:7-14, 22-41, Zechariah 12:10 – 14:11. The earlier prophets Isaiah and Joel also referred to this last re-gathering, still yet to come after the Great Tribulation period. Isaiah 11:6-16, 49:5-12, Joel 2:30-32, 3:1-21.

The result of the work of God through His prophets and leadership was that the people marched out of Babylon along the roads of the ancient Middle East and entered the land, and did so with the psalms on their lips. They sang for sheer joy, and they laughed aloud at the grace and mercy of the Lord when they saw their enemies shocked at the things God had done and was doing amongst them. Even the heathen nations identified that the Lord had done mighty things amongst them, for they ought not to have survived. The greatest miracle of God upon the earth today remains the Jewish people, for they should not have survived the terrible assaults upon them through the centuries. The best is yet to come. Romans 11:11-27. Paul here builds upon all the prophetic passages on the final salvation of Israel.

- 3 The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.**
- 4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.**

When we recognise who has blessed us, the correct response is to shout aloud the truth, and express our appreciation for all that has been received in teaching the truth, and in celebrating it in songs of praise. Many of the psalms do this, and the readiness of the ancient believers to shout aloud praises to God rebukes us today. We are to praise and worship with all our hearts and all our voice. Psalms 66:5-12, 68:7-8, 19-23.

The greatness of the deliverance of the exiles in 535 BC was one thing to praise the Lord for, but greater things were yet to occur. The greatest was the arrival of Messiah for His first advent. Mary's song, as recorded by Luke, expresses this joy in her own psalm to mark the wonder of the event. Luke 1:46-55. The final captivity of the Jewish people will be overcome in the days following the Great Tribulation period, when all the Jewish people will return to the land, with none left in foreign lands. It will be like the first return in the Exodus when all members of the nation returned to the land promised to their fathers. All will return one day, and the praise and worship regarding that day will last 1000 years.

**5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.**

**6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.**

There is a time for joy and a time for weeping. Ecclesiastes 3:4-12, Zechariah 12:10ff. At times we need to "weep and howl" for our sins in order to fully repent of them and let them go finally. Israel has a great time of weeping to come when the survivors fighting around Jerusalem confront their need for a Saviour and realise that He is the Lord Jesus, the one who they pierced. They will sow the seeds of repentance, with CONFESSION of sin that opens the door to the Lord's FORGIVENESS and their restoration as a nation in glory for the Millennial Kingdom. Refer to the BTB studies on REPENTANCE, WEEPING, WEEP AND HOWL.

The people of that day will sow sadness and reap joy; they will sow tears and reap rejoicing in the Lord who delivers them. Even in the great and terrible time of Great Tribulation many will be saved; there will be a great revival there, with great fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit. Revelation 7:9-17. God is not constrained in His ability to bless mankind, and even for those saved at that terrible time, there is rejoicing, and there is a wiping away of all their tears. God will bless when He can, and judgement remains His "strange work" until the very end. Isaiah 28:21, Ezekiel 33:11, 2 Peter 3:9.

### **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. The Lord will re-gather His people into the land of Israel. All Jewish people returning in our own day need either, to find their Messiah now and enter the Messianic Fellowship, or they will face the Great Tribulation there in the land, with one third only coming through alive, and they will be the believers. Only those who accept the Messiahship of Jesus will come through that time, but they will come through with glory, and they will see Him deliver them on that final day. The future of the land of Israel is secure, but there is weeping to come that will be greater than any before it.

2. God's future plan is secure and has been revealed to us to praise Him in advance for what He is yet to do. The Lord is a mighty God and He will do His work amongst His people and all surviving Israel will be delivered. There is no doubt about the end, and the challenge to each of us is to get to know God's prophetic plan and encourage ourselves in advance with the truth.

3. God seeks man's blessing, not man's judgement. God seeks to show mercy, forgiveness and love rather than judgement. Judgement is certain, but only for those who persist in their hatred of their creator and saviour and are determined to walk down a negative path.

### **DOCTRINES**

#### **PROPHECY – DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS**

#### **CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

#### **CHRISTIAN LIFE – REPENTANCE**

#### **WEEP AND HOWL**

#### **WEEPING**

## PSALMS 127

### INTRODUCTION

This is a wonderful psalm on the subject of the foolishness of worry, and the contrasting power of faith, and the assurance of the Lord. Many have quoted the first verse for their businesses and homes, but it has no relevance apart from the total obedience and walk of faith that the believer is called to in the rest of the psalm. Remember the wonderful sentence of Dr David L Cooper. "A text out of its context is a pretext". Unless we walk with God all that we do is in vain, and all that we say is hypocrisy.

No matter how hard we work and watch, unless we have prayed, and purified, and stilled our soul in the truth of the Lord, all we do is a waste of time and effort. We have a saying in business today; "Work smarter, not harder". This psalm is about working spiritually smarter as we walk through this life. To walk smarter spiritually, is to walk prayerfully in the filling and armour of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16-26, Ephesians 5:8-18, 6:10-18.

### PSALMS 127:1-5

- 1 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.**
- 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.**
- 3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.**
- 4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.**
- 5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.**

### REFLECTION

- 1 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.**
- 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.**

It is the Lord alone who has the power to protect us from the assaults of fallen angels and wicked men and women. If we seek to build up some mighty work, then the Lord alone can guarantee that it will be built and survive. All the opposition of men and angels is nothing against the power of God that protects and enables the believer who is walking as God has called them to. We are kept, guarded, protected and empowered by God when we walk with Him. This means walking in the light of God's Word, in moral purity and in holiness. Remember the concept of "holiness" in the Old Testament referred to a fitness to serve as a PRIEST. It was a short hand way of speaking of the FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Unless we are walking in the daily filling of the Holy Spirit, we cannot claim this verse over our business, our marriage, or our properties.

Remember Paul's serious and sober words. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11.**

*"9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

*11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

If there is persistent unconfessed sin in the life of a person, then they are outside any promise in this Psalm and need the Lord's forgiveness through CONFESSION. 1 John 1:5-10.

No business, no marriage, no household may be established with the Lord's blessing unless the leaders of each entity are walking in the power and light of the Holy Spirit of the Lord. Those without the Filling of the Holy Spirit and the transformed life to go with that power, are "none of his". Romans 8:9. Unless we are Holy Spirit filled and Holy Spirit led we do not have the power, spiritual discernment, or the information to operate successfully in the ANGELIC CONFLICT.

Unless we are led by the Spirit of the living God we do not have the discernment to identify and defeat evil men and women. As "watchmen" of the Lord all ministers are called to be vigilant against evil attacks upon the Lord's people, but we cannot exercise that role unless we are opening God's Holy Word and teaching from it regularly. Ezekiel 2:3-6, 3:4-11, 16-17. It is WALKING IN THE LIGHT of the Word of God that gives discernment and enables the preacher to warn the people of the enemy's strategies and tactics.

Many people think that working harder will produce better results, and that longer hours are the solution to increasing work output. These things, even in the purely human area always fail over time. Sheer exhaustion always catches up with the toughest and hardest working person. "Burnout" is the term we use to describe the person who has tried too hard for too long in their own strength.

In my clinic I have seen many burned out ministers who have laboured hard and long, but all too often in their own strength, and so their strength has failed, their Immune Systems have collapsed, and they have become ill and

depressed. We are called to a super-natural life, not a natural life. We are to walk spiritually in God's power, not just our own. God calls us to be people of FAITH, not people of FEAR. God calls us to know His purpose and plan for mankind, and the path that we individually are to walk. With these things grounded in bible doctrines in our soul we can move forward without fear or worry for the future. We will feel fear at times, but we lay it quickly at Jesus feet.

This means we can face the threat of assassination with faith in the Lord and no fear in our hearts before or after the "would be" assassin strikes. It means we can face financial threats with faith. In both cases we work and we pray, but we do not worry about outcomes, for the Lord gives sleep to those who rest in His person and plan. Psalms 3:5, 4:8. The best example of this was Peter asleep in jail on the night before he was meant to be executed. Acts 5:18-40. The Lord is our strength and shield, and as we do what the Lord wants us to do, we have no legitimate reason to be in fear or worry. Let us deal with worry and eliminate fear, by walking in faith in the power of the Holy Spirit! Let us worship the Lord and by praise banish fear and doubts. Psalms 3:3-8.

**3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.**

**4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.**

**5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.**

These verses cannot be properly quoted by anyone who has not already applied the first two verses into the fabric of their daily life. Over the years of my life time I have seen foolish people quote these verses as they referred to their young children playing around us. They were people saved from the drug counter culture of the sixties and seventies, and they were filled with emotional religion, but steadily, through the years, they moved away from serious Biblical study and morally obedient living. Sadly, these fools did not bring their children up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord! Ephesians 6:4.

They didn't walk with the Lord themselves and they didn't bring their children up to value the Lord, honour the Lord, and follow the Lord. The result of their half hearted religion was that their children followed them back into the drug and alcohol culture that they saw their parents had been living within. Their children became over time as bad as the parents ever were as pagans before their apparent conversion. There is no blessing for the wicked, and the half hearted believer had better read Revelation 3:14-21, and shiver in their boots! James 2:19-20. Note these verses carefully, for just "shivering" isn't enough; God calls us to holy obedient and thoughtful living!

Our children can be a blessing that spiritually recharges our batteries, or they can be a source of great grief. Children can be like the arrows in the quiver of a mighty warrior, for they know that the Lord will ensure their legacy in life survives, as their children take up their weapons and fight also for the Lord. With godly children following us into ministry we can be assured that no demonic or human enemy needs ever be feared at the "gate" (entry point) of our home, our business or our ministry.

To "keep the gate" meant to be sure that the building was safe and the people within it secure. All was focused upon keeping the gate, and godly children "keep the gate" of the family, the home, and the family business. If however they fall into sexual sins, or other addictive sinful life patterns, then they will be no value at all and the gate, and the house/business will fall. The best biblical example of this is the loss of the kingdom of Solomon within five years of Rehoboam's take over. Solomon had many sons from his adulterous relationships (in God's eyes) and so he bred fools and pagans. His son's stupidity, following his father's great sexual and pride based sins instead of godliness, led to the loss of everything his father had built up. 1 Kings 11:1-10, 12:1-19, 14:25-31. No matter how great the house, it will fall if we do not walk with the Lord in holiness.

## **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. Our challenge is to rest in the Lord's person, power, and plan for us. We are called to "cast all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us". 1 Peter 5:7. The Lord will build up whatever we have been called to work upon, and will protect us in every way so that we can achieve what He has called us to do. What the Lord has set before us as the task of our life, He will provide for in every way, and ensure, as we walk in the Holy Spirit, that we can achieve the goals set by Him. Let us relax in the power of God and serve in power.

2. Let us banish fear and worry from the people of God. We will do this very thing pastors, by preaching the truth of godly Holy Spirit empowered living. We have many speaking of the filling of the Spirit and the Baptism of the Spirit, but often forgetting to remind people that the Fruit of the Spirit in the life of a person is the evidence of the genuineness of the Spirit. Let us call the Lord's people to walk worthy of the Lord and not bring disgrace upon His name.

3. It is not the number of our children but the spiritual quality of them that will guarantee that our spiritual and material legacy is carried on into a new generation. If our children are fools, then all will be lost very quickly. If we are fools then we set the example for them in the first place and can blame no-one but our self for their final fate. Let us be spiritually stable and strong in the eyes of our children and so lead them to serve and love the Lord even more than we do. Let us ensure that our children can stand on our shoulders and do greater work than we have done.

4. Let us walk in the Spirit and teach our children to do likewise. When I refer to "children" here, I refer to all who can be our children, and that involves adopted children, and those who we have led to the Lord, or taught the Word of God, and are our spiritual children. Remember the great apostle Paul had no biological children, and yet he had many

sons and daughters of faith, and what a legacy his “children” have had. Let us build spiritual legacy in all we do, and work spiritually smarter not physically harder.

**DOCTRINES**

**PRIESTS**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – BELIEVER-PRIEST OF THE CHURCH AGE**

**HOLY SPIRIT – FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – SERVICE**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY-CARNALITY**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – THINKING BIBLICALLY**

**ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT**

**ANGELS – SATAN’S STRATEGY AND TACTICS**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING AND LIVING IN THE LIGHT**

**LIGHT**

**BIBLE – BIBLE AND THE BELIEVER**

**BIBLE – WORD OF GOD – HEBREWS 4:12**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH**

**FEAR**



**PSALMS 128****INTRODUCTION**

The family is the third great DIVINE INSTITUTION. It is one of the four corner posts of any stable and safe society. The teaching of the Lord from the beginning has been that MARRIAGE and the FAMILY are at the core of stability for each and every national grouping. History backs this completely, with annual evidence of what happens to nations when marriage and the family are mocked or assaulted by immorality and political interference. The Lord seeks to especially bless marriage and the family.

In this little psalm there is the “secret” (although it is a very open secret) for happiness within marriage and the family. It is the “fear of the Lord” that opens the door to blessing in all areas of life. In the Millennial Kingdom, with pre-flood climatic conditions restored to the earth, there will be blessing in marriage and the family unlike anything seen since the beginning of time. The earliest patriarchs recorded lived to see many generations of their children, but in that final millennium of world history there will be spiritual blessing in perfect environment, and that will make the blessedness of the people beyond all that has ever been known.

**PSALMS 128:1-6**

- 1 Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.**  
**2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.**  
**3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.**  
**4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.**  
**5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.**  
**6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.**

**REFLECTION**

- 1 Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.**  
**2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.**

The “fear of the Lord” is the phrase that refers to the mental attitude of total respect towards the person and plan of Almighty God. It means to respect and follow the Lord in all things, and serve the Lord in all ways with rejoicing. Psalms 19:9, 118:4-6, Proverbs 1:26-33, 3:1-7. Those that walk in the Lord's paths and have a healthy and total respect/admiration for the Lord will reap a harvest of blessing in their families that will amaze them.

All too often in the history of man upon this blood soaked planet, people have laboured and others have stolen the fruit of their labour. I sat with my ninety four year old aunt yesterday and heard her sadness as she spoke of all her grandmother's jewellery from the 1880s and earlier being stolen by a visitor to her house. She invited friends of her brother into her home and one of these random people stole their family jewels and sold them to buy his drugs and alcohol.

We live today with the daily possibility of the theft of our goods, and employers who may steal our time, and even rob us of our health with toxic work places. We live surrounded by evil people with a total lack of respect for the rights of others. We truly today live in a “fallen world”. In that Millennial day all thefts and robberies are over, for the Lord deals directly with those who commit evil. In the Millennial Kingdom the environment and the structure of work and community life is overshadowed by the caring protection of the Lord.

Even today, if we stabilise our spirit in the Lord, and walk in His paths only, we have blessing in the midst of the sin and evil of mankind. The only way we can find blessing in the midst of our fallen world is to find the peace of the walk that Jesus gives in the midst of the evils that Satan has spawned. Refer again to the BTB study on WALKING IN THE LIGHT. Happiness is not the result of more goods and bigger houses, but of lovely trusting and warm relationships within our family and friend network.

- 3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.**  
**4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.**

The images here are lovely ones from the Middle East. In a hot and barren landscape the presence of fruitful vines and shady olive trees is the very picture of peace, tranquillity and restful refreshment. Some seek the excitement and noise of the race track, or night club, and the frantic roar of the crowd at public sports matches, but a thoughtful person will seek the quiet enjoyment of the family table surrounded by loving family members. It is in quietness that real happiness is identified and enjoyed.

The psalmist returns to his key point; that these blessings are only available to the man who fears the Lord. It is respect for the Lord that opens the door to the blessings of this earth, not wealth, nor power, nor human success and intelligence. The Lord wonderfully summed up this point in the Sermon on the Mount.

*“Matthew 6:27-34. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”*

All our frantic efforts and the strongest of our mental energies with “positive thinking” cannot add an inch to our height, nor change a situation that is about to befall us. We are powerless to affect our fate if we walk in our own strength, but we are energised by God if we walk with Him. If God cares for the flowers of the fields, then He will care for us daily until time ends.

We are urged to forget about the future, but concentrate solely upon serving the Lord as we have been directed to in the day we have, trusting that the Lord will protect our tomorrow. We are urged daily to think about tomorrow by all sorts of agencies in today’s world, but the Lord urges us to adopt a different path to the wisdom of man. We are to trust His power and plan and walk in them, and leave our tomorrow to the one who has made the worlds, and has the future in His hands. Deuteronomy 33:27.

**5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.  
6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children’s children, and peace upon Israel.**

The blessings within marriage and the family are going to be particularly wonderful to those who have come through the Great Tribulation period. The blessings flow from Zion’s hill because that is where the Lord is ruling the earth from.

One of the old commentators makes the point that the word “blessing” is never in the singular, for the Lord does not bless in the singular; He always blesses abundantly. The Lord’s blessings pour upon us; they never just trickle. When God blesses it is always abundantly. Exodus 34:6, Numbers 20:11, Isaiah 56:12. In the days of the rule of the Lord upon the earth there will be peace, security and goodness to all. Jerusalem will no longer be fought over but there will be peace upon Israel. Refer to the BTB studies on PEACE, and WAR.

### **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. If we have total respect for the Lord’s person, policy, and plan, we walk through this life with inner calm in the midst of the storms that will come. The fear of the Lord drives out all things that will have any power to hurt and destroy us on our journey. When we are guided by the fear of the Lord we walk through all things with peace of mind and strength in our spirit.
2. We can add nothing to our lives by worry or the turmoil of pride motivated evil thoughts. All our plotting and scheming will make no difference to the outcome of our life. We may die richer in earthly goods but they are all left behind on the earth when we die. All that matters is the happiness that we discover when we walk with God and see our family also walk with God. Let us seek this happiness above all else as we walk through this world.
3. There will be peace one day, but not until the Lord rules over this earth and the author of all evil is banished from it. That day will come, and every time we raise the Communion Cup we remember that we do it “until He comes”. 1 Corinthians 11:26. Let us pray with John, “Even so, come Lord Jesus”. Revelation 22:20.

### **DOCTRINES**

**GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS**

**GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – MARRIAGE**

**GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – FAMILY**

**GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – NATIONS**

**PEACE**

**WAR**

**PSALMS 129****INTRODUCTION**

At times we wait a long time for vindication, but it is always sweet when it arrives. I have been seriously attacked by two false pastors in the past and waited many years before vindication of my position and the Lord's judgement upon them; it was around seven years in each case. We need to cast our cares regarding these things upon the Lord and wait for His work on our behalf. While we wait we forget about these attacks upon us, leaving them at the foot of the Cross of Jesus for solution.

Whenever we think upon offences against us it is a good practise to use Paul's CBT technique (Below in the Doctrines Section) and pass the distressing thoughts of them over to the Lord for solution. By passing all worry and upset over to the Lord we clear our day for the tasks the Lord has called us to fulfil and we are not wasting mental energy on the enemy's nonsense. We are not to be distracted by thoughts of judgement of evil men; we can safely leave all judgement to the Lord.

The psalmist here praises the Lord for deliverance from the attacks of gossips and evil maligners of his reputation. He reminds us that the Lord is able to deal with all malice and evil and He does. He reminds us that the evil people prosper but for a moment in time, and then they lose everything. It is a strong encouragement to us all to be powerful in the Holy Spirit and resist any weakness in our thinking when verbally abused and lied about.

It is spiritual weakness to become preoccupied with the opinions of men and women who are hell doomed with their lord Satan, and it is spiritual strength to cast all such evil assaults upon the Lord for Him to deal with in His majestic power. Let us be strong in the Lord and not allow ourselves to be distracted by the lies told about us and verbal insults we have received. God does such a better job than we can ever do with those who attack us.

**PSALMS 129:1-8**

- 1 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:**
- 2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.**
- 3 The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.**
- 4 The LORD is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.**
- 5 Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.**
- 6 Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:**
- 7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.**
- 8 Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD be upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD**

**REFLECTION**

- 1 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:**
- 2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.**

The liturgical element, "let Israel now say", is an invitation for the crowds in the Temple to join in the singing aloud with the Levites and singers. It is a song about the affliction of the believers by unbelievers in the many centuries of the history of the earth. For centuries the believers of the Lord have been abused, attacked, and afflicted in spirit and body by evil men and women who have mocked their faith and abused their practise of it. When the Lord rules in Jerusalem those terrible days are over, for the evil ones have been cast off the face of the earth.

Many believers feel that abuse from others is a strange thing and that it is unfair of the Lord to allow it to happen. We must remember that the Lord warned us that we would be hated for His sake. John 15:18-27. The constant challenge for us all is the challenge to not let the pressures of this world overwhelm us. We will be attacked, insulted and abused at times, but these evil and wicked people will not prevail against us if we walk with the Lord and lean upon His power, rather than our own strength.

- 3 The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.**
- 4 The LORD is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.**

This image here is both violent and powerful. It is an image of the worst possible torture imaginable. It is the evils that we have seen in history, by pagans and sadly by the church itself within the Inquisition. When satanic malice is launched against a believer it is often launched against us with deliberate and powerful energy. The extent of the hatred of satanic people is staggering at some times, but we must remember that he hates us with good reason. We are the grounds for his eternal condemnation and we are the focus of his hatred for that reason.

Satan's hatred means he will take whatever means he may to hurt us and we need to take all such hurts to the Lord. We may be asked to suffer with the Lord and for the Lord, and a readiness to accept that is required for some believers. Refer to the BTB study on SUFFERING. Whatever the pressures that will come at times, the Lord will cut all the cords of evil men and women that assail us eventually. We will be set free at some point from all the assaults of evil.

**5 Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.**

**6 Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:**

The prayer of the psalmist is answered by the Lord in the Second Advent. All those who live to hate and hurt others are dealt with by the Lord at that time. They will be confounded in that Day of Judgement. Isn't it sad, that the people who fight for Satan are so blinded by his and their own malice that they do not see the truth until it is too late. There are none so blind as those who will not see the truth! Those that hate Zion will be confounded, and so let us join the psalmist in his prayers today as the evils of extremism pollute that place and the city around it today.

Malice grows extremely quickly in soft ground, but the winds and heat of adversity and troubles parch and destroy it equally as quickly. When we see malice grow we can be amazed at the speed with which evil people take over organisations and pollute good movements, but they do not last, for everything built upon satanic self centeredness will not last the heat of the sun of righteousness. When the Lord rises over the earth to judge evil the enemies of truth will wither. Let us pray for a foretaste of that over our cities today!

**7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.**

**8 Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD be upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD**

The harvest of unrighteousness evaporates in the heat of God's judgement. They have nothing to reap or gather into their barns, for all is lost when evil motivates the heart of man. All that evil builds is taken by God from the evil person. There is no peace to the wicked! Isaiah 57:20-21. All that work evil will be stubble before the fire of the Lord, for our God is a consuming fire. Malachi 4:1-3, Hebrews 10:31, 12:29. There is no blessing from God upon evil people or their wicked works. They will not prosper through time into eternity.

Do not envy the wicked man in his wealth, for he loses it all in the end and has nothing but regrets forever. Proverbs 13:9, 24:19. The only blessing that lasts is the blessing that comes in the name of the Lord, and only the Lord's people can bless and be blessed in His name. Let us bless others in the Lord's name, and receive the Lord's blessing as we walk with Him, and walk away from the "Broadway" that leads to destruction upon this earth and in eternity. Matthew 7:13-23.

## **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. The enemy may assault us severely at times on our journey through this life. We must be ready to be ploughed by the enemy if we walk with the Lord, for He was grievously hurt by the malice of evil. Let us take our suffering to the Lord and walk with Him through it. Let us encourage our brethren as they suffer and let us walk slowly through the paths of this world in the Lord's company. Let us bless our brethren with the blessing of the Lord, and receive the same blessing ourselves, by walking as the Lord calls us to walk. Let us be a blessing!

2. Let us continue to pray for the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. John 16:8-11. Let us uphold good people and support spiritually positive people. Let us remember that evil will be judged, and that our prayers are protective over our businesses, our families, our communities, and our churches. Let us pray for satanic malice to be defeated in our day, as a foretaste of that final glorious day when it will disappear from the earth altogether.

## **DOCTRINES**

### **CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING**

**COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY ACCORDING TO ST PAUL**

When an annoying person says something, or an unwanted thought occurs, we can allow them or it to “rent space in our head” and not be paying for it, except in misery to ourselves!!! All unwanted mental “clutter” weighs us down and can create great frustration within. It is a result of the Fall of Adam and Eve, and an ever present reminder that we are all fallen creatures, with an easy tendency to sin.

This simple Cognitive Behavioural technique below may assist you to plan to deal with a specific problem that really irritates you; for example, “crazy” drivers on the road, an annoying customer, or a dysfunctional neighbour, or a dysfunctional thought pattern you have within yourself coming from early experiences. The good news is, this tool can be used to deal with our own annoying behaviours also, and is a powerful way to stop yourself doing something that childhood software errors, and poor adult choices on top of the old tendencies, may have programmed you to do! This helps you label such “software errors” as “not me” (that is, not my real born again nature, but a reflection of my Old Sin Nature), and enables you to get control over them and re-program your responses to unbidden thoughts and impulses.

First identify the situations where you find yourself responding in an unacceptable manner. Write these situations out, identifying the precipitating events, the thoughts you have, the feelings associated, and the things you then say or do that make you ashamed or annoyed. Programmed bad reactions waste time and energy – and bluntly, life is just too short to waste on such things. Bad responses also hurt the people we love and need to be eliminated before they eliminate our relationships!!!

Once you have your “hit list” of problem situations, ask the following questions of each.

1.       WHAT LABEL CAN I USE TO PUT THE PERSON/SITUATION INTO A FUNNY or PROFESSIONAL BOX?

Find a funny label (or at least a neutral one) for the annoying precipitating event, thought or person. This can be used when the event occurs and it will take the heat of your reaction out of it. You label it as a “thing” rather than accepting it as an integral and permanent part of yourself, for in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit’s power, it is not!

2.       TELL YOURSELF THE TRUTH.

“The truth is....” Think of a statement that powerfully expressed the reason why you will not let a “twit” or “idiot thought” rent space in your head, but rather you will walk your genuine life path in Christ!

3.       TAKE ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION TO REINFORCE THE TRUTH.

Identify any action to immediately take to reinforce your true path in life rather than your old reaction which reflected your bad programming from childhood.

EXPERIMENT with these steps and test yourself in all problematic situations. End with celebration and worship in which you acknowledge the truth to the glory of God.

Review with your counsellor, mentor or pastor. Build strength in this by daily feeding upon the doctrines of the Word of God to build your hold on the truth that will always set you free from satanic deception, false priorities, and blindness to consequences of wrongful actions.

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**Do a Bible study of the following passages to reinforce this technique.**

ROMANS 7:14-25       -       THE “WRETCHED MAN” – FACING OUR SINFUL REALITY

(Unless we face the facts we live a lie and are open to deception from all sources; human and angelic.)

ROMANS 8:1-18 - THE GLORY OF KNOWING THE POWER OF THE INDWELLING CHRIST.

(There is hope for all who face the facts of their Old Sin Nature and the greater power of the indwelling Lord and Holy Spirit, 1 John 4:4-6, for then we are “plugged into” the power for spiritual victory)

EPHESIANS 4:20-32 - PUTTING OFF THE OLD AND PUTTING ON THE NEW  
COLOSSIANS 3:8-16 - PUTTING OFF AND PUTTING ON

(Our old behaviours are the result of our early “programming” and the choices we have made later; all of this being laid over our genetic strengths and weaknesses, but in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit’s power we can re-program our inner computer.)

EPHESIANS 5:17-29 - THE RELATIONSHIP OVERFLOW OF THIS CBT TOOL  
COLOSSIANS 3:17-19 - RELATIONSHIP OVERFLOW OF CBT

(If the Holy Spirit is active in our life there will be evidence of it in our daily walk through life, and especially in our relationships with loved ones and others we meet. No change = no Spirit!)

PHILIPPIANS 3:10-17 - FORGETTING THE PAST AND FOCUSING FORWARD

(It is not a “one shot decision” to make change, for the old patterns are tenacious. They must be identified, understood, targeted, replaced and we must rebuild new patterns through the Holy Spirit’s work upon the Word of God, to firmly establish and live and celebrate daily in the new life we now have.)

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9 - FILLING THE MIND WITH POSITIVE THOUGHT PROCESSES  
SQUEEZING OUT THE NEGATIVES FROM LIFE

(The mind acts like a vacuum; it will suck in all evil around if there is not positive pressure from good working out from the centre of our being. We squeeze evil out by leaving no room within for it to grow.)

COLOSSIANS 2:20-22 - SAYING NO TO THE “EASY FIX” OF LEGALISM

(The great “cons” of Satan are initially focused on down playing sin and evil so that believers are neutralized by them uncontrolled within their lives, but if that fails he has an even better plan to neutralize the grace of God within us. This plan is the “super-spiritual” plan of legalism, whereby foolish men get to feel really superior because their sins are more refined than their neighbours! Legalism is false spirituality that feeds of the great sin of pride and arrogance, the very opposite of God’s grace and mercy, and the complete opposite of the servant heart of the Lord Jesus. Matthew 7:15-20.)

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**PSALMS 130****INTRODUCTION**

Most commentators think this psalm was another of King Hezekiah's psalms, written after his illness. Read Isaiah 38 and the sentiments certainly make sense in light of that traumatic experience of the king, but many authors of scripture have faced equal challenges that have led them to see the deliverance of the Lord from "out of the depths". In all ages of human history men and women will plunge into despair and sickness at times. Even in the perfect environment of the Millennial Kingdom there is not necessarily absence of pain, anguish, and suffering at times. These painful things can still occur due to choices made and experiences that must be endured for spiritual growth.

At all ages and life stages, and in all the Ages of man, the Lord wants us to be ready to cry out to Him and lay our hearts and lives open for His attention. The Lord is our hope and our salvation; He is the only dependable source of mercy and His holy character and plan is our assurance of deliverance. Even before our physical deliverance there is spiritual learning and growth of understanding that can make all the suffering worth while in the end.

**PSALMS 130:1-8**

- 1 Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.**
- 2 Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.**
- 3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?**
- 4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.**
- 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.**
- 6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.**
- 7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.**
- 8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.**

**REFLECTION**

- 1 Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.**
- 2 Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.**

Many of us have felt that the depths were where we have been trapped at times. The depths of suffering, or despair, or fear of death are sometimes experienced as we walk through this life. Some people get through life without any major health "scares" or near death accidents, but that is not the norm for most active servants of the Lord. Psalms 18:4-6, 25:16-18, 88:6-7, 116:3-4, Lamentations 3:53-55.

To serve the Lord means that we put ourselves in a place of danger at times, and for "training purposes" the Lord may allow the wall of protection to come down and give us opportunities to experience tests and expand our faith by application of doctrine into difficult places. I have personally cried to the Lord from the depths of great suffering, and have proved the Lord is good and hears my voice at all times I cry aloud to Him.

We need to know that we are heard and the Lord truly hears our voice and responds to our requests. Psalms 18:1-3. God is attentive to our prayers and hears our cries when they are lifted up to His majesty. We are not ignored, but heard and answered by the one who gave Himself for us. Isaiah 61:1-3, Matthew 7:7-12.

Having accepted the Lord as our saviour while we were still the enemies of God, and been saved by His grace, will we receive anything less from the Lord now that we are His people, His children by faith? Daniel 9:17-19, Ephesians 2:4-10, Titus 3:5-7, James 4:6. These passages give us what we have called before the "logic of grace". We are under the "much more" care of the Lord now as His children, members of the ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD. We belong now, and we are loved and adored in His family.

- 3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?**
- 4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.**

If the Lord really counted our iniquities we would be without any hope at all. Who could stand before the Lord if He added up our sins and weighed them? Who would survive His wrath if all our sins were laid upon us; their weight would crush us totally. Psalms 143:1-6, Isaiah 53:3-6. This concept of weighing of sins is the view that many of the pagan neighbours of Israel had regarding their judgement before their gods. Most of the ancient people believed their gods weighed their sins after their death and unless their sins weighed less than a feather they would be doomed. The pagan peoples lived in fear of death, and died without any hope of eternal life. The good news of the living God of Israel was so different.

God had revealed the path to forgiveness to the first men on the earth, and it was the path of BLOOD SACRIFICE, a path that spoke of GRACE. Genesis 3:21. There was further revelation through the Patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets and they explained further the path of REPENTANCE, and it was a path that guaranteed forgiveness, through faith, by grace. Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:3-5, Galatians 3:6-7, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-10, 17-19.

Man may depend upon the Lord's Word, that they are forgiven, and the "fear of the Lord" stems from that fact. As we understand the greatness of our salvation our respect and admiration for God knows no bounds, for we see that we are saved and forgiven through His gracious and abundant provisions for us. Psalms 2:11-12, 103:2-3, Jeremiah 33:1-9.

**5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.**

**6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.**

To wait upon the Lord is to place yourself in the place where God's will matters more than your own will, and God's timing for events matters more than your own. Psalms 27:14, 33:20-23, 46:1-3. In the truths of the Word of God the wise believer depends. If we hope upon the Lord, we rest in Him, we trust in Him and his Word. It is a passionate love for the Word of God that is in view here, not a casual reading occasionally.

The believer longs for the fellowship of the Word, and "hangs out" for it when away from the Word. In the Armed Forces the hardest watch has always been the middle watch of the night leading to the dawn, for in the last hours you are aching for the dawn to break and the night to be over finally. The believer who loves the Lord waits for the Lord and aches for conversations with God in prayer, as the soldier aches for the dawn to break.

**7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.**

**8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.**

In contrast to the pagans all around them, Israel is urged to trust in the Lord, for in the Lord there is MERCY and plentiful REDEMPTION, and complete RECONCILIATION. The psalmist urges the people of Israel to maintain their hope in the Lord, for in the Lord there is hope, mercy, love and peace for their souls. The worst thing about the pagan religions is that they cost a great deal for their worshippers and they deliver nothing when death comes except doubt and fear.

In the PROMISES of the Word of God there is the only certainty in this world for the next. Only the facts of God's Word give us any hope and confidence as we face the great abyss of death. Refer to the BTB study DYING GRACE. God's provision for mankind is bountiful SALVATION; His provision is there to meet the needs of all who will come to Him in humility, repentance, and faith, and simply cast themselves at the foot of the Cross. Israel will do this as a nation in the last days of the Great Tribulation period. Zechariah 12:10ff, Isaiah 64:1-4, Ezekiel 33:11, 2 Peter 3:9.

## **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. When the people of the ancient world faced death they faced doubts and fear unless they had met the true God and accepted His truths
2. Do we ache for the sweet fellowship of the Lord? The believer aches for the fellowship of the Lord and longs for His voice, heard through the Word and heard in the stillness of the heart through prayer. Let us fellowship with the Lord in the Word often, and pause long enough over the Word to hear His still small voice in our spirit.

## **DOCTRINES**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD**

**BLOOD SACRIFICE**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – FORGIVENESS – DIVINE FORGIVENESS**

**SALVATION – REDEMPTION**

**SALVATION – RECONCILIATION**

**DYING GRACE**

**SALVATION**



**PSALMS 131****INTRODUCTION**

This short psalm of David expresses beautifully the simple relaxation of the soul that trusts in the Lord, and has its mental stability resting upon the ROCK that is Christ Jesus. The emotions and experiences behind this psalm are powerful ones. They accord with details from the lives of many in the Old Testament period. David, Uzziah, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Nehemiah, Daniel, and Jeremiah, (to name a few) all experienced great periods of intense suffering and pressures that could have produced a psalm like this one before us.

It is a reminder to us, when we read, "Psalm of David", to sit with the emotion and thinking behind the psalm and see that it expresses the journey of many of our spiritual forebears and can be our song also. We build our faith upon the foundation of the great men and women whose stories we read here in the Word of God. This is a Psalm that sums up the spirit of patience and SUBMISSION to the will of God and the PLAN OF GOD. It expresses the MENTAL ATTITUDE of the SERVANT of the Lord who in their SERVICE is an OVERCOMER BY FAITH.

**PSALMS 131:1-3**

**1 Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.**

**2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.**

**3 Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.**

**REFLECTION**

**1 Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.**

Nebuchadnezzar is probably the man in scripture who most wonderfully illustrates the dangers of pride and arrogance, but then recovers. His story is a "good news" story for those with Narcissistic natures, because it gives us hope for them; they can be saved, because Nebuchadnezzar was! He lifted himself up in self centred Narcissism and got all his people to bow before his golden statue, and the Lord judged him and brought him down through mental illness to live like a beast for seven years to teach him humility.

He had become so proud of his achievements that he forgot that it was the Lord who had lifted him up to greatness and the Lord was able to bring him down to the earth. Refer to the BTB study of the character of NEBUCHADNEZZAR. His confession of the great sin of pride is worthy of note, and Daniel records the official document for us in Daniel Chapter 4. Let us see a few of the verses therein, but follow these verses up by reading the EBCWA study of this chapter from the CD or website.

**Daniel Chapter 4**

*"1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.*

*2 I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.*

*3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation. . . . .*

*34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:*

*35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

*36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.*

*37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."*

The psalmist has faced many of the temptations that Nebuchadnezzar would face as a great king. Those of us who have never had the level of power that these men exercised cannot begin to think of the temptations they faced and the opportunities that were there before them daily to sin and do evil things. When they had experienced the great successes and victories they had it was easy to walk away from dependence upon God and start to believe their own publicity machine.

Nebuchadnezzar had built an empire, defeated great nations, and built great monuments, and could look out his palace window and see the results of his mighty work, and it was mighty. Like King David however he finally won the battle over himself, and bowed before the Lord, recognising that all he had done was done in the power and plan of God. Psalms

78:70-72, Amos 7:14-15. God lifts each of us up into the place we are called to serve within, and our challenge is to serve obediently right there all the days of our life.

David, and each of the other great kings and prophets, had a place to fulfil in the PLAN OF GOD and they each played their part and did what the Lord called them to do, and they praised God for the opportunity and the spiritual power to do it. Finally each of the great men of the past recognised that the Lord alone had lifted them up. This is the challenge we all still face. Will we play the part the Lord has called us to play and recognise the gifts that God has given for us to use? Let us walk the Lord's path for us, and not over reach ourselves in position and role, or claims about what we understand this side of eternity! Romans 11:33. Believer, walk God's path for you, no matter what that is, for it is the only path where eternal rewards can be won by you.

**2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.**

Jesus would later say words very similar to this, and they are recorded in Matthew Chapter 18.

*"Matthew 18:1-6. 1. At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*

*2. And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,*

*3. And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

*4. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

*5. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.*

*6. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."*

What is the Lord saying in this passage? What is His challenge to the disciples and our selves? The answer is, exactly the same as David in the Psalm before us. As the child absolutely trusts the mother who breast feeds it, so the young believer can trust the Lord as they draw spiritual nourishment from their relationship with the Lord. David looks back at his life and he sees it as a child drawing food from his mother.

It is interesting that David doesn't picture himself as a mighty warrior being strengthened by the power of an Almighty God. Now he could have pictured himself that way, and it would be real and dramatic, but it is not the reflection that sums up his heart at this point in his life. He is the great king and victorious warrior, but in spiritual power he is the child feeding upon his parent, and depending totally upon their love, care, and protection. Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17, Romans 8:14-18, Galatians 4:1-7. The great glory of the Lord's care over us and for us, is that we are entered into His family as full children, and have all the rights and privileges of adult children and heirs of Christ, and yet we are loved, protected, and adored as little children are. Refer to the BTB study on ADOPTION AS CHILDREN OF GOD.

**3 Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.**

David's prayer for his people is that they might find the humility of service that he has discovered in the arms of his Lord and Saviour. God is our help and our shield from dangers. We can have confident hope in the Lord, for He will deliver us from all things on the path He has called us to walk. Psalms 115:9-11, 130:7-8, 146:5, Jeremiah 17:5-8.

The Lord alone is a refuge and strength to us when troubles flow over our heads. Keep remembering under pressure, that you are in good company, for all the great men and women of the Lord have had troubles "over their heads" at times. Trouble over our heads is not outside God's love and protection, and the Lord brings us through to greater glory through each such experience. Note in the psalms how many times David expresses this thought of the Lord as his refuge in times of greatest trouble. Psalms 9:9, 46:1, 7, 59:16, 62:7-8, 91:2, 142:4-5. The Lord is the only hope we have, now and forever; there is no other to whom we can come for no-one else has the words of eternal life. Isaiah 43:11, John 6:68, Acts 4:12.

**PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. We have an individual path to walk through this life, and the Lord will provide the plan and the power to follow it. Our challenge remains each and every day to recommit to the path and follow the plan, not deviating to the right or the left after our own imagination. Let us commit our ways to the Lord again today, and tomorrow commit our ways to the Lord again. Proverbs 3:6. "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths".

2. In our scientific age we can easily fool and deceive ourselves that we are able to understand things that are actually well beyond us. Many scientists state things in their desire to eliminate God through their evolutionary theories that are things "too far" beyond mans ability to understand. Let us be humble in our claims and statements. Let us be humble and obedient in our daily walk. Let us live our life, not be envious of others paths through this life. God will not ask us why we were not more like Paul; He will ask us why we were not more our self! We each have a called path and our eternal REWARDS AND CROWNS depend on being our self not being like some famous person

3. Let us take David's words here and the Lord's words in Matthew 18 to our heart. Let us see ourselves as the children that the Lord encourages us to see ourselves as. Let us see that we are totally dependent upon the Lord and rest in His arms and take in His spiritual food. Let us express our love as a child does to a loved parent and let us rest in

His arms for care and protection. The Lord alone has the words of eternal life; there is no other hope for mankind than the Lord Jesus. Let us rest in His care and protection and serve Him with confidence for the future. Our tomorrow is as secure as yesterday was with Him.

**DOCTRINES**

**CHRIST – ROCK: CHRIST AS THE ROCK**

**CHRIST – STONE: CHRIST AS A STONE**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUBMISSION**

**GOD – PLAN OF GOD**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – MENTAL ATTITUDE**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – SERVICE – MODEL SERVANT**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – SERVICE**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMING BY FAITH**

**NEBUCHADNEZZAR – PRIDE**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – ADOPTION AS A CHILD OF GOD**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – REWARDS AND CROWNS**

**PSALMS 132****INTRODUCTION**

Commentators have no idea who the author of this psalm is, although I believe it is, at least partly, a psalm of David, and will explain this as we go through it. This psalm is longer and quite different in its feel to the others in this section of the Deuteronomy group, and so we ought to pay close attention to it. It is here in this group for a reason, and it sums up something important. The editor who collected the Psalms into their final form desired it here rather than in another section, and as a Holy Spirit inspired man, we need to take his choices seriously. Let us be open to what this Psalm has to say and why it is here standing out as it does.

Its central themes are worship at the Ark/Tabernacle/Temple, and the Throne of God upon the earth. It is divided into two parts; the prayer of the people in verses 1 – 10, and the Promise of the Lord in verses 11 – 18. The psalm centres round the subject of worship, and the need for worship to be whole hearted and focused upon the Lord, even if the venue is less than adequate. It speaks of the ruling power and strength of the Lord as the God of Israel through the centuries, but also speaks of the Lord's rulership of the world from Jerusalem, and in this subject matter it is a crucial psalm for this section. So let us see its structure and examine its verses so that we can spiritually discern the meaning that the Holy Spirit intended us to take from them.

**PSALMS 132:1-18**

- 1 Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions:**
- 2 How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;**
- 3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;**
- 4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,**
- 5 Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.**
- 6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.**
- 7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.**
- 8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.**
- 9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.**
- 10 For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.**
- 11 The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.**
- 12 If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.**
- 13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.**
- 14 This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.**
- 15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.**
- 16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.**
- 17 There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.**
- 18 His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.**

**REFLECTION**

- 1 Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions:**
- 2 How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;**

This is a very formal prayer-song that has all the hallmarks of a dedication of the Temple itself, and as such would have had great significance for the days of Solomon, or of Zerubbabel, and will yet have great significance in a yet future time when the survivors of the great tribulation period enter the rebuilt Temple on the site of Mt Zion.

It is a psalm that celebrates the throne of God with mankind in the form of the Ark/Tabernacle/Temple, and it begins by recalling David's prayers that he might build the Temple. 2 Samuel 7:1-29, 1 Chronicles 17:1-27. The prophet Nathan immediately said, "Yes", and believed he was entitled to say so, but God quickly corrected the prophet and the king, and David accepted the verdict of the Lord. He was not to build the Temple, but he would prepare for its building later.

David made solemn oaths to the Lord to do the right things and the psalmist will challenge us about our prayers and our intentions. The life of David is a life worth studying, for in it we see a man like ourselves with all the failings that can make us feel quite spiritual at times! We can often find our self saying as we study David, "Boy, I am not so bad after all!" Having felt that the Lord quickly convicts us of our own arrogance, because although David fails, his heart is right towards God and the Lord's love is constant towards David. This reminds us that God's love remains constant towards his children, even when we are behaving very much unlike his children. 2 Timothy 2:12-13.

This man David gives us hope and confidence in the love of the Lord, and the Lord's ability to save and deliver us through all the ups and downs of life. Read David's great song of the mercy of God in 2 Samuel 22:1-51. Read the EBCWA Commentary upon it and be encouraged by it. Read also David's last words as recorded in 2 Samuel 23:1-7. David made vows to the Lord and he kept them, for he loved the Lord with all his heart. He sinned, but he always came

back to the Lord. Let us be passionate in our walk of faith, and daily deal with the sins that upset our path, or we will be unhinged as David was when he allowed sin to ankle tap his great blessing.

**3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;  
4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,**

It would appear that we have here David's vow to the Lord between verses 3-5. Read the entire vow as we have it and then reflect upon Solomon's words in Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. David's vow did not end up being a totally "hasty vow", but let us reflect upon this for a moment, because the Lord will show David that the timing of an answer to prayer does not depend upon any human vow putting "pressure" on the Lord, but it depends upon the Lord's timetable.

Let us be clear about some principles of biblical vows. Vows ought not to commit us to a path that we are not 100% happy with, and they will not assist us in meeting the objective set before us. A hasty vow actually becomes a hindrance to achieving goals at times, and the best example from the days of David was the hasty vow of King Saul that no man could eat before they had killed all the Philistines after a great battle. Now the best thing would have been for every man to eat on the run, build strength, and then more Philistines would have been killed, and their army eliminated, but the tired and starving Israelites allowed most to escape. 1 Samuel 14:24ff. With this in mind let us look at David's vow before the Lord about finding the place to build the Temple.

To vow that you will not enter your house, lie down to rest, not close your eyes to sleep in any way is a foolish thing, for you are limiting the Lord to a couple of days to show you the thing before you cannot help falling asleep. You are in effect trying to pressure God into answering in your time frame, and the Lord may have a different plan altogether. What will you do then? If you need to sleep, then you ought to sleep, and indoors is better than outdoors! Worship cannot be meaningfully done by tired and sleepy people, for the Lord wants us relaxed and focused upon Him. Cults gain control of people by exhausting them, but God's people ought not to do that to the Lord's flock.

Now this vow appears to have been taken by David as he sought for a place for the resting of the Ark, and the building of the Temple, and the Lord led him to it by two steps. David is going to be forced to sleep each night for over twenty years between the two steps also! David first brought the Ark up to a place in the city of David as a temporary measure, and then the Lord showed him later where the new Temple was to be built by staying the arm of the destroying angel at that place. 2 Samuel 6:1-19, 7:1-16, 24:12-25.

In between the two events where the Lord showed him where the Ark and then the temple was to be, David did sleep, and he recognised that the Lord had been gracious to him in showing him where the Ark and the Tabernacle was to rest, and that he was to leave the timing of the Temple building in the Lord's hands, not try to force the Lord's hands by any vow he took.

Let us look at this subject for our own prayer life today. Study again the BTB doctrinal study on PRAYER. If we are praying about any issue, let us be clear regarding our petition (what we are actually wanting and asking for), and let us also be clear on our desire (what is behind our request – what we want to achieve). Jesus himself discouraged vow making. Matthew 5:33-37. James backs this advice. James 5:12.

Having really clarified our prayer request, let us then ask the question about time frame for the Lord's response. Is it right to ask the Lord to respond within our time frame? When prayer is analysed carefully and we are sure that we are praying for a desire of our heart, and that the petition reflects the true desire, and we are operating in God's will, then why would we add some vow in there to emphasise our seriousness?

The Lord seeks our simple faith based prayer, not any foolish vows to emphasise our seriousness. Most vows are pious play acting, and remember, that is also called hypocrisy! Let us be very careful about vows, but if we make a solemn vow, we had better be ready to keep the promise associated with it. If any doubt about that exists read the rules in Numbers 30 and be very scared! Let us stick with the advice of the Lord, and be clear about what we pray for and what we promise to perform, and ensure our word can be trusted both ways. What we say is to be what we mean, and what we mean is to be what we will do!

Now David took a vow, and he meant it, and God answered his prayer and in humour gave him the last part of his answer over twenty years later just to teach him this principle properly. Let's learn it thoroughly ourselves and make our "yes" means yes, and our "no" mean no, so that all people learn quickly that we are serious people who mean what they say and say what they mean.

**5 Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.  
6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.**

David's vow was centred round his desire to find the right place in his new capital for the Ark of the Lord. I can see why he felt it was so important. The reference to Ephratah is problematic in the received text. No commentator has a good explanation for it. Bethlehem Ephratah was where David had been born, and so does it refer to him finding the answer while at prayer in his old home town? We don't know the answer to this. Was it a corrupt reference to Kirjath Jearim, the hiding place of the Ark for many years? We simply do not know at this distance.

The Ark had been hidden in the forest city of Kirjath Jearim and had been there for many years in hiding from the Philistines, and then back at Nob, and then later at Gibeah, but it still was in semi-hiding even there due to the sporadic Philistine attacks. David wanted to bring the Ark into the city he had captured as his capital, as a unifying factor for the twelve tribes, as this city was in between the tribal areas of Judah and Benjamin but belonged to neither.

The new capital gave the opportunity to solidify the Israelite confederacy and unify worship in one place; it was crucial to all David's reforms and rebuilding of unity after the civil war between his supporters and those of the dead Saul's surviving son. David felt passionately about restoring a central worship site, but the blood soaked land of Shiloh, Nob, and Gibeah, were not the places to do that. 1 Samuel 12:4-22, 6:21 – 7:2, 22:17-22.

He wanted the Lord's answer as to where the Ark, and rebuilt but very temporary tabernacle he had made, would be placed. Clearly the Lord answered that prayer, and when the Ark entered the city they headed for the place the Lord had showed David, but it was not to be the final resting place. 2 Samuel 6:1-17. Mt Zion was to be that final place, but at this point it was a barren hill to the north of the original city; a place of threshing floors, not a suburban area.

The area of Mt Zion could not be the "fields of the wood" referred to here in the psalm, for as a threshing floor area it would have to be barren and open to the winds so that it could operate as a threshing floor. We have some questions here we cannot answer, but they are not material to the doctrinal points that the psalmist is making. David was serious in his prayer and he was answered, but the Lord made it clear in the answer that his vow did not produce the full answer, for its time was not yet right. Timing of answers to prayer is in the Lord's hands, not in man's hands.

**7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.**

**8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.**

Even if the initial placement of the Ark, in its temporary tabernacle, was not its final resting place the psalmist will worship in the tabernacle as it is. Psalms 66:13-20, 118:19, 122:1, Isaiah 2:3. Many believers want all the physical details to be "right" before they feel they can worship, but the Lord looks for those who seek His fellowship, and are prepared to worship in a temporary tent, just to be part of worshipping the Lord of glory.

The psalmist now refers to the "footstool" of the Lord. Are we prepared to worship at the Lord's footstool? The footstool of the king was exactly that; the footstool for his feet. Now there are a lot of meanings and possible points of significance in this reference. The footstool was the place where people bowed to recognise their utter humility before the king. It was the place that captured enemies were made to kneel before their execution, and it was the place that visiting subjects came and paid their respects. In a manner of speaking the footstool was a symbol of the power and strength of the king; it was where the feet of the king rested.

There is another significance of the footstool that our Lord drew upon in His earthly ministry and it also may need to be factored in here. The feet were unclean in the ancient world, as the people of that day walked through the sewerage of the streets. To wash the feet was the job of the most menial slave, and when the Lord washed the disciples' feet they were shocked indeed. John 13:1ff. To wash the feet was a potent symbol for the disciples, for they learned from it the concept of servant leadership, and the importance, and necessity, of regular confession of sin as they walked through the filth of daily life. Matthew 6:31-34, 20:20-28, Luke 9:46-48, John 13:9-17.

From this reference to feet and where they rest, the "footstool" in the psalm may be a symbol of servant leadership. The footstool was the symbol of ruling power, but also the symbol of victory, for it was with the feet that the enemy were trampled, and the enemy themselves were often made "the footstool of the feet". Sin, Death, and the Devil are spoken of as being trampled under foot in victory by the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, Ephesians 1:19-23, Hebrews 2:5-10.

To worship at the footstool meant that you worshipped at the feet of the Lord, not seeking to lift your eyes beyond His feet. It was worship that indicated total humility in the presence of the strength and power of the King of all kings, and the Lord of all lords. Possibly the Ark itself is being compared to the footstool of God's feet here. It was for Israel the potent symbol of the ruling power of God.

The Ark itself had been vandalised by the Philistines who had captured it in the last days of Eli and his corrupt sons. 1 Samuel 4:4-22, 6:1ff. Read the EBCWA Commentary on these chapters. It was a damaged box now, but it was still the place where God met His people. David deeply felt the humiliation of the state of the Ark and the Tabernacle itself. He had made a new tent for the housing of the Ark in Jerusalem but he felt that it was inadequate and inferior to the tabernacle of old. Everything felt less than it should be to David; he wanted something better for the Lord to be honoured from and heard from.

The psalmist (and I believe it is David – at least to this point) wants the Lord to honour his tabernacle and restore the glory of the Tabernacle of olden days. He longs for the final resting place of the Ark to be a place worthy of the honour of the God of Israel. He longs to see a Temple built to be the home for the Ark. He wants the Ark to have its place of rest in a place worthy of God, and for it to be the centre of the worship of the people. The Ark is referred to as the "Ark of thy strength". The psalmist longs to see the power and strength of God as the unifying force for the kingdom. This psalm looks more and more like a psalm of David! As we reflect upon these verses let us challenge ourselves; does our heart long to worship the Lord as the source of our strength and power?

**9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.**

**10 For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.**

To represent the Lord's sacrifice through the Levitical offerings the priesthood had to be ceremonially and morally clean and righteous. The psalmist prays that the priesthood might be worthy of the leadership they were called to exercise over the worship, and even in our own day this is a very important issue. The pastor-teacher must be morally clean or the ministry is polluted by his poor witness. The crucial qualifications for Priesthood and Eldership were moral. God's servants must be righteous, or they and their fellowship will be judged.

The prayer of verse ten is interesting, for it may be David himself praying, or a later king/ruler. The thought is clear; if sinfulness and all forms of unrighteousness are not dealt with by rulers, then they will lose their position as God's leaders. Moral cleanness is required of God's leaders. Refer to the BTB studies PRIESTS – LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD, PRIESTHOODS OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, CHURCH OFFICERS-PASTORS/ELDERS. Psalms 51:1-14.

**11 The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.**

**12 If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.**

The only certainty we have in our journey through this world is the certainty found in the doctrines and promises in God's Holy Word. Israel could be sure in the past, and can still be sure in the present, of the promises made to Abraham and David. The Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants will be kept, for they depend upon the holy character of God not anything in men. The certainty that all Israel could rest upon was that the Lord's promise to David would be kept. The specific promise referred to is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:8-16. The certainty however rests upon one line of David, not the politically dominant one in the early history of the kingdom. The true line of spiritual kingship flows down a hidden line, through Nathan the son of David, not through Solomon. **Luke 3:22-32.**

**2 Samuel 7:8b-16.** *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:*

*9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.*

*10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime,*

*11 And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.*

*12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.*

*13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.*

*14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:*

*15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.*

*16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."*

The promise to David is that he would not lack one to sit upon his throne forever. None sit upon the throne of David today in Jerusalem, and no legitimate king has sat upon it since the last king of David's line was taken into Babylonian Captivity in 597 and 586BC. How has this passage then been fulfilled? We believe it is fulfilled today in the person and rulership of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David. Refer to the BTB studies at the end of this chapter, CHRIST – PROPHET, PRIEST, KING, and PROPHETIC PSALMS ABOUT CHRIST, and VIRGIN BIRTH.

The promise to David's physical sons was made clear to them, and it is repeated in verse twelve here; if they kept the Law of God they and their descendents would sit upon the throne forever, but if they failed to do so, then they would lose that right. The line of Solomon ends with King Jehoiachin because they failed to live up to the standard God set for them. 2 Kings 23:36-37, 24:19-20, 2 Chronicles 36:11-16. The Lord Jesus descends through Mary from Nathan the son of David, and he is the perfect King and he does rule forever.

**13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.**

**14 This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.**

The Lord's promises about the hill of Zion are specific and clear. The Lord has chosen that place as the place that will be the centre of the world, and the place from where the Lord will rule. 1 Chronicles 21:16-26, Psalms 48:1-3, 76:1-3, 78:68-72. The Lord's presence will rest upon Jerusalem and upon Mount Zion especially in the Millennial Kingdom and the Lord Jesus will rule from that place. We are to remember this verse in the years to come for Jerusalem will look anything like the place the Lord has chosen.

This hill is presently the site of great evil and political argument and yet it will be the site of the throne of Jesus in the coming day. Hatred is preached in that place today, but the day will come when all evil is wiped away and righteousness will rule, and be seen to rule, until time ends and eternity begins. See the events of today in the light of the certainty of God's Plan for tomorrow. This is the challenge of faith, for faith sees tomorrow's reality already in place. Give thanks now for the truth that will dawn soon, and praise Him for His victory well before the world sees it come.

**15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.**

**16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.**

**17 There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.**

**18 His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.**

Blessings flow from the throne of Jesus when He rules from Jerusalem. All the things man longs for today will be provided for then directly by the Lord. Today we are urged to join the “war on hunger”, but the Bible teaches we will not see the hungry poor satisfied, nor wars cease until the Lord comes. The reason is not related to our prayers falling short, but the active and ever present evil of Satan and his followers in the fallen world at present. Jesus tells us that the poor we have always with us. Matthew 26:11. The poor were always to be assisted where possible, but there was to be a realistic WELFARE program in the Church.

Poverty cannot be eliminated because of the on-going sin of man. A tough pagan businessman said to me yesterday, “Greed is the one dependable and consistent motivation for men”. I reflected upon his words and chuckled, for he is right! Without Christ ruling over the heart, we are desperately wicked and self centred! Jeremiah 17:9. The Lord alone changes that reality in an individual, and only when His coming eliminates all evil angels and men will poverty and all evils be eliminated from the earth.

Notice the blessings that will then flow from the Lord’s throne. The poor will be fed in that day, and they will be able to feed themselves over time. Poverty will be eliminated in the Millennium for the first time in human history. The priesthood will be 100% righteous and the Lord will clothe them in the garments of salvation to bring glory to the Lord for His graciously provided salvation. All believers will worship in that day with all their hearts, for all the distractions of the world, the flesh, and the devil is gone!

As a pastor I ache for the people of the Lord as I preach at times, for I can feel the oppression and distraction of the devil’s world upon them. They are simply not 100% there in the worship, but in the Millennial Kingdom all believers will be 100% there! Even today, in the filling of the Holy Spirit we can get a glimpse of that 100% worship! That remains our daily challenge! The devil’s main attack today is distraction and in 90% of cases he is successful in keeping God’s people away from service and associated blessing.

In that day the whole earth will see the line of David come into the kingship, and the holy anointing will be upon all who serve in that day, with shame gone, and the crown of man upon the Son of Man. Let us walk today in the power and filling of the Holy Spirit, and so let us walk in the inner spiritual reality of the world to come. Worship helps us glimpse the rulership of the Lord upon the earth, and also the eternal rule of the Lord. Let us be 100% there in our worship, for otherwise we rob God of honour and we rob ourselves of the foretaste of glory! Let us worship the Lord, for in our worship we taste heavenly realities now.

## **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. Let us be very careful about making hasty vows. Let us ensure our “yes” is yes and our “no” means no! James 5:12. Most vows are testimonies of the seriousness of what we have just said in our prayer or our promise. If we have really thought about our prayer or promise we ought not to need to add to it by any vow. Let us be very careful if making any vow, but rather than making a vow of any sort, let us just be more thoughtful about our promises or prayers, for if they truly reflect our hearts desire there is no need to back them by any vow at all.

2. Do we worship the Lord with the heart that the psalmist shows us here in this psalm? The psalmist longs to have the Ark of the strength and power of God at the centre of worship for His people. He longs for the place of worship to be worthy of the Lord and a proper place for the dignity and glory of God. He recognises, as Solomon will also, that what man can make is never going to be as good as it needs to be. 1 Kings 8:22-32. These men recognised that, as inadequate as their worship places were, the Lord was looking to their heart, and desired that they be whole hearted in their worship towards Him. Mark 12:29-33. Let us worship in whatever place we find ourselves, but with all our heart and mind let us give glory to God who made us and saved us. In worship we have a foretaste of glory, and so let us be there 100% in our worship in Holy Spirit filled power and focus on our Lord

3. Moral cleanness is required of all who would lead God’s people. We must resist all immoral temptations and deal quickly by confession with any sinful thought or action. God will only work through clean vessels. Let us deal with sin and resist the devil in the areas where we know we are easily tripped up. Let us lift up in worship holy hands!

4. There is rest only in the plan of God and the rulership of the Lord. In the earth today we have war because of the sinfulness of mankind, but we can have the Lord rule over our heart now and know His peace through faith that passes all understanding. Let us walk in faith and experience the peace of the Lord in our lives in the midst of the turmoil of this world. John 14:27, Philipians 4:7.

## **DOCTRINES**

### **PRAYER**

### **PRIESTS – LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD**



**PRIESTHOOD – OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT**

**CHURCH OFFICERS – PASTORS/ELDERS**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**COVENANTS – ABRAHAMIC**

**COVENANTS – DAVIDIC**

**CHRIST – PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING**

**CHRIST – PROPHETIC PSALMS ABOUT CHRIST**

**CHRIST – VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST**

**POVERTY**

**WELFARE**

## **PSALMS 133**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is a wonderful thing to experience the joy of the fellowship of genuine believers together. There is nothing better than to spend time in the company of those who love the Lord as much as you do. There were specific times in Israel's history when disunity was overcome and unity was forged around worship again. Hezekiah did this at the great Passover he held. 2 Chronicles 30. David had tried to do the same reunification after the terrible evils of the civil war between the house of Saul and himself. 2 Samuel 19. In both situations the desire of the kings was that the people would come together with "one heart" and worship the Lord together.

Revival always opens the door for this, but revival does not last long unless it is constantly daily renewed by the Filling of the Holy Spirit on the part of the believers. Satan's main strategy is to get the Lord's people to go spiritually lukewarm and cold, for then he can break up the strongest fellowships. Refer to the EBCWA book REVIVAL AND RENEWEL. God desires us to know the joy of fellowship that is possible when believers worship the Lord in unity through their love for the one who gave His all for them.

### **PSALMS 133:1-3**

**1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!**

**2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;**

**3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.**

### **REFLECTION**

**1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!**

It is intrinsically good and pleasant for believers to fellowship together. No tricks and techniques of man are needed when the Holy Spirit brings believers together in the love of the Lord and in love for each other. The two loves are of course related, indeed if love for the Lord does not overflow into love for our brethren, then there is something wrong spiritually in that person. A major FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT is unity in the bonds of love. Psalms 122:1-4, Ephesians 4:1-6, Philippians 2:2-6, Hebrews 13:1, 1 Peter 3:8-9, 1 John 3:14-19, 4:7-19.

**2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;**

The psalmist sings of the great dedication of the priesthood under Moses leadership in the wilderness march. Exodus 30:22-28, Leviticus 8:1-13. The perfumed oil that was made to anoint the High Priest and the priesthood and implements of the Tabernacle was not to be made or used for any purpose other than the anointing of the holy items and the setting apart of the men for their priestly duties.

The sweet smell was only be smelled when the priests were anointed, for it was a reminder of the special nature of their role and what their work stood for. The anointing was a picture of abundance and joy, and also a picture of passion, and

the overflow of the fragrance of holiness. The entire picture was one of the beauty of holiness. Today we would say, that such time was “special”, and that is exactly what the psalmist says of time with fellow believers in shared fellowship and worship.

**3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.**

The dew of Mt Hermon may refer to two different things; one evocative and the other refreshing. The first meaning would be a reference to the cool snows of that mountain that were brought down to the workers at harvest time as a cool drink. This was a picture of pleasant refreshment; a cool drink on a hot day.

The other meaning that may be intended, and certainly would be for the “dew of Zion”, would be the evocative morning mist that circles the hills around Jerusalem at some seasons and makes the whole place take on an ethereal atmosphere. It is an atmospheric image; one that makes people feel the mystery of a place. A time of sweet fellowship is both a spiritual, and even physical refreshment, and also a time of sweet and wonderful mystery. I have left meetings at times, and in the car as I drove away I have felt a longing to be there again, and reflected on the wonderful afterglow that I carry with me away from that time.

### **PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:13-23, and always be a good “fruit inspector” of those who claim to be brethren but do not show good spiritual fruit in their lives. If people are not showing a spirit of unity, love, joy, peace, and the others on the list, then we ought to be very suspicious of their true spiritual status. Those who are in living fellowship with the Lord will resemble the Lord. We become like the one we spend most time with! Any spirit that causes discord is not of the Lord, and any spirit of unity is to be welcomed, and is the sign amongst believers that the Holy Spirit is in control.

2. Let us enjoy the sweet mystery of the meetings with our brethren. We can experience the joys of the Lord with people and carry the joy of that time with us for many hours. Fellowship is meant to be renewed often and must be to stay alive. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Let us ensure we meet with our brethren as often as we can. An old minister visiting a parishioner who had fallen away from church attendance illustrated the importance of gathering together regularly by a simple and homely illustration. He took a hot coal from the fire and placed it alone on the hearth, and while the rest of the fire glowed red hot, the isolated coal changed colour slowly to dark grey and went cold. The minister picked it up with his hands and placed it back in the fire, and within seconds it glowed red hot again. The parishioner got the message; have we got it? Let us get together with other believers as often as we can.

### **DOCTRINES**

#### **CHRISTIAN LIFE – FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

#### **HOLY SPIRIT – FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**PSALMS 134****INTRODUCTION**

This is the last of the “Songs of Degrees”. It is short but a powerful call to worship and to the heart of communal worship, which is blessing, being a blessing, and being blessed. It is a joyful call to all who love and serve the Lord to bless the Lord in passionately loving worship, and to then bless the Lord’s people in more acts of loving service. Worship is always “other centred” not self centred. I get concerned when I see worship leaders singing with their eyes closed and getting into their own little private world, for they are there as worship leaders to draw the people into worship, not have their own little private experience. Worship is to involve others and to be shared with others.

True worship is always Christ centred, but also congregation centred, for we bring praises to the Lord and we encourage each other simultaneously in corporate worship. In addition to weekly worship services, worship can be daily alone, but even then the Lord Jesus is the centre of it, not the worshipper. Worship is always best when with the gathered saints. By each focusing on blessing the Lord and those around them, to bring a blessing, all are blessed multiple times, whereas the self centred separate worship of those that keep their eyes closed and separate themselves, in the end isolate themselves from the best God has for them in worship.

The church is not meant to be many little bubbles of worship heading down the same road, but an interlinked family walking hand in hand down the road rejoicing with their Lord and each other. This communal worship becomes important when we get to the end of this psalm, for we are abruptly in eternity in the last verse, and from this side of time that can be a scary thought. We need the comfort and encouragement of others as we worship as the psalmist calls us to here. Worship takes us from where we are to where the Lord will be leading us, and that is a very awesome place, and the more brethren we have around us when we think of that, the better we will feel.

**PSALMS 134:1-3**

**1 Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.**

**2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.**

**3 The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.**

**REFLECTION**

**1 Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.**

The last song of degrees begins with a call to open the eyes and see the things of the Lord and truly respond to all that is seen and anticipated in faith with heartfelt worship. The order given is a good one, for we all need to be told to “open our eyes” to see the things that the daily grinding details of life can distract us from at times. We need to respond to the enthusiasm of the passionate faith we are called to, and “come and see” the truth of the Lord more often. John 1:39, 46. We are too polite and quiet at times in our worship. Now there is a time for quietness at the start of each service, to draw close to the Lord and deal with any shadow that has passed over the soul, and confess any sins that remain in the heart, but having drawn close to the Lord, let us open our eyes and see His truths and rejoice in them as believers together!

Rejoicing in the Lord’s person, His power, His Work, and His Word is what worship is all about, and as you reflect upon who the Lord is and what He has done, is doing and will do, the obvious thing to do is to turn to your neighbour and rejoice with them in the joy of the Plan of God. It is good to be in the place for worship, and the psalmist calls all who gather each night in the Temple to bless the Lord together as a passionate congregation, who just love the Lord with all their heart. The lovers of the Lord gathered often together to bless His holy name. Malachi 3:16-18.

To love the Lord means to fear the Lord in the biblical sense. The “fear of the Lord” is the holy respect for who God is and what He has done, is doing, and will do. Let us stand before the Lord in congregation as often as we can and let us praise and bless His holy name. Psalms 135:19-21, Luke 2:25-28, 36-38, Revelation 7:9-15. Heaven is about worship, so let us get into practise here and now brethren!

**2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.**

The posture for believing prayer in the ancient world was in three dominant ways. The first was total prostration before the altar, with the knees bent under the worshipper and the forehead touching the ground. This posture is maintained by the Moslem world today. The second posture comes from the first, and was a half way posture, with the knees bent and kneeling with arms outstretched in front of the worshipper. This kneeling position is the most common one in churches in recent history, and padded kneeling benches are still provided in traditional churches.

The third posture was standing, head bowed and arms outstretched palms upwards in front of the worshipper. This was the most common posture in the Temple at Jerusalem where all stood facing the great altar. The order in this verse is to move from that posture and lift up the arms, (and the eyes) and with the arms lifted higher than the head to praise and bless the Lord. It is the order to move from confession, supplication, and any request (all such prayers made with palms open facing upwards to receive blessing), and raise the arms in praise to the Lord.

We are to move from asking for blessing to blessing the Lord ourselves with the sacrifice of praise. Romans 12:1-2. Praise is expressed after we have confessed any sins, and laid all our burdens before the Lord, for praise must be offered with a clear heart and nothing within us to distract us from total worship of the name of the Lord.

**3 The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.**

We have seen a number of times that the psalmist returns to the thought of God as the creator after praise and worship have been urged. There are over thirty references to the heavens in the Psalms and each serves to ground the worshipper in the reality that we are worshipping the one who made the heavens and the earth. The heavens declare the glory of God. Psalms 19:1. The stars also declare the power and plan of God, for they have nearly all been already extinguished to meet their scheduled observable departure in terms of the Plan of God.

Most of the stars are millions of light years away from the earth. The light we see from them tonight has been travelling for millions of years to get here in time for us to see them tonight. The Bible teaches that during the Great Tribulation period one third of the stars will be seen to fade and die. Revelation 8:12. Now even if the Great Tribulation is one hundred years away (and I don't believe it is that far at all) then these stars must already have been extinguished several million years ago for their lights to fade at exactly the right time in the Tribulation. We have a mighty God!

The Bible also teaches that all the heavens and the earth will be "folded up" and put away like an old tired blanket, and all will be replaced by a new heavens and a new earth that is well beyond the scope and wonder of the present space-time universe. Isaiah 65-66, 2 Peter 3:10-18, Revelation 21:1ff. Once again reflect for a few minutes on this biblical prophetic fact. If all the stars will be seen to be wound up and put away, and from the earth it will be seen to occur, then the galaxies whose light has been travelling towards us for 200 million years must have already been extinguished!

If they will be seen to fade in a future day, even a thousand years down the track, they must have already been extinguished. It is only their light travelling towards us now from an empty space! Now don't think too long on this without a spiritually mature friend beside you because it is a bit overwhelming, but this is what the psalmist is asking us to reflect upon together as we worship. Refer to the BTB studies at the end of this chapter.

We worship the creator and finisher of the universe He made! What we see tonight in the sky has mostly already gone, it is just the light of long dead stars that still travels through empty space, but we don't need to be depressed about that because God is clearing out space and time because He has some thing better to reveal to us!

Think, reflect, and then praise the God who is a lot bigger and more wonderful than we often allow ourselves to think about! God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He has something for us in eternity that is better than we can even think of now! God's best for us is yet to come. Praise His holy name.

**PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS**

1. Let us bless the Lord with all our hearts and minds and worship the holy name of the Lord who has done all for us to win our salvation and open the doors of heaven to bless us abundantly. Let us bless the Lord with all our hearts and lift our voices often to Him in praise of His holy name.
2. Let us follow the order of verse two of this Psalm. Let us pray as the psalmist orders, and first deal with any sins and lay our burdens before the Lord, but having done that, let us praise His Holy Name aloud together and rejoice in who we worship, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He is yet to do! Let us praise Him in the highest!
3. Let us praise the holy name of the Lord as the Creator and finisher of the space-time universe we presently live in, and let us lift our voices in praise that reflects our confident expectation that the best is truly yet to come in the Lord.

**DOCTRINES**

**CREATION**

**REVELATION**

**REVELATION – BLESSINGS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

**WORRY**

**GOD – DIVINE DECREES**