

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE PSALMS OF DAVID

Psalms 9 - 16

A VERSE BY VERSE STUDY

by

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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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THE PSALMS OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR:

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

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

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

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

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

PSALMS SECTION ONE

THE GENESIS PSALMS – PSALMS 1 - 41

INTRODUCTION

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

The dominant name for God used in this section is “Jehovah - JHWH”, the holy name of God given to Moses. It is used 277 times in this book of the Psalms, well ahead of the next three sections, with the last section alone getting close with 226 uses of this special name of God. This name of God was never pronounced so do not get into debate about whether

it should be said as “Jehovah” or “Yahweh”, because it was simply breathed through by the readers, or the word “Adonai”, or Lord, used in its place. Other names for God used in this first book of the Psalms are, Elohim 48 times, El 15 times, Adonai 11 times, Alyon 3 times, Adon 2 times, and Eloah once. Refer to the doctrinal study on the names of God below to explore the significance of these names, as all carry important reference to the psalmist’s understanding of the triune God.

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

DOCTRINE

CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

Notes

Psalm 9

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN UPON MUTH-LABBEN, A PSALM OF DAVID

The sub-title of the Psalm has been translated to read, “upon the death of a son”. If this is the case, it gives us an amazing challenge to process grief, and if it was written in the weeks after Absalom’s death it tell us that David has travelled a long way since the day he heard of that evil young man’s death.

David’s grief at Absalom’s death was self centred, sinful even, and extreme (2 Samuel 18:33 – 19:4), and this psalm is a song of almost rejoicing over the death and defeat of enemies, although it is far more complex than that as we will see.

It is also to be noted that those enemies referred to, or included here, are referred to as “the heathen”, meaning foreigners, of Gentile nations, (verses 5, 15 and 19). This psalm’s evocative sub-title must make us think about what might be here, for it is grouped in the collection with the other psalms of the Great Rebellion and yet may not belong there at all.

Psalm 9: 1

“I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvellous works.”

REFLECTION

Given the sub-title of the psalm this beginning point is instructive. All prayers, even the ones covering the most extreme of human emotional situations must begin, if they are godly and righteous, with praise to the Lord for who He is and ever will be. He is worthy of our worship, and though he slays us, yet must we begin by praising his holy name, as the martyrs did in the Roman Arenas in the days when evil men ordered them torn by wild beasts.

In the midst of pain and suffering, in the way of pressure and threat, we are challenged to bow before our creator and saviour and praise his holy name, for that is the starting point of blessing and comfort. It is in worship that we are restored to mental and physical health, and whatever has driven us to the extreme place we find ourselves in the Lord meets us where we are.

Let us pause and reflect upon two passages of the Holy Word of God that remind us of these things; one from David’s life and one from the prophetic words of Isaiah. David’s great sin with Bathsheba led to her pregnancy, and the little child sickened and David prayed earnestly for it. David by this point had confessed his great sin (Psalm 51) but he knew that the child was ill and could die because of the great evils that he, David had let loose by his actions. He prayed earnestly for the child to live, but the child died. Note the events as they unfold.

2 Samuel 12:11-25

“11 (The prophet Nathan speaks). Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

17 And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

24 And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.

25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.”

Notice David’s prayers through the days of distress, and then his laying aside of grief once he knew the child was dead, for his faith was firm that this little child was now in heaven, and that he would see that child again there when he himself went to heaven. David has assurance of the child’s destiny and his own through forgiveness. **Psalm 103:10-18.**

Look now at the words of the prophet Isaiah as he speaks prophetically of the Lord Jesus at his First and Second Advents. **Isaiah 61:1-3.**

“1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”

Worship achieves what all psychologists cannot achieve after any “great grief”, the oil of the Holy Spirit brings joy to the soul again in hope of heaven and resurrection, and **the garment of praise and worship replaces the spirit of heaviness.** It may be that these two passages are a clue to David’s joy in the midst of grief and death in this psalm, for he is beginning with worship, and thereby he centres himself in the person and plan of God for himself and for those who have died. This is the right place to anchor our minds as we face all grief.

He will worship with his “whole heart” (his entire being – with no aspect of his being held back from worship). He is totally open to what God is doing in this situation, and seeks the Lord’s way through it in joy and peace. He further reflects upon the “marvellous works” of God, and this is the right place to begin any contemplation for events that are beyond our immediate understanding. All works are the works of God finally, for they have occurred within his plan and are to be embraced and the meaning found for them in light of his plan and purpose for our life and that of the others.

APPLICATION

1. Worship is the only tonic for grief and shock, for it is in the Plan, Person, and Power of Almighty God that meaning is found, and there alone. The garments of praise alone will replace the spirit of heaviness with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
2. God seeks worship with our whole being, not just our minds or emotions, but will both. Let us worship with all our being and lose ourselves in the grace, mercy and love of our heavenly Father.

Psalm 9: 2

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

REFLECTION

No matter what we face we can make the free will decision to “be glad” and to “rejoice” in the Lord. Happiness is a choice we make daily and hourly by what we pay attention to and what we deliberately do to shift our emotions. Emotions flow from actions and thoughts, and we are able to shift them by shifting our thoughts and actions. Proverbs 23:7. As we think so we become over time. This is how worship and praise shifts emotion and finally moves even our stress hormones and lifts the physiological pressures that are upon us.

Psalm 34:1-5

“1 I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

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

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

4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.”

It is right to praise the name of the Lord, for this is to praise the Lord for being God Almighty; it is the celebration of his character, plan and purpose. It is our recognition that the Lord is God Most High. There is none like our God, and we are safe in his arms and within his plan for our life, whatever that brings.

Habakkuk 3:16ff

“16 When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.

17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments."

APPLICATION

1. Whatever comes into our life we are to praise the Lord and seek his path through it. Lord give us your strength and your power through your Holy Spirit to do this and glorify your name on the way.
2. Happiness is a choice and one we make daily as we praise the Lord and serve Him in faith, hope, and love. We have received of the Lord grace, mercy, and peace, and so we can walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death and fear no evil on the journey. Psalms 23:1ff.

DOCTRINE

GOD – NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Psalm 9: 3

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

REFLECTION

It is not "if" my enemies are turned back, but "when" they are by the power of God against whom they have fought. Those who declare war upon God's people declare war upon God himself and we are to rest upon his strength and power in these matters and trust in his deliverance. All evil men will fall before God, and the day will come when they perish before his face for their evil hearts and deeds. There is no escape from the justice of God except on your knees seeking the mercy of God. For those who persist in evil there is no hope for they have turned from their only hope.

Hebrews 9:26-28, 10:26-31.

"26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

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

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

Those who think they can escape the judgment of the creator of the universe must pause and ask where they plan to hide? There is no hiding from the judgment of the one who made all things and has them all in his hands. There is one day fixed for mankind to face their maker and be judged and that day will be kept by men for they must face their maker and give account of their decision making.

We have all had deaths that have baffled us and raised questions. We have also seen some live who we wished had died in place of the good and great and we stand baffled and upset at the Lord's work. In all such times we need to rest upon the Character of God and the Plan of God, and the Word of God. Notice how the promises regarding the death of saints are sandwiched in between other vital principles regarding worship.

Psalms 68:20

"19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.

20 He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.

21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses."

Psalms 116:15

"14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD."

APPLICATION

1. God will judge man and do so surely and justly. There is a day fixed when all things will be dealt with and the Lord will sort all our questions out on that day, and even the strongest believer does have some questions about the death of some friend or other. Let us rest in the certainty that the one who hung the heavens for his glory has every answer we need as to the death of his saints.

2. We do not rest in the ability of our mind to understand things, but in the immutable wisdom of the Lord to resolve all our questions in the end. Our faith is in God, not our own minds. Let us hold our doubts and fears in the container of "limited comprehension" and cast ourselves in faith on the maker of our minds and the entire universe.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH

NOTES

Psalm 9: 4

“For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; you sit in the throne judging right.”

REFLECTION

God will always accomplish all that he intends to in our life as we open ourselves to his Holy Spirit’s deep working within us. John 19:28ff. The Plan will work out in time and into eternity. The only question for us is, will we be blessed as we can be in the process? God seeks our blessing as we obediently walk with Him down the path, even if at times it is a rocky and thorn sided path. Matthew 7:13-23.

The Lord has maintained his purpose and plan for David’s life, even through all the tragedies and acts of evil that have at times swirled around him. Have you reflected upon your own life believer regarding the Lord’s provisions through great adversity? I stand amazed at the grace, mercy and love of God, just as David does, for I should not have lived this long or been as well as I have been. I should have been killed many times, but the Lord has brought me through to accomplish his purposes and that is my focus for that very reason.

He has maintained my privileged position as his child, the son of his plan of salvation. John 15:15-20. I have a particular right in Christ Jesus to expect the grace of God to continue, not because of my righteousness, but because the Lord has promised it and I can depend upon his promises to be fulfilled to the letter. My pleas are heard because the Lord is on the throne and He is my Father and hears my prayers and answers them all! Psalm 45:6-7, 89:14, 96:13.

1 Peter 2:21-24.

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

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

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

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

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

APPLICATION

1. We are the children of our loving Father and come before his "Throne of Grace" not his judgment bar. We are recipients of his grace, mercy and love. We can rest in his love as David understands, even after great sins have been forgiven, and great grief has been painfully sat through.
2. We have the right to expect answers to prayer because of our relationship with the father through Christ Jesus.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Psalm 9: 5

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

REFLECTION

David can look back to his first great encounter against evil with the death of Goliath of Gath. The interesting thing about this is that he later serves Gath and its king, and many of his greatest military allies and honour guard come from Gath (the Gittites). Not only did God assist him to defeat the giant, the Lord allowed him to see the conversion of many of these people and their entry into blessing in Israel later. The greatest victory over this enemy was not their death, but the final death of their paganism.

1 Samuel 17:45-49.

"45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth."

There are two ways the Lord can destroy the wicked; the first is their death, the second is their conversion, for then they are brethren not enemies. Paul delighted in pointing out to the early church that they contained amongst their members all manner of people who had been criminals and pervers. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. God delights in elimination of evil men, but he prefers to bring them into salvation and make them brethren, just as he did with many of the relatives of Goliath of Gath.

The Lord will "put out their name" forever. For many pagans the big thing was their reputation before their fellow men. The reason for this is the same as for such men and women today; it was pride and arrogance. They valued their reputation and would go to any length to protect their "precious reputation", but such things are irrelevant to the genuine and spiritual believer, who rests solely in the opinion of the Lord Jesus of them. No believer worries about their reputation before men, but seeks a heavenly reputation where the truth will always be known.

Many here and now have had reputation, but it has evaporated as facts emerge about their financial dealings and corruption. Reputation is a vapour, and it can be destroyed by justice or injustice. I have seen in recent years following the financial crisis of 2007-2012 good and bad men lose their reputation, their money, and their liberty, and I have seen evil men come through without blemish because they were more thoroughly evil in their dealings than the others. Reputation before men is nothing, and the Lord will remove all great men and lower them into the Lake of Fire unless they have reputation as genuine believers before Him.

Only the Lord secures our reputation where it matters, and that is heaven, where the righteous and spiritually mature seek to hear the Lord's "well done good and faithful servant". Matthew 21:25-30. This praise alone has eternal value.

Proverbs 10:7-9

"7 The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known."

Proverbs 13:9

"9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase."

APPLICATION

1. All will eventually stand before their maker and receive what they have done in full from their maker and saviour and so let us fear the Lord and depart from iniquity in thought and deed.
2. The mightiest and most powerful will die and be judged by God, and in their dying there will be no hope for any recovery from the evil actions of this life, there will only be eternal consequences. Reputation with men who also perish is a vapour, gone with the wind, but reputation with God is eternal.

Psalm 9: 6

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

REFLECTION

David reflects upon the power of evil in this world and the terrible results of the actions of evil men at times. Entire cities can be destroyed by evil men or evil actions. In World War as well as in local wars there are terrible consequences of great evil for civilian populations and eternally for those men who take such decisions. The bombing of cities in WW II was a great evil and whoever started it is irrelevant, God’s judgment will be upon all who destroy the innocent to get at the guilty. David reflects upon the inevitability of judgment upon evil men, or even otherwise good men, for their evil actions.

God notices the actions of men and evil will be faced finally by all who practise it, and there is no escape from the justice of God. There is a terminal point and it is called the Great White Throne Judgment. God will destroy the evil ones fully and finally at that time with absolute justice in the Lake of Fire.

Those who destroy cities may or may not live to see their very “memorial” of power destroyed totally. To be known as the “destroyer of cities” is a satanic objective and if the very “memorial” of your destructive power (the blasted city) is gone, so is your memorial. David sees the pathetic and empty evil of the boast of such people, for they are true servants of the hater of mankind, Satan himself. This earth is destined to be destroyed one day, 2 Peter 3:10-18, and so all that is restricted to this place is gone in the end.

APPLICATION

1. Do not rest upon the rewards of time, for they are fleeting and will all decay and be blown away. All you will have is what the Lord gives for eternity, so rest upon that, for that is all that is secure here.
2. The great classic movie, “Gone With The Wind” catches the temporary nature of fame and wealth in war and reminds us of the foolishness of men and women who cling to a vapour, rather than Christ and his eternal purposes.

Psalm 9: 7-8

“But the LORD shall endure forever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.”

REFLECTION

The evil men and women will perish without being remembered again, but the Lord, and all those who stand with the Lord will live forever and be honoured forever. There is no doubt about the end of all things within this present creation; it will all be judged and it will all be removed and replaced by a better. 2 Peter 3:10ff, Revelation 21-22.

The Lord is absolutely just and fair in all his dealings with men. There is “no shadow of turning” with the Lord. James 1:17. The holy Character of God is stable and sure and there is no chance for evil to triumph in the end, or for unrighteousness to remain unpunished. The Great White Throne Judgment is absolutely sure and its results certain.

APPLICATION

1. We can rest in the absolute justice of God.
2. When facing all matters of injustice in time we need to rest upon the justice and righteousness of God.

DOCTRINES

JUDGMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE

CHRIST – PROPHET, PRIEST, KING

Remember to always relate these New Testament doctrines to the Old Testament ‘shadows’ of the Temple ritual, a ritual familiar to all the Old Testament saints. Hebrews 7:12-25, 10:1-4.

SHADOWS

Psalm 9: 9-10

“The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.”

REFLECTION

The fellowship of the Lord is a refuge for the crushed and oppressed, and he is a secure place for those who have suffered injustice. David has learned this through the Great Rebellion and he has come to the place where he sees that the evil ones who stood with his evil son have been dealt with by God. This psalm may even be the evidence that David accepted the death of his son as judgment from the Lord upon Absalom. He certainly here recognises that he has been kept and the enemies, though numbering more than his men, have been defeated.

The Lord has been a “safe place” for David as he fled the city and headed across Jordan and the Lord has proved a safe place through the battle and after it. David affirms that he has trusted in the holy Character of God, as reflected in the Lord’s names, and he has not been disappointed. The Lord has been true to his names, and He always will be, a secure place for the believer to rest his head in troubled times. Psalms 37:7.

Those who seek the Lord’s rest and the Lord’s solution will not find they are let down. The Lord will always deliver his people for his reputation depends upon it. If the Lord lets down his people he loses more than his people, he loses his reputation in the eyes of the lost and closes the Gospel door to them. The Lord defends his people, even though they go through deep waters and severe trials at times.

Jonah 2:1-7

“2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.”

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

“8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.”

APPLICATION

1. Great trials will come upon God’s people, for we are called to battlefield action, not deck chairs on a cruise liner. We will suffer badly at times but may rest, like David, on the security of the Lord’s love for us and power over all things.

2. In trouble let us draw close to the character of the Lord and rest upon his name and his reputation. It is the Lord’s way through only that we need to find, for there is no other. Do not trust the lying words of the “prosperity gospel” preachers, for they have no truth, only deception that kills the over-confident in the angelic battlefields.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFIDENCE

Psalm 9: 11

“Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.”

REFLECTION

David is facing the death of many men as he writes these lines and yet he is able to sing unto the Lord and urge all those who mourn with him to do likewise. These are the words either of a callous madman, or a mature believer who has seen more than the multitude of bodies that lie upon the earth in the forest before the city he writes in. How can David write this and praise the Lord with song after the death of so many?

It is only as he sees that the Lord’s stability is reflected in the outcome of the battle and that the dead are in the Lord’s hands for eternity, as they were in his hands in the battle. He has settled his mind in the outcome of the battle, even the death of his son, and sees that the Lord is indeed The King in Zion. The Lord has never left the throne of Zion, even though David was forced from his just down the hill in the palace. He now sees that all that has occurred is the doing of the Lord and he rests in the Lord’s work.

APPLICATION

1. Let us rest in the work of the Lord, and watch to see what it is that he does, even through what we see as tragedy.
2. The Lord has not left his throne and the maker of the universe still holds it together. We need to rest upon the Lord for our deliverance and trust in his holy character through the trials of life.

DOCTRINE

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Psalm 9: 12

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

REFLECTION

The innocent are slain all day long at times, and we are left with serious questions of the Lord regarding some of the matters that we see, just as David did after the battle at Mahanaim. 2 Samuel 18-19. When the innocent are slain by evil men their cries are heard and rise up to the Lord in heaven, and the Lord will, in human terms, conduct a thorough investigation from which no facts are hidden, and will punish the guilty without any mercy shown to those who showed none. Judgment is God’s “strange work”, Isaiah 28:21, but it is a thorough work after grace and mercy has been rejected by evil men. There are only two categories of mankind; the arrogant evil and the humble and obedient to the Lord.

Psalm 9:8-9.

“When he goes forth in the earth to execute judgment on the wicked; when he cuts them down in his wrath; when he sweeps them away as with a flood - the punishment will not be indiscriminate. He will then mark the oppressed, the afflicted, the persecuted, the troubled, and the sad, and will interpose to save them - delivering them from the storms of wrath. The idea, then, is, that the righteous will not be forgotten; that even in the most fierce and awful of his dispensations he will still regard them, and interpose to save them.”

Luke 18:1-8

- 1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;
- 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:
- 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.
- 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
- 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
- 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.
- 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?
- 8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.”

APPLICATION

1. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay." Deuteronomy 32:35-36, Hebrews 10:30.
2. Let us remain humble supplicants before the Lord our God and depend upon him alone for provision for our lives here and for all that is involved in eternal life.

DOCTRINE

HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Psalm 9: 13-14

"Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death: That I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation."

REFLECTION

Even though there is victory spoken of in earlier verses the grief of what has happened sweeps over David at this point and this is an encouragement to all of us who suffer great pressure times. I have experienced this over recent months and years, whereby I rejoice in the Lord and feel the rock beneath my feet in the Word, but a second later deep waters sweep over me and I succumb to despair and have to "find the rock" again and re-plant myself upon it.

When despair sweeps in over us like a tsunami we need to settle our heart and mind again in the Word of the Lord. We must seek the Lord's mercy alone and appeal to the Lord for his vindication of his servant who is hated for his work. To be able to do this we need to be settled in the work of the Lord and obedient to the work of the Lord. We cannot ask the Lord to deal with us as his son/daughter and servant if we are not living as such in obedience to His Word and will.

The Lord has lifted David up from the gates of death in the Great Rebellion and he seeks the Lord's solutions to all his problems now at the feet of the Lord in abject humility. His desire is that he might show the Lord's praise to the "daughters of Zion". To seek to praise God before the most vulnerable of the city is instructive. It was the young women who were most at risk in the Civil War that is just over.

David's harem has all been sexually seduced by Absalom, and other mischief may have been done by Absalom that is not recorded. David seeks to praise the Lord and honour the Lord in light of the evils done by his wicked son, and teach the young women that the Lord can be trusted to set things right again and restore righteousness. The Lord has delivered/saved David and the Lord will save these girls, and David wants them to praise the Lord for his deliverance through the death of Absalom and the defeat of the rebel army.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord knows our troubles and suffering against the evils of this world. We will be deeply burdened with evil at times, but the Lord knows and will deliver us in all things. Our challenge is to rest upon the Lord's deliverance and wait for his coming to save us.
2. When trouble and fear overwhelms we need to seek the Lord's face and find that rock that is Christ again. We have no stability outside the Lord's plan for our life and so let us find that daily and walk in it.

DOCTRINES

PERSECUTION

WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Psalm 9: 15

“The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.”

REFLECTION

Evil people dig holes for themselves and then are baffled that they have fallen into them. There is justice with the Lord and the Lord pays his accounts to all who work evil, but often not in our time frame. They practise deceit and so are caught by their own lies and deceit. They are devious and are caught by their deviousness. They may be left to their own devices, for they will be taken in their own devices. Psalm 7:14-16, 35:8, 37:15, 57:6, 94:23.

APPLICATION

1. Evil men can be left to the judgment of God, for the Lord does a so much better job than we can ever do. Leave your case in the Lord's hands at all times, for the Lord can be trusted to secure justice.

Psalm 9: 16

“The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgsion. Selah.”

REFLECTION

God's Character depends upon his righteousness being upheld by his actions. Isaiah 43:1-3. God executes final justice and all will see it in the end, but down here we have baffling things that we must bring to the throne of grace. We are not to sit with and weep over the things that baffle us, but seek the Lord's solutions at the foot of his throne. Let us bow before the throne of grace and seek the Lord's comfort as we face difficult things.

This part of the psalm ends with a musical sound that challenges all hearers and singers to pause, reflect and bow their heads in silence and contemplation. The wicked are snared by the evil work of their own hands. Jesus had said that all men are known by their works. Matthew 7:13-23 and so the Lord is known by his works amongst men. We are challenged to be "fruit inspectors" of those who claim to be prophets and David challenges us to be a fruit inspector of God's work also and be assured of the trust we have in Him.

Matthew 7:15ff

*“15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.
 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?
 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

APPLICATION

1. Let us be sure to work the works of God and let us be assured of the Lord's judgment over all who work iniquity. Let us leave our case in the Lord's hands.

Psalm 9: 17

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

REFLECTION

There is one destiny for the lost and that is eternal judgment and the Lord has been clear on this since the beginning and we must come to terms with this reality. There is judgment and it is full and final. This life is fatal, and has an end in death for all, and after that the judgment. There is no escape for man and we must all stand before our maker and give account of our lives. Revelation 20:10-15.

Hell (Hades in Greek, Sheol in Hebrew) is the waiting place for unsaved mankind before the last judgment, not their last destination. Refer to the study below. It does not pay to forget your maker, for if you are made then it is logical that you will be asked to give account to the maker of what you have “made” with the life given by grace to you.

APPLICATION

1. All of us must give account to God. The unbeliever must explain why they ignored the righteous demands of a holy God, and the saved must give account for their productivity for reward or loss. Let us walk before the Lord in holy fear and serve in thoughtfulness. 2 Corinthians 5:9-15.

DOCTRINE

HELL AND HADES

Psalm 9: 18

“For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish forever.”

REFLECTION

Suffering is nearly always baffling in some way or other, for it hurts and offends our human expectation that we will have a lovely life. We have to sit with the truth of suffering in the devil’s world, for this fallen place is a place where hurt is more normal than joy at times.

The terrible consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin are still with us in suffering and death today and we need to take into account the Fall when we ask about why suffering comes to people. The great evil of satanic power was let lose upon the earth after the Fall of Man in the Garden and we must factor this fact into our thinking about all we face here.

APPLICATION

1. Study the doctrine of Suffering below, and reflect upon its truths, for we all face great suffering at times and must sit before the Lord with it and rest upon his holy character to help us through.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

Psalm 9: 19-20

“Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O LORD: *that* the nations may know themselves *to be but* men. Selah.”

REFLECTION

Asking God to “arise” is not accusing God of taking a holiday, but is a dramatic way of stating that the believer is expecting the Lord to respond now and deliver quickly. David wants to see all people recognise that they are “but men”, not the god-like creatures that they have deceived themselves into thinking they are.

Men in rebellion against God will actively rebel against his majesty, and will resist the truth until their death. It is inconceivable that men would fight God and yet they do. We see this in the evil life and grubby deaths of Hitler and his

mistress Eva Braun. Right until the end Hitler blamed others for the failure of his evil empire; he never accepted his responsibilities, but in hell now he has in the company of all the other evil men. Isaiah 14:9-11.

No man will "prevail" against the Lord God. David wants men to be "put in fear" that they might repent before it is too late. Even though David recognises that evil men deserve the pit of hell and the Lake of Fire to follow David seeks their salvation and deliverance through repentance. His prayer here is a good one to pray over the lost even today. John 3:16-36, 16:8-11, Acts 4:12.

APPLICATION

1. There is one redeemer and man has no hope without total repentance and humble acceptance of the truth. Let us pray for that in our churches.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – REPENTANCE

NOTES

Psalm 10

David continues his meditation in this psalm, building upon the thoughts of Psalm 9, reflecting upon the need for great patience in adversity in our journey through the Devil's world. We are called to get our armour on daily because we are on the battle field of the Angelic Conflict and that means the going is tough a lot of the time, as it is open and total war. Ephesians 6:18ff James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:5-9.

"My brethren, when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience... ..let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing... ..Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." **James 1:2-4,12.**

It is possible to have peace in the midst of adversity, and it is the reality for all who walk in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18ff. This is the Lord's plan for our lives.

Psalm 10: 1

"Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? "

REFLECTION

How often have you doubted that the Lord has heard you believer? How often have you cried out to the Lord in pain and anguish of soul and felt not heard? Most of us, just like David, have been in extreme anguish at some time and felt this desperate and the psalmist's words are a great encouragement to us in our distress. If David felt this strongly, then we can also express this and find grace to help in our time of need as he did.

It is not wrong to pour our worry and even our "complaint" to the Lord as we wait upon the Lord for the answer to our prayers. We can feel at times that the Lord is a "long way away", and yet he is at our right hand at all times. Psalm 91:15 reminds us, "Call upon me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you." The delay we feel is not delay, for God is never late, it is just timing (ours and Gods!) and we need to wait upon the Lord.

Does the Lord "hide" himself from us? It is impossible for God to do certain things, and this is one of them, and the other is for God to lie. Hebrews 6:9-18. In distress we have a choice and David expresses one attitude towards the challenge here in this verse. We can be so overwhelmed by the pressure situation that all we see is the situation rather than what God is doing in and through it. We can look at the problem or we can look into the wonderful face of our Saviour and Lord. Psalms 37:7, 116:7, Isaiah 30:15, Jeremiah 6:16, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Hebrews 4:1-11.

APPLICATION

1. Let us labour in the Spirit to enter into his rest and so find peace and the place of powerful service.
2. The Lord does not hide, nor does he close his ears to our cries. Our Saviour hears and answers our prayers.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – REWARDS AND CROWNS

ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT

Psalm 10: 2

"The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined."

REFLECTION

How can we tell that a person is "wicked"? The answer is in this verse and others like it. We can tell people are wicked by the "fruit" of their life. Those who do Satan's work are "wicked", and Satan's work is always work that expresses hatred and contempt for mankind. All contempt is satanic, and all abuse of people is satanic. Those who do not care for the poor are wicked in their behaviours and show who their "father" is. John 8:39-47.

Such people have declared war on God, for showing care and concern for the needy is God's heart for all who reverence Him. Luke 6:20, 14:13, Galatians 2:10, James 2:2-6. Those who despise the poor and abuse the weak and vulnerable

are under the Lord's special judgment. Let no man think he can get away with abuse of the vulnerable, for the Lord will catch them in their deviousness.

Matthew 18:2-11.

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.

7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

APPLICATION

1. Beware of "wicked" people who do not care for the vulnerable, for such betray their family origins as satanic.
2. The Lord will judge those who abuse the weak and vulnerable and they will be without remedy except they fall upon their knees before their Creator and the Saviour of the vulnerable.

Psalms 10: 3

"For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth."

REFLECTION

In case there is any misunderstanding of God's position on evil this verse spells out in a different way the points made earlier in this and other psalms. Psychologically it is always interesting and a little baffling that evil people boast of their evil and even illegal schemes. I have been baffled at evil as a result of my studies in theology and world history through the last forty years. The more you study of self centeredness the more amazing is the stupidity of evil people who seem to be so totally deceived that their logic completely breaks down! Isaiah sees this later with the Assyrian king. Isaiah 10:7-15.

Self centred people very quickly become unable to see, understand, and finally even comprehend and tolerate other's opinions. They are centred round their own feelings and thoughts, and their Old Sin Nature, strengthened by the forces of evil that they let "make their home" within, build up a total barrier to stop truth getting in. I have seen one woman die in total self deception and hatred of the truth just this last week, resisting the truth to the end from the very minister she had asked to take her funeral.

Such people bless the plunderers of others and rejoice in iniquity. There is an old English proverbial saying; "A man's character is known by his friends". Those who rejoice in goodness rejoice in good people, and those who rejoice in evil surround themselves with evil people. Those who love goodness celebrate things that are good, but those who love evil celebrate the "victories" of evil. The Lord hates and despises the persistently evil and he abhors their deeds, and they will be judged when the days of grace end. Acts 4:12, Hebrews 9:27, 10:27, Revelation 20:10-15.

APPLICATION

1. Be very selective in your friendships; flee evil company, and do not be a friend of the world. 1 John 2:15-17.
2. Evil people love and delight in the victories of their evil friends and the result is always more evil. Do not be baffled at this, but withdraw yourself from their midst and cling to those who are good.

Psalm 10: 4

“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God*: *God is not in all his thoughts.*”

REFLECTION

Why do people refuse to even contemplate the existence of God, let alone seek to know their creator? At its heart atheism is passionate hatred of the very idea of accountability for mankind. Atheism should, by its basic philosophy be very relaxing, for they have rejected God and all absolute morality, and so ought to relax, like the old Epicurean and just enjoy life, not worrying about the “fools” who agonise about God and judgment, but that is not what we see with most. They passionately hate all religions that remind them of the truth rather than ignoring them.

At its heart the atheist has rejected God's existence because of human pride; he simply will allow no challenge to his own opinions. It is pride, Satan's great sin that moves him to reject God and so this same pride drives him to reject and hate any challenge that brings the question of the existence of God back to his mind. He will not seek after God, and banishes God from his mind, and hates all who remind him that the issue must be faced. They have in arrogance excluded the creator from their created mind! Proverbs 6:16-19, 21:2-4, Romans 1:21-28.

APPLICATION

1. Those whose minds are fixed/hardened against accountability will maintain their viewpoint until the end, and finally be held accountable by Almighty God. They are rightly condemned and will bow their knee on that last day.
2. Expect to meet those who close their minds against the very thought of a creator who whom they must give account. The hatred of such people will surprise at times, but do not be amazed, for they have followed Satan himself in their attitudes and so they will reflect his hate filled malicious behaviours in time.

Psalm 10: 5

“His ways are always grievous; thy judgments *are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.*”

REFLECTION

It is useful and safe to always recall the nature of the enemies of faith, for then you are not too shocked at their malice when they oppose truth. Their ways, chosen by thousands of self centred decisions over time, are always “grievous”. They cause pain to others and they care not for that, and they pervert truth, and they care not for that either. They are limited in all their decision making and choices to the things of this temporary earth and they are incapable of seeing the eternal issues that make the heart of our decision making as believers. Proverbs 1:22, 19:29, 2 Peter 3:3ff.

They do not “get” any understanding of where we are coming from, for they close off their minds. They despise the good and all who stand for the truths they find “inconvenient”, and they fume at us. They will blow hard at us and pour scorn upon us. The malice of evil is to be accepted, for it is the badge of honour to the true servant of God. We are known by our scars as soldiers, and we will have them from malicious people.

APPLICATION

1. As the days darken scoffers will increase in number and malicious intent towards genuine believers. Accept this and keep focused forward as the true soldier of the Lord you are. 2 Timothy 2:3-10.
2. Accept the Lord's verdict upon the last days of this age and work within his truth. He warned and Paul backs this, that in the days that end this age we will see great apostasy and great hatred of goodness. 2 Timothy 3:1-7, 4:1-5.

DOCTRINE

SIN – OLD SIN NATURE – FRUIT OF THE OLD SIN NATURE

Psalm 10: 6

“He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for *I shall never be* in adversity. “

REFLECTION

The so called “prosperity gospel” began at the pit of hell and its origins are seen in the attitudes of the evil ones who believe they cannot be beaten, nor have any bad things happen to them. They are invincible in their own eyes because they are so thoroughly deceived by Satan and his philosophies. They say within their own hearts that they will see no problems in their life because they are in league with the stones of the fields! Job 5:23.

These people do not fear evil, for they are on its side and are often the most baffled when those more evil than themselves destroy them. Isaiah 47:5-9, 56:9-12, Matthew 24:48-51, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5. These people have deceived themselves into thinking they are more powerful than God and such are deluded beyond all reason and will die without hope and reason. These people die in fear and bafflements, for they have kidded themselves that there is no evil, because they are so much part of it they no longer recognise it, and so when they face the angel of death they have only fear and apprehension.

APPLICATION

1. Never say “never”, for you do not have the knowledge to know what will unfold in your future. A man is known by his friends, and by his foolish and empty headed words, which betray his foolishness at times. Those like the man in verse 6 betray a limited brain that is vulnerable to all adversity in the future.
2. There is none so deceived as the man who thinks he knows what is in his future. Let us rest upon the Lord and commit our ways to the Lord, seeking His Plan alone for our life. Psalms 37:5, Proverbs 3:1-8, 16:3. We are secure in the Lord’s Plan and Power and Person alone; there is security in no other “words” or “realities”.

DOCTRINES

SALVATION – REGENERATION: BORN AGAIN

HOLY SPIRIT – BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

HOLY SPIRIT – FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

Psalm 10: 7

“His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity. “

REFLECTION

The five elements of evil listed in this verse are the true “fruits” of the Old Sin Nature of fallen man and the sign that the life so blighted by evil is firmly under the power of evil forces. We either have the “fruit of the Holy Spirit”, or the fruit of our Old Sin Nature active. No normal tree bears two fruits, good and bad unless it has been interfered with. Galatians 5:16-21.

Let us do some “fruit inspecting” here as the Lord orders us to do. Matthew 7:13-23. The first fruit of evil’s presence is “cursing”. Oath swearing for devious effect was common in the ancient world, and remains so in courts where evil men will falsely swear oaths and lie to achieve their evil ends. They will also swear, using foul and disgusting language towards others, and try to bring evil curses upon the heads of the good. In all these various shades of meaning of the term “cursing” the evil people bring disgusting behaviours to bear upon the good and so show their place of origin.

Deceit is a word that sums up the entire empire of evil that Satan begins with his rebellion against God in heaven in eternity past. Firstly they delude themselves about their wisdom and power and then they delude others. They betray truth with lies, and betray friends with self interested actions, and they do not hesitate to deceive all that they can. The truth is far from them and they care not for it.

They use fraud to obtain all that they can from others, and their lies are organised to get money that they otherwise would not have. They are driven by their lust for money and power and seek nothing that cannot be enjoyed by them alone. They lie for gain. Many good people are baffled by the sheer arrogance of evil men who use and abuse others for their own ends. It is evil – nothing else and nothing more. Satanic logic is not logical, for it begins with deceit and it ends with total self deception (vanity – emptiness).

Mischief is an old fashioned word now and sounds almost benign and so it is important to get the definition that the psalmist had for the term he uses. They will work hard at evil, these people. I am always amazed at evil men and women who I have worked with in the past, for had they put even a fraction of the effort they put into evil, into good work or a trade, then they would have made tidy livings for themselves. They work at evil and they labour at deception and expect to win great rewards, but the “wages of sin is death”, and Satan always pays! Romans 6:23, 2 Peter 2:15.

APPLICATION

1. There is no reward for evil except death and judgment. All that evil gives is temporary and time erodes it, and eternal judgment removes it totally. Isaiah 14:5-11.
2. By the fruits of their lives men are known. Let us be very careful to inspect the fruit of people who claim to be great, for often they will be great workers of iniquity and a danger to all around them. Be discerning believer, or be deceived to your own destruction and even death.

DOCTRINE

BLASPHEMY

Psalm 10: 8

“He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.”

REFLECTION

There will always be those who prey on the vulnerable, some by fraud and others by violence. In the days before crime and punishment was within a tight legal framework and outcome certain many would prey on the weak and make merchandise of men and women. Evil has always delighted in abusing the weaker and destroying them for profit. Proverbs 1:10-19. Evil is always self-destructive, and malicious to the point of death for the practitioners.

If you are malicious there are always “lurking places” where an ambush may be made against the unwary to kill or rob them. The purpose of these evil men in David’s day was to murder and steal without any thought for temporal consequences. The psalmist reminds us all that justice may not be done in time, but it will always be done in eternity at the throne of God, and even if we have to wait until that day, justice will come. Good people who are unaware of the malice of others will always be their targets, and evil will reign upon this earth until the Lord rules.

The poor will always be the target of other poor thieves, for the wealthy often have the protection and defences that make attack unlikely or unable to be successful. This shows the malice of evil, in that the poor and needy target and destroy their equals rather than working together by honest work to lift each other up to success and comfort. It is malice and evil that destroys those who need help but have a boot smashed in their face. Those who have showed no mercy cannot expect any from God and they will be shown none if they do not repent in time.

“Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, and to the scribes who write toil; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to steal the right from the poor of My people, that widows may be their prey, and they rob the orphans” (Isaiah 10:1-2.) C.f. Isaiah 1:23, Isaiah 3:14, Isaiah 5:7; Jeremiah 7:6; Ezekiel 22:7; Matthew 23:14.

“Woe to you, ‘scribes’ and ‘Pharisees’, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and ‘pray at length’ as a pretence. Therefore you shall receive the greater condemnation.” The Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely devastating of these evil people and we must stand with our Lord in these things as the Psalmist did 1000 years before. (Matthew 23:14)

APPLICATION

1. Jesus toughest words were reserved for those who abused the vulnerable. We are to protect the vulnerable and defend the fatherless and the widow, never to be party to evil works against them.
2. Do not ever under-estimate the malice of evil men who will lie in wait to abuse and murder. Pastors, please keep churches safe places for the vulnerable, and that means taking good security precautions to protect money and people against malice. “Open house” policies without good security policies are the sign of foolishness that have no place amongst doctrinally wise believers, and while we welcome all who would come to hear God’s Word we must guard against evil entering and making merchandise of God’s people or money. Let us be as “wise as serpents and as harmless as doves”! Matthew 10:16.

Psalm 10: 9-10

“He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net. He croucheth, *and* humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.”

REFLECTION

Hypocrisy is the major “fruit” of evil and the Lord was specific and direct in his warnings and condemnation of the hypocrites who pretended to be good but were evil. Matthew 23:13ff. These people adopt “humble” posture to deceive and destroy. People who pretend to be one thing and are actually another are a danger to all honest people, for they deceive deliberately and lie with malice and cunning plans behind each falsehood. These people are out for their own ends and have no concerns for what is true or right, only for what will assist them and abuse others.

The metaphor of the evil man is mixed here; of a lion with a net! It is a funny image but captures two aspects of the plan and attitudes of the evil man or woman. They have the violence and destructive force of the lion. This is the image that James and Peter pick up 1000 years later to remind us of the violent hatred and destructive force of Satan and satanic forces. James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:8-11. The Asiatic Lion was particularly violent, lithe and swift, and preyed upon men and animals for thousands of years in the area around Israel.

These evil men practise the military doctrine of the great Chinese general Sun Tzu from 500 BC, who said in his paper on “deception in warfare”, “when you are weak pretend you are strong and when strong pretend you are weak”. In war it is crucial that you keep your opponent in the dark about everything about your plans and strength to wage war. We must remember that the Angelic Conflict is the “WAR” between Satan and all believers.

We have no choice in this matter; we are part of this war, and the deception strategy is applied by Satan’s people daily. They will pretend they are weak and contrite, truly repentant for past sins and ready to change. All fraudsters that enter the church to steal God’s money and rob missions of funds always pretend to be repentant and contrite, and then they steal all the church funds and run away laughing at the “dumb Christians” they have conned.

APPLICATION

1. Do not approach lions, no matter how cute they are acting. Do not ever approach the enemy without caution and care when you have reason to believe they are ‘enemy’ forces. Always deal with deceptive people as the potentially evil men and women they are.
2. Many churches have lost their funds and equipment because they didn’t take care and concern over their premises. Evil forces will always target the Lord’s people and money! Many foolish believers say, “O this is a church, we won’t be attacked and stolen from”. Such a person shows they are without understanding of God’s Word or Satan’s forces. Satan hates us and will attack us. Take all measures you can to protect the Lord’s people and funds. Every dollar stolen from the church is a dollar less for missions and a dollar into Satan’s pocket!

Psalm 10: 11

“He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see *it*. “

REFLECTION

Evil people will always believe they are smarter than those who oppose them, and they will act with absolute self centeredness, and in their self deception they will be confident that they are beyond the law, and beyond the plans of others to capture them. In their foolishness they think God is “too busy” to spot their evils and so they will get away with all they do. God sees all that evil men do and they will be held to account and their end will be with absolute justice and righteousness. God sees all things.

Ezekiel 23:28-35.

“28 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of them from whom thy mind is alienated:

29 And they shall deal with thee hatefully, and shall take away all thy labour, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

30 I will do these things unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols.

31 Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand.

32 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou shalt drink of thy sister’s cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much.

33 Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria.

34 Thou shalt even drink it and suck it out, and thou shalt break the sherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

35 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms."

Psalm 64:5-9.

*"5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?
6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.*

7 But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.

8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.

9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing."

APPLICATION

1. God sees and God knows of all things. There is no hiding from the justice and righteousness of Almighty God. These fools will be unhinged by events in God's timing, but do not be hurt by them in the interim.
2. Rest on the righteous judgment of God believer, and keep yourself safe from evil devices.

Psalm 10: 12

"Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble."

REFLECTION

In the midst of his thinking about the evil ones that surround him he bursts out with this cry for the Lord to act. It is alright for us at times to have this experience also, and we need to affirm the normal nature of passionate faith, whereby the standard communication boundaries are broken. The psalmist bursts into a prayer for the Lord to act directly and save the humble who are being so badly abused.

Once again we remember that the Lord is not resting and does not need to be aroused from slumber. It is a dramatic way to call upon the Lord and remind ourselves that we need to see the Lord work in our world and deliver us and that while we wait we can get worried and distressed. Our time is not the Lord's time to act, but still it is important that we call upon the Lord honestly and passionately. David seeks the deliverance of the humble and we need to stand in their place in prayer also.

APPLICATION

1. It is alright to cry out to the Lord in theologically incorrect phrases. The Lord looks to our heart not our literal words. He seeks passionate faith of the whole heart and mind and at times that will burst out with prayers that may not make 100% sense intellectually but will be answered by the Lord.
2. God honours the prayers of the humble and desires for us to stand in their place and seek their justice and deliverance from evil men.

NOTES

Psalm 10: 13

“Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require *it*.”

REFLECTION

The Creator is the Saviour (Psalm 4:4, 8:3, 14:1, 19:1-4, 53:1) and only the greatest fool would consider that the one who made the universe and space and time itself would not be able to control all details within it. How can the creator of space and time be unable to handle any details of space and time? It is ultimate abuse of logic and contempt towards God to think that the Lord is not able to control all the variables in his created universe. Will not the one who made all things require of man and answer as to how they have lived? Will not the Creator require an answer of man if he has stepped into his creation as a creature and died for all others?

APPLICATION

1. It is foolishness to stop thinking about the greatness of God at a certain point, for only as logic is pushed to the end do you see that accountability is at the core of the Gospel message. Stupidity is no excuse – we must face facts.
2. God will require an answer of all men and women, for we are creatures and the creator has a right to ask us what we have done with his world and his offer of salvation.

Psalm 10: 14

“Thou hast seen *it*; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite *it* with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.”

REFLECTION

It is always crucial to stabilise ourselves in the facts about the way God sees things before we act or panic further at a crisis situation. David is under great pressure but stabilises himself in the doctrine of the Character of God, and that means he recalls the truth that God does hear and God does act to deliver his people, but it is in accordance with his plan and his timetable.

God sees the “mischief and spite” of evil people and they will be judged and dealt with, and God’s people will be kept in the midst of evil in accordance with the Plan of God. God stands by his people and supports them in their pain and distress and he delivers in his time and in his way to the glory of the name of the Lord Jesus. This is the crucial point that we need to cling to in great pressure situations. Glory will be the result of all suffering in time.

God sees the heart intentions of evil people and they are met with pure justice for their evil hearts intents. As they have judged so they are judged; the only exception is salvation. It is the total transformation of the evil person by the Holy Spirit that alone saves them from disaster. If men and women persist in evil designs they will suffer in them the full penalty of their rejections of God’s holy standards.

Hosea 14:1ff

- “1 O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
 2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.
 3 Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.
 4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.
 5 I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.
 6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.
 7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.
 8 Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.
 9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.”*

APPLICATION

1. Those who walk with the Lord will find forgiveness and salvation, but those who persist in evil will receive evil’s reward from Satan in loss of all decency, and from God in eternal judgment.

2. The Lord will stand up for the fatherless, and his “right hand” (Power) will be exercised to assist those who need help.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CHARITY

Psalm 10: 15

“Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.”

REFLECTION

The Lord will judge his own people and they will know that there is no escape from the evils of man except by total obedience to the Lord’s Word. God will however answer this prayer of David for all evil to be rooted out from amongst men so that none is left behind. Can there be any escape from the holy God? David’s prayer will be answered! The strong arm of the evil ones will be broken and the evil man will be eternally judged so that none remain upon the earth alive. The Lord will seek out and destroy all wickedness until none remains! Revelation 20:10-15.

Psalms 37:16-20

*“16 A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.
 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.
 18 The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.
 19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
 20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.”*

APPLICATION

1. Judgment will come one day and the Lord will answer fully all our prayers of judgment. The last such prayers to be answered are those of Tribulation Saints who are murdered by evil forces in that terrible time. Revelation 6:9-11.
2. The Millennial Kingdom is truly wonderful because it begins with the total elimination of evil from the earth. This is the prerequisite for true “peace on earth”, for there is no peace without the elimination of evil and sinfulness. Isaiah 57:20-21. Even then, after 1000 years of perfect environment there are those who reject the Lord’s rulership over them. Revelation 20:7-15.

Psalm 10: 16

“The LORD is King forever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.”

REFLECTION

The LORD (*YHWH*), the self existent, the Eternal one, is King and will be King forever and ever. This is one of the early references to the doctrine of the Millennial Kingdom that John will describe in Revelation. David sees, in light of all the battles he has fought, that the only time there will be peace and security is when evil is eliminated, not just when it is beaten. Evil will always rise again if any survivor is left in their self centeredness, as this is the sin of Satan himself.

Evil is at its heart rebellion against God’s person, plan and power, and the substitution of man’s power and man’s/Satan’s standards in their place. It is a rejection of God and His replacement with Satan and self. Unless a person bows totally and unconditionally before the Lord’s standards and accepts the Lord without reservation, evil will re-grow eventually.

Like a deeply rooted weed evil grows again if the slightest piece of the root system is left behind. It is the Lord’s total elimination of evil that clears the earth for the millennium, and even then over the next 1000 years there are people born

who grow up to face the choice of evil, and sadly some take that at the end of the period and reject God's plan for eternity and join Satan, even at that late point in the Lake of Fire.

To me Evil is the saddest subject in this creation, for it is a rejection of the very foundation of the creative and saving work of God. It is sad because it reflects a deep malice towards the one who gave us all things, and it reflects the heart issue of the doctrine and reality of angelic and human "Free Will", which can reject all that is good and choose evil.

APPLICATION

Let the sadness of evil drive your evangelism and move you steadily towards systematic Bible teaching every time the church doors are open, so that none are without excuse before their maker. There is to be no compromise with evil, for it will never compromise with the Lord's Word.

Psalm 10: 17-18

"LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress."

REFLECTION

There are only two categories of mankind in God's sight; the evil and the humble. This way of seeing things clarifies the meaning of humility, for it is God's holy demand of us. We either bow before the Creator or we stand defiantly against Him. The various people of the earth are known to be in either category by their life fruit. The fruit of the humble/saved is their desire for the Lord's Word and will in their life.

The Lord will meet the desires of the heart of the saved. Their desire is to be in the place where the Lord's will is done upon the earth, and that evil rules oppressively over men no more. The humble seek deliverance that lasts, and the Lord will grant their prayer in that great day when he rules over the restored earth in the Millennial Kingdom. The great disciples prayer, "thy kingdom come" will be answered and all the saved will see it and rejoice in it.

APPLICATION

1. There is hope and joy in the end of this creation. All that Adam lost is restored by the Lord, but just for long enough to bring in the final sifting of man. The Lord is absolutely fair and just and none are forced to enter the heavenly state who do not want to be with God forever.
2. There will be poverty and oppression until the Lord rules, but the day does come when he will rule. It is this hope that is to be the centre of every Communion Service. 1 Corinthians 11:16. We take the emblems "until he comes", and this is to be cried aloud at every service to remind us we seek his kingdom to come.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

NOTES

Psalm 11

To the chief Musician, A *Psalm* of David.

Psalm 11: 1

“In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?”

REFLECTION

In the Lord alone we put our trust. In the big and small issues of life we rest upon the Lord alone, for in his power alone there is help. Remember, there is no “big” or “small” in the sight of the Lord. The creation was the “finger work” of God, Psalm 8:3, and so the little details of our life are well “in hand”.

At times in history God’s people must “flee to the mountains”, but that is not what David is saying here. In the Great Tribulation period the believers around and in Israel must flee at a certain point to the mountains and wilderness places or they will be killed by the forces of Anti-Christ. Daniel 11:40, Matthew 24:9ff. They must know the scriptures and obey them thoroughly or they will be killed.

David is not fleeing to the mountains, but to “your mountain”; that is he flees to the holy hill upon which the Temple will be built by his son Solomon, to Mount Zion. It is the mount of God that is the place of safety for David and for ourselves spiritually still. It is the habitation of the Lord, heaven, where we find our spiritual Zion, and must “fly away like a bird” when trouble comes.

Psalm 55:4-8

“4 My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

6 And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.

7 Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.

8 I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us fly away in prayer and rest upon the Lord’s arms. Deuteronomy 33:27.
2. There is one place of refuge and security and that is in the Lord’s arms. Let us find our place there.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY

ANGELS – SATAN’S STRATEGY

Psalm 11: 2-3

“For, lo, the wicked bend *their* bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

REFLECTION

It is always a “touch and go” situation where evil is concerned for the enemy is determined to destroy mankind and the prayers of the saints and the power of God alone stop this occurring. Let us keep as focused upon the battle as David is here. He sums up the danger well, for if the foundations of morality is destroyed then that society so affected is lost in chaos. If the foundational values associated with the sanctity of marriage and the centrality of a moral family are removed then the society so affected will implode.

Moral chaos and political-social chaos is always the result of the moral foundations of society being destroyed, or the people who are the foundations killed. There are always a few people who “stand in the breach” and hold back chaos in each and every generation and society and if they are removed then that society dies. Many nations and people groups are no more, and the reasons are nearly always moral, even though war or disease ends their life.

Those who hate biblical values are certainly “bending their bows” today, pushing homosexual agendas and what they call “alternative family models” which are the destruction of family life as we know it. Men who follow evil agendas will always seek to undermine and destroy the biblical framework of society and will let all their malice be focused upon those who stand for truth. John 15:18ff.

APPLICATION

1. Do not underestimate the malice of those who have rejected God’s standards, for they will hate you as Satan hates God.
2. While the enemy may bend their bows we are in the Lord’s hands and secure in his hands. Let us rest in his hands and focus upon doing what he desires of us.

DOCTRINE

MILITARY

Psalm 11: 4

“The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men.”

REFLECTION

The Lord is always “at home for business”, and his business is his creation. The Lord is always ready to hear and answer our prayers and the “throne of grace” remains open for business at all hours. Psalms 57:1, Ephesians 3:12, Hebrews 4:16, 10:19ff. God measures, checks, assays, and investigates the heart behind all our prayers and answers in accordance with the spiritual desires of our hearts.

Hebrews 10:19-23

*“19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
21 And having an high priest over the house of God;
22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)”*

APPLICATION

1. God hears and answers our prayers and knows our deepest desires. He delights in hearing and answering our desires for grace to abound and blessings to be seen amongst men.
2. Let us seek the blessing of the Lord amongst man through all our prayers.

DOCTRINES

BLOOD SACRIFICE

TABERNACLE

Psalm 11: 5

“The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.”

REFLECTION

God does not need to investigate our prayer requests, for he knows all things, but he “tries/tests” our motivation and desire as he answers prayers. There is intelligent thought in all the works of God and so prayers are not answered by the Lord by rote, but by the whole Character of God applied to them. We need to carefully think through our prayers and then apply ourselves to them with passionate commitment. The Lord will apply even greater vigour to our prayers than we do and we can be assured of the Lord’s focused attention, for all things he does are done “well”.

We are assayed by the Lord, and all that is good in our prayers is rewarded with the “well done” of God and an answer to bring even more blessing into our life. The evil ones however can rest assured that they will also receive the full power of the Lord upon them and the full vigour of the Lord in judgment of their “case”. If they love violence, then the Lord’s hatred is upon them in direct proportion to their hatred of goodness. The unbeliever gets exactly what they desire, an eternity without God and without those who love God.

APPLICATION

1. Do not be in any doubts about the fate of those who hate goodness, for they will receive all they desire in eternity. They seek the elimination of all goodness and all those who stand for goodness and so it will be for them in the Lake of Fire, their only company will be the self centred company of those who hate God as much as they do.
2. We are tried in the fire of affliction in this life and we will come through deep waters some days, but the Lord is the one controlling the pressure and we are safe in his hands. Let us rest within his arms and be secure in his love and power.

DOCTRINE

PAUL – PRESSURE

Psalm 11: 6

“Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: *this shall be the portion of their cup.*”

REFLECTION

Remember the wicked are those who have been determined to follow after Satan and his devices and will certainly reap their eternal reward unless they repent. In time the Lord will direct judgment at them to ensure they are without excuse before his throne. The judgment that David describes here is dramatic and poetic in its language. There are times when judgment is very literally “fire and brimstone” as it was upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 19:1ff.

The figurative interpretation of judgment may also be applied here, and I would see it often with those who reject God’s way and standards. It is as though the Lord has “rained snare and traps” around them as every few days they stand in traps and are caught by their own devious plots and plans. If people live by deviousness they will be destroyed by their own plots and plans. When you take the “cup” of Satanic behaviours you will be forced to drink it to the full unless you pour it out at the foot of the Cross. Repentance alone turns cursing into blessing.

The fire of affliction, guilt and the burning regrets for their past evils haunt them day and night and the swift tempests of guilt and regret blow upon them in the darkness of their nights. I have just seen a counselling client with deep and bitter grief at the results of his earlier fornication with an evil woman who he then married. Many try to sanctify their evil by marrying their mistress/lover and the result is the “fire of torment” later and the hurricane of despair and worry for their children who will suffer at the hands of their evil partner.

APPLICATION

1. Do not feel sorrow for those who have persistently worked evil, for they reap what they sowed and drink the cup they spent time preparing for others. God is absolutely just and fair in his judgment here. Pray for the message of salvation to come upon these people for that is their only hope.

2. The Lord drank the cup of judgment for all mankind, but if men refuse to accept his free gift of salvation they must take their choice and drink it to the full.

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Revelation 21:8

DOCTRINE

HELL AND HADES

Psalm 11: 7

“For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.”

REFLECTION

God’s love for the righteous is equal to his hatred and judgment of the wicked who abuse the righteous. You cannot love without hatred also being present. Reflect upon this principle and feel its truth deeply. If you love the righteous you will always hate those who try to destroy the righteous. If you do not hate evil you open the door to its work and to the loss of all you love. Psalms 45:6-7, 146:3-8.

God’s vision is fixed upon those who stand for righteousness and truth and he desires their blessing and will answer all prayers of theirs, to ensure they complete their task upon the earth. We are here to serve the Lord and as his servants and children we are his responsibility and he closely watches over us to ensure we can do all he has called us to do.

Psalms 34:12-19

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

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

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

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

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

17 The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

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

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us live in righteousness and behave with dignity and with truth as our guide.

2. In God’s path we can depend upon the close vision of the Lord upon our path, for it is his own for us. We are his and we are guarded by Him. 2 Timothy 2:12-13.

DOCTRINE

WORKS – DIVINE AND HUMAN GOOD

Psalm 12

To the chief Musician upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David.

Sheminith, is a transliteration from the Hebrew, pronounced *shem-ee-neeth'* it is the feminine of *shem-ee-nee'* or the number eight. This may imply that the psalm is to be played on an eight stringed lyre. (Strong's Concordance.)

It is suggested by some that *shem-ee-neeth'* is the lower octave and the psalm is required to be sung by the deeper male voices. This has some support from the heading to Psalm 46, which includes the words 'A song upon Alamoth'. Alamoth is the plural for *almah*, which means virgin or maiden, those who have voices in the upper register. (Barnes Notes). It is a Psalm that has a serious contrast drawn between those who walk with God and those who walk in carnality with evil as their companion.

Psalm 12: 1

"Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

REFLECTION

The psalmist cries aloud for immediate help from the Lord, for as he looks into society he sees few standing for righteousness and truth. He fears the consequences of the decline in number of good men. The Lord referred to believers as "salt" in their nation and that is an important image to bear in mind here, for we are to be the preservative of the nation and we will be if we hold the truth firmly. Matthew 5:13.

When good men cease to do what is required, and when their numbers decline in any group, that group becomes vulnerable to evil's influence. At a certain point there will not be enough good men to preserve the society, and it will disintegrate. This is the same as trying to preserve meat and not having enough salt; the meat will rot and decay.

APPLICATION

1. The need to pray for our societies is drawn powerfully here. When good men cease to work or enough exist their society will fall apart. Let us pray for good men to stand up for truth and for the expansion of bible doctrine into the world, so that goodness preserves our societies.
2. There is a critical mass of good people to preserve a society and there is a critical mass of evil ones to destroy it. Let us pray and work for our society's survival through the preaching of the Gospel message.

DOCTRINE

APOSTASY

Psalm 12: 2

"They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: *with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*"

REFLECTION

The impact of evil is by direct contact with others. Evil spreads like a virus and will destroy society if it is not stopped by good people standing for righteousness. The battle is never over against evil until the Lord eliminates Satan, and so we must fight daily against it. Evil works by direct assault at times, but mostly Satan is "subtle" and works by deviousness steadily undermining truth by whispered words. We must be alert to the "fruit" of men and see quickly who we can trust and who we cannot trust ever. Failure to spot evil is to guarantee that you will later be hurt/destroyed by evil.

Jeremiah 9:1-6

"1 Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

2 *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.*
 3 *And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.*
 4 *Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders.*
 5 *And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.*
 6 *Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD."*

Flattery and lies are his stock tools of trade and with "double words" he speaks. This means that what is said is very rarely what is meant, and what is meant is not what is being said. The only thing you can be sure with evil people is that you cannot trust their words at all.

Psalm 52:1-7

"1 Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.
2 The tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
3 Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.
4 Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.
5 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.
6 The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:
7 Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness."

APPLICATION

1. By their words and by their "flexibility" with truth we know many people are untrustworthy, and the sooner they are spotted the better and safer you are.
2. Recognise that some are simply liars by nature, and so do not seek explanation, just identify, isolate and avoid!

DOCTRINE

EVIL

Psalm 12: 3-4

"The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, with our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: Who is lord over us?"

REFLECTION

The day will come when evil will be eliminated, but that day is not yet. We are called to vigilance and care, but be aware of evil's deviousness. Many will surround you with flattering words, and the only safe policy for pastors is ignore all comments made about your ministry by all people not 100% committed to the ministry in passionate spirituality. If you take praise on board from men you open the door to later negative comments and the opinions of man mustn't guide us in any matter at all.

It is the Lord who is over us in all things. It is the Lord who will defend us, for we are his and it is his responsibility to do so. We are not our own, we were bought with a price, the precious blood of Christ. 1 Corinthians 7:23, 1 Peter 1:18-19. Those who attack us verbally feel very strong in their arrogance, but they are answerable to the Lord finally. It is the Lord who can rot the tongue and eliminate the speech of abusive people. We are in the Lord's hands and he will deliver us.

I have seen evil men struck down and be unable to speak in a few months with terrible cancers that eliminate their evil words forever. When men declare war on God they do a foolish thing, for their words are dependent upon so many fragile cells in their throat and mouth and all can be destroyed easily, and often are by their own smoking and drinking!

1 Peter 1:16-19

"16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.
17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

APPLICATION

1. Rest upon the Lord and trust his power to save you from evil men's words and deeds.
2. Do not worry about those who abuse you verbally, for the Lord will silence their words in his way and time. Just be beyond abuse by your behaviours, and care nothing for the words of evil men, for in time all lies will be revealed for what they are.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – IGNORANCE

Psalm 12: 5

"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set *him* in safety *from him that puffeth at him.*"

REFLECTION

At a point in time the Lord moves and the prayers of man are answered, but it is in God's timing not our own. Most of my "why?" questions of the Lord relate to timing as I reflect upon the "losses" I perceive to have suffered because of the Lord's apparent "delay". Our challenge is to see as God sees, and of course we cannot at this point, and it is often only as years unfold that we see the answer to a prayer as we look back far enough to get a better perspective.

Micah 7:7-9

"7 Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

8 Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness."

APPLICATION

1. When in trouble we are to keep asking the Lord for a place of safety without hesitation, delay, or stopping until the answer comes. We are to remember that the Lord will answer, but it is timing that matters.
2. God delivers his people and will bring us through with rejoicing to the place of safety.

Psalm 12: 6

"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

REFLECTION

God's promises are clear, concise and dependable. What the Lord says he means and the words are "pure" words, in that they are trustworthy and real. The silver of redemption is then used to emphasize the purity and saving power of God's Word. Seven times purified is a way of speaking of perfection again. The psalmist is underlining the power and perfection of the Lord's Word to us – we can rest upon the promises of the Word of God. Proverbs 30:5.

Psalm 18:30-34

"30 As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

31 For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God?

32 It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.

33 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.

34 He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms."

APPLICATION

1. Let us take the Word of God as we take the finest silver, and value it above all else, and depend upon it in our daily life, as we depend upon the blood of Christ for our salvation.
2. Let us see the promises of the Word of God as more real than the things that challenge our faith. Let God's Word be more real than our circumstances.

DOCTRINE

GOD – FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Psalm 12: 7

"Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever."

REFLECTION

God will do it David urges us to see. God will do what he has promised to do. The Lord will preserve his people, not just now but forever. The Lord has a plan and it will be fulfilled. We are to rest in the preserving power of the Almighty God who rules the heavens and the earth. Satan has usurped power, but he remains just the "prince of this world" through the sin of men, but God remains the King and what he says goes, and who he preserves is preserved. Psalm 121:8, 145:20.

APPLICATION

1. God's preserving power is absolute, and the Lord's Word backs us all the way. We will achieve all the Lord desires us to achieve. Let us simply focus upon the things the Lord requires of us, and let us do the things he requires of us. Trust in his power and Word and Obey his Word believer and relax with the outcomes.

Psalm 12: 8

"The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted."

REFLECTION

At times it feels like the enemy are all around us, and at times they are! When evil is celebrated most weak people will act as if they are the vilest of people, just to fit in. The bizarre thing about unsaved mankind is the weakness and pathetic nature of their morality. When vile is "in" there are people out performing each other to prove they are more vile than the last person reported on.

There is no end to television programs being made that trumpet evil, and as believers we must walk firmly away from them. Evil grows with encouragement, and what the psalmist identifies here is the classic psychological conditioning truth of "positive reinforcement", where a thing encouraged grows in its power and influence.

Do not be deceived by the popularity of evil and think that it is more or less powerful than it was, it is simply a "fashion" that changes at times in the devil's world. Reject evil and stand against it, and firmly oppose it and stand in all this in God's Truth and God's power. The enemy will have the field for a time yet but their day is limited and their growth is an illusion that the breath of the Lord will blow away.

APPLICATION

1. Popularity breeds nothing but arrogance, and Satan's people love their own reflections, just as he does. Evil people abound in many areas, but we walk with God, not with men. Focus upon the Lord and walk through their midst and do the things the Lord has ordered, even with the enemy thickly around you. No distractions!

DOCTRINE

WORLDLINESS

Psalm 13

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

Psalm 13: 1

“How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? forever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?”

REFLECTION

“How long Lord?” As I read these words I smiled and nodded my head, for I have faced such great pressures recently that they have brought me to tears in the night and I have found myself asking the Lord aloud this very thing. David is greatly encouraging to us all as we walk the same difficult steps through life that he walked and face the same level of turmoil at times, but hopefully without the great sins he committed.

We can all be wrung out in the battles we fight in this life and it is alright to cry aloud with David these questions. Let us not get too self righteous about our sins either, for while David was guilty of adultery and murder we can err in other, more polite and respectable areas, but still sinful! Remember that pride and arrogant self-righteousness is as bad as murder, for it will lead there. There are no grades of sin, there is only sin, and it all separates us from the Lord. Isaiah 59:2. Let us be humble before the Lord, and thankful to David that he was so honest and helpful to us.

We may feel that we are hidden from the Lord, but as Jonah discovered we are never away from the loving care and protection of the Lord. Jonah 2:1-7. The Lord hears us and he protects us. Jonah 2:8-10. His face isn't hidden, it's just that we cannot see the care that is over us at all times. Only in heaven will we realise the battles that were fought around about us and the protection that was provided by the angels. Hebrews 1:14. We are guarded and protected by the Lord at all times.

APPLICATION

1. Let us give thanks right now for the protection of the Lord over us in all things, and let us praise God for all He does daily for us, even when we may feel he is “far away” due to the pressures upon us. Let the promises of the Word of God be more real than the fears and pressures of today.
2. The Lord sees, hears, and acts to protect. Let us praise His Holy Name at all times.

Psalm 13: 2

“How long shall I take counsel in my soul, *having* sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?”

REFLECTION

This is one of the passages that psychologists and counsellors will take depressed clients to so that they can see David battling his depression and finding the way through to victory. I praise God for David, for this man tells us the anguish of his soul and does not hold back from sharing with us the dark moments that men in such positions as this king will often never share aloud.

To share depression with others may be helpful to them, but only if you have a solution for them in your sharing. David will work his emotions through with God in prayer; he will not just sit still feeling miserable. Note the emotional power that is here. Firstly he sits up in the night and is talking to his own soul to encourage himself in deep anguish. Often foolish people will argue that such depressed emotional power locked within indicates sinfulness, but there is no indication of unconfessed sin here. David is depressed as a result of his great sins, but he sits with the depression as emotions to be processed, not sins to be confessed, for the confession is done. 2 Samuel 12:1ff, Psalm 51.

When we face deep emotional power waves surging through and over us we are facing deep anguish and trouble and that needs to be faced, not simply explained away by some past “sin”. Simplistic answers to depression need to be rejected by mature believers and God's path through the emotional turmoil found and walked. There is great grief in his heart daily for the losses suffered and pain caused to all around by the events being walked through.

Deep grief is not wrong, nor depression anything other than the soul's emotional response to situations that are grief filled. David is sitting with his grief and trying to work it through with God, but he faces the assaults of evil people who accuse him of sin and evil still. Remember, David is forgiven his great sin at the point of confession, and we all are forgiven the same gracious way. Psalm 51, Psalm 103, 1 John Chapter 1.

The great pain added to that of his soul within is the insults of evil men around him. He is abused by many, and by some with great reasons to hate him. Many people were hurting in the land and small minded people seek to blame great ones for their troubles, and David was blamed by many. He does not defend himself, but trusts in the Lord for deliverance and final victory.

APPLICATION

1. Depression and grief are normal reflections of great suffering that comes at times. Let us process it at the foot of the Cross today, and remember the one who gave himself for us loves us still and hears our prayers.
2. Let us leave our case in the Lord's hands for defence of our reputation and life itself. The Lord will act to defend and save. Rest upon the Lord. Psalm 37:7, 116:7, Jeremiah 6:16.

Psalm 13: 3

“Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep of death*”

REFLECTION

“Look with favour and pleasure upon me Lord”. This is a lovely prayer of a son to a father and one I myself have been praying through my own dark night of the soul in recent months and years. At times we feel so sad we might die. This is not being “drama kings/queens”; it is simply expressing our deep anguish and the intense blackness that surrounds our soul in our pressure time. Isaiah 26:18, Jeremiah 51:39, 57, Ephesians 5:14.

The eyes get heavy under pressures like this and we feel totally overwhelmed. This is not weakness but simply a recognition that the stress of the situation has affected our vision and perception generally, as stress always will do. When we are overwhelmed all aspects of our perception and thinking gets affected. David is simply expressing what many feel under extremes and he encourages all of us who have walked such dark paths.

APPLICATION

1. Praise God that we can always appeal for a hearing and be heard by God.
2. The Lord will restore our perception, our thinking and our sleep patterns as we rest in his care through the dark days of pressure, grief and depression.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY

Psalm 13: 4

“Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; *and* those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.”

REFLECTION

David's concern is the reputation of the Lord rather than his own distress. He does not want any evil man to rejoice in victory over him and thereby abuse the Lord's Character and care over his saints. It is this insult to God that David is concerned about. He cares more for God's reputation in the eyes of men than his own reputation or health. It is this “God centred” way of thinking that made this man so great. Let us meditate upon our own thinking patterns in these matters and be sure that we rest upon the Lord and secure ourselves by focusing upon the Lord's character and the Lord's working.

David does not want any satanically inspired and motivated person to claim any victories over him as God's servant. David was thinking correctly and in a way that bears copying by us. Let us be wary of any actions that might give the enemy any opportunity to rejoice over the Lord and insult our Saviour. Let us stabilise ourselves in the Word and firmly

ground ourselves upon the Rock that is Christ and his Word to us, and so not be “moved” from our faith assurance. We are not to be cast from our assurance by troubles, nor shifted from our stability in the Word by the assaults of the enemy.

APPLICATION

1. Let us see our troubles in terms of the character and plan of God and so find God’s way through each and every situation we face. Let us not be moved from our assurance in the promises of the Word and the holy and dependable Character of God our Saviour.
2. Let us give no occasion to the enemy to rejoice over us by any word or action that indicates we are beaten and the Lord has let us down.

Psalm 13: 5

“But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.”

REFLECTION

Recovery begins when we rest upon the doctrines that stabilise in pressure and the first of these is the “Mercy” of the Lord towards us as his children. Mercy is God’s way of dealing with us as his children. Thank God we are not dealt with by justice alone or we would have no hope! It is grace and mercy that we need, and it is grace and mercy that we find at the throne of God.

David has come before the Lord and sought his mercy and as his sons/daughters we will always find that at the throne of grace. Hebrews 4:16. David expresses his trust in the past as being in the mercy of the Lord. He has rested in the past and he rests in the present distress in the mercy of the Lord towards him.

He then reminds us all that he expects salvation from the Lord. He expects deliverance and rescue that will affirm the glory of God and glorify the name of the Lord. David’s rescue is going to be the act of God and he affirms that he expects the deliverance to be a work of God’s holy character to the glory of his holy name. In advance of the deliverance arriving David begins to praise the Lord’s name in faith that it will arrive. Hebrews 11:1ff, 12:1-3.

APPLICATION

1. Trouble is to be confronted with affirmation of faith. God’s promises of deliverance are to be more real than the deep anguish of fear in the situation we face. Let us affirm the deliverance of the Lord in the presence of the enemy and while still surrounded by and overwhelmed by the fears of the situation.
2. We shall rejoice in the salvation of the Lord. Let us affirm the confident rejoicing in deliverance that by faith we affirm is coming. Let us by faith seize the future reality as our present experience and thereby banish depression.

DOCTRINES

MERCY

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFIDENCE

Psalm 13: 6

“I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.”

REFLECTION

Worship is the expression of faith, and worship here takes the form of singing the praises of the character and actions of God towards him. David praises the Lord for he has received assurance of the Lord's bounty towards him. God is never stingy and short handed towards us, but always gives abundantly. Exodus 34:6, Psalm 21:13, Isaiah 56:12.

God's work towards us is always in the area of abundance. 1 Timothy 1:14, 1 Peter 1:3, 2 Peter 1:11. There is no holding back with grace on God's part, but often our arms are not wide enough to receive the blessings. God seeks to bless us abundantly, but if we are not ready to receive, then we may not receive in time what the Lord has had for us set aside since eternity past! Let us be fearful of falling short of the blessing of the lord. Hebrews 4:1-2, 6:17.

APPLICATION

1. Let us sing to the Lord and rejoice in his name and his plan, for he delivers his people. Isaiah 61:3.
2. God does not bless in half measures, and so let us build faith capacity to receive all he wants to give us in time for his eternal glory.

NOTES

Psalm 14

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

Psalm 14: 1

“The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*”

REFLECTION

There will always be “fools” around while Satan remains loose and the Lord waits upon man before his return. Fools are only eliminated by the Lord, not by our logic and reason. There is no educational answer to atheism, for it is a moral and spiritual choice of those who adopt this position. Most I have met through life are not so much atheists as “anti-theists”. They hate God and they hate his followers.

The “fool” is not only lacking in logic, he is lacking in piety. They hate God and all that God stands for. They reject God because they reject accountability and all morality that doesn't suit them. Many will argue the logic of their case, but when you push them you can see that their logic is irrelevant; they simply “will not” accept anything other than their position. They have a “vested interest” in their viewpoint. They are “destroyers” of goodness and haters of all that is good.

APPLICATION

1. There will be those who hate God until the last judgment. These are people who care only for their own viewpoint and will not accept any accountability for their actions. Point out the truth but do not expect them to accept what they do not want. These people are self centred, not God centred.
2. They believe that they are doing “good”, but it is in accordance with their standards not God's, and so in their arrogance they reject what is actually “good” and substitute their own standards. Preach the Gospel to them, and leave them without excuse.

Psalm 14: 2

“The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and seek God.*”

REFLECTION

David reflects upon the confidence that men have in God's approval when the reality is the opposite. God does not approve of man's godless behaviours and our arrogance is amazing! Unsaved men often act as if they are fine in God's sight and they will always say, that in relation to others they are “pretty good”.

Unsaved Man simply “doesn't get it” when they consider the holiness of God. Man thinks in terms of relative values, whereas God sees absolutes and man falls short always of his holy standards, but will often in arrogance cling to their relative values because they make them feel and look good.

Thinking accurately about God is not just abstract thinking, it is the precursor to worship, and this is the issue for the unbeliever. It is not just the existence of God that is the issue for men or angels. The demons absolutely know that God exists, and they have no doubt about what that means and they tremble! They know God is there, but will they seek Him and will they worship Him?

The challenge to the demons and to all unsaved men is the challenge to bow their knee before the Lord their God, not just affirm his existence. The sad truth is that they will not, for in their arrogance they believe they can get away with their active atheism. They believe that God will not judge them, and yet they fear and tremble at the possibility. Fear is not a good teacher in getting life results, for the fear of the demons does not produce the bending of their knee!

James 2:19-20.

*"19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.
20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"*

Do any seek Him, for if they do they will be found of him? Isaiah 55:6, 65:1, Jeremiah 29:14. We have God's Word on this matter! He will always be found of those who seek after Him. God delights in saving man, and will save to the uttermost all who come to Him. Hebrews 7:25.

Ephesians 2:1-10

*"1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.
10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

APPLICATION

1. We do not save men; we simply lead them to the Cross and leave them without excuse if they walk away from God. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, not of reason that saves men. Let us pray for the lost for prayer alone delivers.
2. Man's relative morality is no morality at all. God's standards are absolute and man needs to bow his knee. The issue is humility before the truth of the holiness of God. Neither the demons nor the lost will bow their knee and it is their arrogance that dooms them, not their inadequate grasp of the truth.

Psalm 14: 3

"They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*"

REFLECTION

Paraphrase

The whole of the human race have turned aside from understanding and wisdom (vs. 2); as a united race they have become morally corrupted with the result that nothing of eternal worth is done, not by anyone.

These two verses are the strongest statement of the total depravity of mankind. There is no salvation by man's works alone, but by the grace, mercy and love of God alone. Man's works lead to Satan's fate. Revelation 20:11-15.

No-one is saved by their own effort or worth; they are saved by the grace of God alone. Ephesians 2:8-9. Mankind is morally corrupt and unable to save themselves by any human goodness efforts that man can do from their Old Sin Nature.

APPLICATION

1. Man stands in need of a Saviour and God alone can provide the Saviour and He has in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sole message of the Gospel; there is no other. Acts 4:12. There is only one name whereby men can be saved and that is the name of Jesus.

DOCTRINES

SIN – OLD SIN NATURE

WORKS – DIVINE AND HUMAN GOOD

Psalm 14: 4-5

“Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD. There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.”

REFLECTION

The question asked here is a good one. Do these evil people not really think through what they are doing? The answer is, “no” they don’t, for they do not factor in the things they ought. They do not think about the Holy Character of God, or the certainty of judgment for evil done. They need to be in fear of the Lord, for the Lord is truly with the righteous and he will repay evil with justice.

Hebrews 10:30-31, 12:28-29.

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

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

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

29. For our God is a consuming fire.”

The psalmist notes that evil people ought to be “very scared” about their evil behaviours and attitudes, but they don’t appear to be. If you have treated people like a meal to be eaten and destroyed you ought to think about the final judgment that must come to you, for as you have done to others will be done to you. Even some pagans talk of “karma” and expect to suffer for their evils, and yet then ignore this very principle. David reminds them that they are foolish if they ignore this principle, for as they have sowed, so will they reap! Job 4:8, Proverbs 24:8, Hosea 8:7.

Galatians 6:7-9

“7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

APPLICATION

1. Men do reap what they have sowed, for they cannot receive anything other than what they have done. Evil people ignore this truth, but we are called to preach it powerfully and remind men of God’s justice and righteousness.
2. God is our protector and we can rest in his power to keep us safe. Let us make our prayer to the Lord and seek the conviction of the lost that they might be convicted of their evils, and be saved, but let us waste no more effort on them after that if they persist in evil.

Psalm 14: 6

“Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge.”

REFLECTION

It is easy for the rich and powerful to verbally abuse the poor and insult their simple faith with big words and arrogant attitudes. The Lord alone is their refuge and they cling to Him there, but the rich and powerful abuse such trust and mock the faith of the humble. There is nothing new in this, but many believers get upset at Hollywood Stars abuse of genuine faith and then their support to fake religions, but that is just what we must expect from evil. God’s Word is blunt towards such as value wealth above people.

James 5:1-8

“1 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

APPLICATION

1. Do not be amazed at the malice of the wealthy evil. Do not shrink back from telling them the truth about their riches and challenging them to eternal values.
2. Take the opinions of no man ahead of the scripture's verdict upon them. God's opinion alone matters and those who insult the poor and humble must answer to their God. Leave your vindication in the Lord's hands, but tell all men the truth about what is of value and what is not.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFIDENCE

Psalm 14: 7

“Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.”

REFLECTION

David longs for the deliverance he seeks, and he seeks it from the source of Zion alone. David sought God's deliverance only, not that of men. It is this challenge he hands to us all; seek the Lord's face alone, seek no other saviours in times of distress. Psalm 53:6.

David looked from a time well before the “captivity of Jacob” in Babylonian Exile, and yet he prophetically speaks of their captivity, and the Lord restoring them back to the land. 500 years before they go into exile their great king prophesies their return at the hands of the Lord their God. Moses had detailed their fate 450 years before David in Deuteronomy 28, even with words as to their fate in 70 AD, Deuteronomy 28:68. Is there any doubt about God's mastery of his own plan?

Remember believer it is the restoration of Jacob, not Israel. This is a significant difference spiritually, for Israel was the “prince of God” and reminded all when they said it of spiritual status and blessing, but Jacob, the old “tricky surplanter” speaks of Israel in their carnality. It is God's way of speaking of his grace, that he loves them as “Jacob” and that he will go to the Cross for them as “Jacob”.

It is as saved sinners that they will repent and be restored finally in the midst of the Great Tribulation period, and they will be rescued and restored by the Lord then for the third and final time to glory. Zechariah 10:12ff. “Jacob” (the unsaved people at that point) will rejoice in overwhelming emotion as they “turn around” and face the truth and are saved, and then as Israel (saved and under God's blessing again) they will worship in praise of God's grace, and under his protection they will enter the Millennial Kingdom. Zechariah 13:1ff.

APPLICATION

1. God's Plan will not be thwarted by the foolishness of men, or by their temporary arrogance. God's Plan will work out and Israel will repent as a nation in the Great Tribulation. The days darken as I write this, and we need to draw closer to the Word than ever before, but in hope for the future, not despair. Read, believe and rejoice in what the Lord is doing and yet to do.
2. God brings joy to those who bow their knee to Him. Let us worship his majesty for his plan is wonderful.

DOCTRINE

HAPPINESS

NOTES

Psalm 15

A Psalm of David

Psalm 15: 1

“LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?”

REFLECTION

Fellowship with the Lord provides the only strength that will carry any human being through the battles of the Angelic Conflict in this life. Without close fellowship with the Lord there is no hope for us at all as we walk through this life and face our hate filled enemy daily. Who is worthy to stand in fellowship with the Lord? Who can dwell in the relationship with God that we all need? How is it possible to stand before a holy God?

We need to “abide” with God and he with us to survive the enemy’s attacks. Occasional visits to “God’s holy hill” (spiritual fellowship) will not carry us through the pressures we will face in believing service of the Lord. We need the ability to speak often and at an instant with the Lord our God, and there is no time to run up hills to do so, we must be able to speak immediately. Psalm 55:6, 56:1.

David longed to build a temple for the Lord on the holy hill of Zion, but here he recognises that it will only ever be a picture of the deeper reality that is needed. We need the “holy hill” of God’s presence within us. That glory would come on the day of Pentecost for the first time and is our living reality today. John 14:16-21, 15:26-27, 16:8-15.

APPLICATION

1. We no longer go to the temple to meet God, we are that temple, and so God meets us within. The “holy hill” has taken residence within us. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16.
2. We have moment by moment fellowship with the Lord since Pentecost, and we need it. Let us walk in that fellowship and serve the Lord as his temples of light in the dark places we are called to walk.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY

WORKS – DIVINE AND HUMAN GOOD

Psalm 15: 2

“He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.”

REFLECTION

Close Spiritual Fellowship with the Lord is not an “optional extra” for believers in the Angelic Conflict today; it is a daily necessity. We must have the Lord with us or we are without hope and strength to cope and win spiritual victories in the devil’s world. We are called to battle and that battle is only won with the spiritual power of the indwelling Lord and Holy Spirit to assist us in all things. Isaiah 59:2, 1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 5:18.

Note the three verbs that describe the spiritual and therefore powerful believer; they “walk”, “work”, and “speak” as the Lord directs. Firstly they walk with integrity and innocence before the Lord. That is, they walk without any unconfessed sin that might separate them from active fellowship with their Lord and God.

We are told to “walk in the Holy Spirit’s power”. Galatians 5:16-25. We are told to “walk in love”, that is, to walk in the place of power where the fruit of the Holy Spirit flows through us. Ephesians 5:1-8. We are to “walk worthy” of the Lord our God in all things. Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12. We are to “walk in the light” of his Word. 1 John 1:7, 2 John 6, 3 John 4.

As we walk with God in close fellowship we will then be able to “work” for the Lord in all called paths he asks us to walk. Like our Lord, we are here to “work the works of our heavenly father”. John 9:4. We have no other purpose in being left here before going to heaven. The quality of our works upon this earth will be examined in eternity and their spiritual quality is the basis for eternal rewards. 1 Corinthians 3:12ff, 1 Peter 1:17ff. We are to be “fruitful” in our time here in good works done in the power of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 6:4, Philippians 1:6ff, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 1:3ff.

Our works are then to be backed by our words of truth to all who will hear them. We are to speak the truth to all men and be known as people who honestly and fully speak the truth of God to all. Philippians 1:14, 2:16, Colossians 3:16-17. God’s word is to “dwell richly within us” and come out in Holy Spirit anointed power whenever we speak. 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 4:2ff, James 1:22ff.

APPLICATION

1. Let us walk in the path the Lord has called us to walk, and work the work we are called to work in accordance with our spiritual gifting, and so let us speak as the very oracles of God. 1 Peter 4:11.
2. Fellowship is most powerful the closer you are to the Lord, and so let us “draw near” every moment and walk in the power we need to win in this world. Hebrews 10:22.

Psalm 15: 3

“He that back biteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.”

REFLECTION

We are defined, as we saw in the previous verse, by what we do as Holy Spirit filled believers, but we are equally defined by what we do not do. The fruit of the Old Sin Nature is well and truly eliminated from expression in our life when we are walking in the Spirit. 1 John 3:11-16. If we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh and do wicked things to others.

The sins of the tongue are particularly subtle tools of Satan and are to be rejected as legitimate things to say by all who walk with Christ in caring agape love for others. There is no room for backbiting. Tale bearing and slander is to be avoided like the plague it is. There are times when evil of someone must be spoken of to protect others from a malevolent influence, but we must be careful of this. All spying activities against fellow believers are banned by the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit will have no part in any campaign to blacken the name of a genuine believer. Such activities are a sign of a person captured by their Old Sin Nature or worse!

The start of evil’s control is seen in backbiting comments, but then it moves to evil actions. To “do evil” is to bring calamity upon your neighbour, and all such action are banned for spirit filled believers; indeed they are impossible for Holy Spirit filled believers to do. Jesus words ring in our ears here; “By their fruits you will know them”. Matthew 7:13ff.

Not just backbiting and acts of malice, but even scorn towards others is banned for believers as unbecoming to those who stand for Jesus. There is no room for negative thoughts and feelings towards any brother or sister in the Lord. There is only room for concerned prayer if there is any concern at all about their status. Gossip is banned, but prayer is commanded.

APPLICATION

1. Let us “put down” any tendency to gossip and malice, and “take up” the challenge to prayer for the brethren.
2. We are known by our fruits, and the fruit of goodness is the key identifier of a Holy Spirit filled believer.

DOCTRINE

SIN

Psalm 15: 4

“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”

REFLECTION

In the eyes of the Lord are all things established, and known fully, and then judged righteously. It is in the Lord's eyes that we are to be known and established as his people, and it is in his eyes alone. Those who stand for evil and do and say "vile" things, will be exposed before him and judged by him. Evil people disdain the good, but they are "disdained" by God, and God's opinion is the one that matters eternally.

The next characteristic of the good man is his "fear of the Lord" and the resultant moral stability. This moral stability means he does not falsely "swear" oaths to others detriment, nor to hypocritically win points with others. The morally good man who "fears the Lord" lets his "yes be yes and his no be no". James 5:12. Falsely swearing oaths for devious purposes was common, and it was a sign of evil; no believer could do such things and remain spiritual.

Jesus Christ is the "same yesterday, today and forever", and our moral stability is also to be dependable. Our truth is to be known by all, and our word is to be our bond. We are not to be changeable, but stable and dependable. God's people can be trusted, for he can be trusted. We are to be like Him. He is our "measure", not other men. Ephesians 4:13.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord is the standard for our behaviour, there is no other. We are to be like Him in our attitudes and our behaviours.
2. Let the "fear" of the Lord's displeasure guide our steps and keep us from evil. The Lord alone is our guide and strength; let us lean upon him as upon the rock of our salvation, which he is.

Psalm 15: 5

"He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

REFLECTION

The challenge of the believer is to walk before God in righteousness and therefore in safety when facing the Angelic Conflict. If there is no unconfessed sin between us and the Lord and fellowship is strong and stable, then we are strong and stable. It is this place of power and relaxation that the sensible believer seeks.

The psalmist now speaks of several other things that will hinder or eliminate fellowship with the Lord and place the believer in a dangerous place in the Angelic Conflict. It is foolishness to undertake activities that will separate you from the Lord's blessing in any situation that has dangers in it, and yet people do this every day.

The psalmist notes several things that were extremely destructive of social cohesion in Israel at this time. Usury at high interest rates was and remains a destructive practise that destroys families and wrecks marriages. Easy and unsustainable credit is destructive and was banned in Israel. To lend money and destroy the families of others for profit was and remains evil in God's sight and believers need to be very careful of their dealings in business that they do not come under God's judgment in these matters.

To become a "police/gang informer" was also a dangerous occupation in any community. The informers in this time were not working for society to ensure that evil men were captured by police, but rather were working as "bounty hunters" ready to sell their neighbours to the highest bidder. It was callous and lying deviousness that destroyed marriages and families and lives. God hates those who make money out of other's misery.

To hold out against the temptation to make easy money by corrupt means is an indication that a person has character and stability, and is ready to work for the Lord and be blessed by Him. We cannot serve the Lord unless we turn away from evil activities and seek to serve the Lord in holiness and truth.

APPLICATION

1. Let us reject any "dodgy" business practise and flee from all things that appear evil in the work place. If it is "easy money" we need to be very careful about our involvement, as anything that hurts people, their marriages and their families is in the category of "evil"
2. Stand for truth and stand for the divine institutions; do not be seen to be involved in anything that undermines marriage and the family.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – STABILITY

Psalm 16

Michtam of David

(A *mikta^m*, an engraving, that is, a poem of David)

In his commentary on this Psalm, Adam Clarke states: "*That David was the author there can be no doubt. (for) It is most pointedly attributed to him by St. Peter (Acts 2:25-31).*" He also believes that the psalm as a whole has Jesus Christ ("thine Holy One" vs. 10) as its main prophetic focus. As we have seen again and again in the early Psalms, it is focus upon the coming Messiah that stabilises the mind and heart of David. It is our focus upon the risen Lord Jesus that stabilises us today.

David recognises his own limitations and worships the LORD who 'keeps him fast', and he rejoices in God's grace received to date in this life, not because of prosperity, but because of the 'hope' of resurrection into an eternal life of joy and pleasure. In this world we will indeed have "trouble" and the challenge of faith is to rejoice in the Lord here and now, knowing that he has overcome this world. John 16:33.

It is once again the humility of David that challenges and encourages us here. He recognises his total dependence upon the Lord for life itself, and his need for daily grace to keep himself and bless others. Even more he recognises that this life is but the "curtain raiser" for eternity and that it is eternal blessedness that eclipses the joys of time, and that worship then is pure and total. Like David let us get as close to the eternal state as we can in our worship today as we open God's holy Word. It is worship that opens up a glimpse of heaven now.

Psalm 16: 1

"Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust".

REFLECTION

David's relationship with God, like our own today, is due purely to God's grace, mercy and love, and David's recognition and acceptance of that fact opens the door to worship, and worship fuses into this petition for help in time of great need. David simply cries out to start this psalm. "Preserve me O God". This is my prayer today, as dawn breaks, as it has been through the darkness of the night under my own great distress. I seek, like David, the great hedge of God around me to protect me and give me security and rest for my soul.

There is hope in no other than the Lord and it is to him that we are to bring our petition for on the blood soaked ground at the foot of the Cross is the only place where true and powerful help may be found. David uses the name for God (EL) that speaks of power and might. He seeks the power and majesty of the Lord to help him, not the help of men and armies. David was a mighty warrior, but his greatness was in that recognition that in God alone was his strength.

David's trust in the Lord is the trust of a man in a hurricane that wedges himself firmly into a cleft in the rock that will not be moved, no matter how fierce the greatness of the winds and rain. Psalm 17:5, 8, 31:28, 37:28, 97:10, 116:6, Proverbs 2:1-5. It is finding in the character and plan of God the rest and security we need in extreme situations (extreme to us). We must actively seek shelter, it doesn't come to us, and we must actively trust the Lord and rest upon his promises. Hebrews 3:17 – 4:12.

APPLICATION

1. Let us rest upon the promises of God's Word. Tears may continue through the dark night of the soul as we pour our heart out to the Lord, but let us rest deeply within in the Lord's power to keep and bring us through to victory.
2. Let us remember the power and majesty of God's Plan and the stable love of his person. We rest upon the blood soaked ground. Let us claim the victory in Jesus completed work for us, and then rest in the plan that was worked out by God in eternity past.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT

WORKS – DIVINE AND HUMAN GOOD

Psalm 16: 2-3

“O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.”

REFLECTION

While these first words in italics in verse two are added, they are added for meaning and to carry the anguish and passion of David’s cry to the Lord. David is in deep distress, but he keeps on worshipping and bringing his desire and petition to the Lord. We can be in great suffering and still worship. We can be in great depression and/pain or discomfort and still worship through the pain. As I tap these words out this morning my right eye is swollen and is nearly closed. It has been uncomfortable all night. An allergic reaction has hit me and added to my already great pressure and distress in my spirit, but the greatest tonic is worship and the Lord is giving me the “master class” today in exactly what David is discussing here in this psalm.

Isaiah 26:1-4

“1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.”

David affirms strongly from his place of pressure that the Lord is his God. This affirmation is a great place to start prayer every time we bow before the Lord, for we affirm his ownership of ourselves and therefore of our problems. Believers in the Lord do not have problems, they have a Saviour, protector and provider, and it is to Him we bring the issues of the day, for we are all blood bought sons and servants, and our problems are the Lords. 1 Peter 1:13-21, 5:5-10.

David then identifies a principle that we often ignore. We cannot directly show the Lord our goodness, nor do “good” for God, for the Lord is in heaven and needs nothing from us. What we can do is show his servants grace, mercy and love in God’s place. We can see every person we meet in the Lord as though they are the Lord before us, and we can treat them as we would treat Jesus if he stood before us and had a need. Matthew 25:40-45.

David can see that the way he treats others is a reflection of his true faith towards the Lord. If he is arrogant towards men, made in God’s image, then he is deeply arrogant towards God! Ephesians 5:18-21. David delights in the goodness of godly people and seeks to bless them in any way he can, for in so doing he is blessing and honouring God who made them this way. It is love of the brethren that marks the believer.

1 John 3:17-24

“17 But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

APPLICATION

1. O believer, let us rest upon the Lord, for in Him alone is our strength and in Him alone there is the power to help us through our deep valleys.
2. Let us seek ways to bless our brethren in the Lord and so bless the Lord and worship his holy name thereby.

Psalm 16: 4

“Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* hasten *after* another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.”

REFLECTION

There is one God and Father or salvation of us all and so anyone who wanders away to worship any other so called “god” can only be chasing the wind, or serving a demonic force. It is a dangerous thing to serve the enemy of man and God, for there is only judgment and deception there. Impetuous people are a danger to themselves and to others. To be impetuous in spiritual matters brings disaster, and such things bring judgment always. All we can do in such places is confess our sin and cast ourselves upon the mercy of the Lord. 1 John 1:5-10.

The evil of paganism is that it was rooted and grounded in evil practises that blaspheme the Cross. To pour out a libation of blood meant an animal or person had died unnecessarily to make it and such things were an abomination to God. Sincerity is not ever good enough before the Lord; only obedience will suffice to satisfy the justice of God. Thank God we enter his throne room of grace and mercy and can have his justice met at the Cross where Christ died on our behalf. Hebrews 4:14-16.

David will not honour or even mention the names of pagan gods, nor in any way be party to giving them any credit before the eyes of men. David saw the battle lines drawn clearly, and we must challenge ourselves today in our pluralistic societies. We must stand for freedom of worship in all places, but we must avoid all compromise with evil, and share nothing of false religions. We may fight in war for the right for people to be free to be deceived in matters of faith, for that is what political and religious freedom means, but we must not honour or give credence to false religion. No believer must ever visit or take part in any pagan ceremonies. Hosea 2:18-20, 4:6, 16-19. No compromise with paganism, only repentance for any past involvement! Hosea 14:1-4.

APPLICATION

1. There is no meeting place between paganism and true faith. We must pull back from every compromise with evil that man makes and worship the Lord alone in purity and truth. Let not the pagan gods be even named before us.
2. There is judgment upon all involvement with paganism. Stay well away believer for no good will come, rather judgment upon you and all who compromise with them.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS – DEMONS

IDOLATRY

Psalm 16: 5

“The LORD *is* the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.”

REFLECTION

People enter into the practices of paganism and religious rituals to “win points” and secure their “rights” or “privileges” from the fake “gods”, but the only genuine inheritance is that given by God alone. There is no genuine and lasting inheritance other than that given by the one true God. God alone blesses mankind; there is hope and security in no other power or force. Satan promises blessing to his people, but in his malice and deceit, he “forgets” to tell people that the “wages of sin is death”. Romans 6:23.

There is inheritance forever in the one who gives eternal life only, for no other power has the ability to promise and deliver eternal rewards. The cup of blessing is the Lord’s to give alone, and the only one who can “maintain” us in this

life is the Lord who developed the plan in eternity past and has already provided all we need for our walk through time. The Lord maintains our "lot", and that meant the casting vote in a trial, and indicates that the Lord maintains our righteousness and our place of blessing.

Only the owner of the house gives any inheritance in that house. The earth is the Lord's, for he is the maker and judge over all that is in space and time, so only the Lord grants any inheritance here and in the new creation. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 1:14-18.

1 Peter 1:3-7

"3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

APPLICATION

1. The Lord alone grants the inheritance that is his to give to his saints. No work of paganism ever "inherits" anything except judgment. Let us rest in the provision and eternal inheritance of the Lord alone.
2. The Lord maintains our righteousness and stand for us in the trials of life. Let us rest in his arms and trust in his deliverance.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – ETERNAL SECURITY

Psalm 16: 6

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

REFLECTION

When God makes his "survey lines" he selects the best for his children for their maximum service and blessing. Even in the dark nights of the soul that we will face in this life there is joy in the morning as we reflect upon the blessings of the Lord. In the midst of the terrible pressures I have been facing through recent years I have rejoiced every day in the many blessings the Lord has given me. I see protection over the health of my children and myself and I see the measured pressure being applied to me in situations, never above breaking point, even though at times I cry aloud. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

God has apportioned "sweet" places for us in the midst of the battlefields of this world. We will be fighting for our life one minute and then be discovering his grace and mercy and peace the next. The Lord has "set the lines" and Satan and his team of demons cannot go beyond the boundaries the Lord has set against us or in any thing. Satan's great lie is that he is God's equal, but he is a creature, and even though in rebellion, he is under orders and faces great restrictions.

David affirms that although under great pressure at this point and others in his life, that he has a "goodly heritage". He has a "beautiful life" from God as a gift to enjoy. The old song we sang as children, "Count your Blessings" sums up the spirit of David's prayer of thanks here. He rejoices in his place as God's son and rests under his blessing, as he knows that in the darkest places the light will eventually break in upon him and bring blessing. Philippians 2:9-11.

Romans 8:14-18

"14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

APPLICATION

1. God has “surveyed” our life in eternity past and made provision for all we need. His lines were drawn then and we are safe within them. Let us thank the Lord for his provisions and his gracious love that is new every morning.
2. We have God’s goodness and grace and so let us praise his name within the darkest places and so bring the message of victory again into Satan’s very throne and remind him he is judged and rightly condemned.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING OF THE BELIEVER

Psalm 16: 7

“I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.”

REFLECTION

I will kneel and bless the Lord. This is the act of free will that is requested of all sons and daughters of the Lord, that they might bless the Lord freely in the midst of great pressure and deep anguish at times. This deliberate decision to bless the Lord from the place of anguish is what transforms the moments of despair into worship and joy. Isaiah 61:3.

It is the Lord who gives me counsel and who will always give us counsel to stabilise our hearts and minds in his Word. It is in the truth of God’s Word alone that we have hope, joy, and peace. Proverbs 3:1-8. It is the Lord who in the night seasons of the soul (the so called “dark nights of the soul” where we are in great anguish) brings counsel to the emotions (reins – kidneys – seat of the emotions to the ancients).

In our suffering our very emotions are “educated” by the Lord and we learn to take all burdens to Him and cast our cares upon him. The emotions are able to be taught, and transformed in Christ Jesus by the education that the Holy Spirit can give in extreme situations. John 16:7-15, 33. There is a fellowship within his sufferings and that is all believers who walk with God through dark places. Philippians 3:10, 1 Peter 4:13.

APPLICATION

1. Let us praise the Lord and turn our sadness into joy and our dark days into morning and hope.
2. Let us seek the instruction of the Lord in our extreme pressure situations and allow the Holy Spirit to teach our spirit the meaning of the sufferings of the Lord in our own.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

Psalm 16: 8

“I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.”

REFLECTION

Once again we have David’s definite statement of affirmative action. He has taken action to defeat despair and banish sadness from his mind. He has set the thought of God before his mind every day. An old pastor of mine would always say to us as young men, “Let the Lord come between you and everything you think about, or everything will come between the Lord and your peace of mind”. What he said stuck with me to good effect and I give thanks for godly men like him in my early years, for they laid a secure foundation.

David affirms the Lord’s presence with him every day and he remembers the Lord at every mental turning point and decision moment. Over all his decisions David sets God’s throne and seeks the Lord’s “well done” over each and every decision as it is made, without having to wait for outcomes. With every decision and thought David keeps the Lord’s

image before his mind so that he sees all things in terms of their impact upon his role and status as God's son and servant.

He also sees the Lord at his "right hand". This is the way of saying, the place of power in the ancient world, and reminds David that the Lord is his strength and power. David is remembering that the Lord alone is his strength and that in all his decisions it is the Lord alone who can bring blessing and safety in the results that flow from all decisions. Only with the Lord beside him can he say with any confidence, "I will not be moved".

APPLICATION

1. Let us decide to affirm the Lord's presence and power with us in all things as we face decisions and see all things in terms of his will and purposes for us.
2. Let us recognise that in the Lord alone is safety and security in our decision making.

DOCTRINE

PROMISES

Psalm 16: 9

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope."

REFLECTION

Because he takes affirmative action to worship the Lord there is an immediate result into his emotions in joy. The fruit of worship is always joy, peace, happiness and excitement at service for the Lord. The will and thinking is uplifted by worship, for in worship we recognise who the Lord is and who we are. We see our place and so can receive his blessings in our place as his servants.

"The joy of the Lord is our strength" in life, lips and all aspects of daily worship. Nehemiah 8:10. The joy of the Lord 'turns us around' to face the truth; that we are sons and daughters of God and his joy and his delight. Psalms 37:4-11, Isaiah 26:1-4. Our source of glory within ourselves can rejoice in the Lord because of who he is, what he has done for us and who we have become in and through Him. 1 Peter 2:9-11.

Our body (flesh) rests in hope/confidence in the Lord. It is only in God's promises that we have hope and are able to rest in difficult places and through terrible times. In my own distress this day I rejoice in the Lord right now; although my eyes are partly closed with a severe allergy reaction and sadness aches within. My joy in the Lord pushes back the symptoms of depression and allergy that have assaulted me over recent days, and so I can feel with David my flesh leap within and joy come through the depression through worship of the glory of the Lord. He is with me and He is with you, Hallelujah!

APPLICATION

1. Let us praise his name as David does here and rejoice in the midst of the pressures we face, for then we push all evils away and restore our hope in the Lord.
2. The Joy of the Lord is our strength. Let us praise Him as Nehemiah did as he built the wall of Jerusalem.

DOCTRINE

HOPE

Psalm 16: 10

"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

REFLECTION

While this verse has been rightly applied to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, who went to Hades (the abode of all the dead till that point), but did not stay there. He went and announced his victory over death and sin and led the believers from that place to heaven, and now all believers go directly to be with the Lord. Ephesians 4:8.

David knew that Hades was not his final destination, nor was physical corruption his final lot before God and men. David knew the stench of putrefaction of bodies, for he had been on many battlefields and seen many dead. He knew that this was the lot of all men, and yet for those who died in hope in God this was not their end. Corruption was not the final end of man.

The Lord Jesus is the “holy one”, but actually all of us are God’s “holy ones” in Christ Jesus. Through our relationship with the Lord we are entered into a new position in time and in eternity. David saw the hope and power of this and rejoiced in what he had in Christ Jesus through the sacrificial system he fulfilled daily. Remember the way David expressed faith was through the Mosaic Sacrifices and as he did so he recognised that there was a Saviour coming who would take away all his sins that were being covered by the blood of bulls. Hebrews 7-9.

APPLICATION

1. Our eternal hope is deliverance from the fear and terror of death, for we do not see death, we see Jesus. John 8:51, Acts 7:51ff. Let us rejoice in the gift of salvation that the Lord gives us all in his sacrifice on the Cross.

DOCTRINE

RESURRECTION

Psalm 16: 11

“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fullness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures forevermore.”

REFLECTION

God shows us the path of life in and through true worship, for in worship we see the Lord and life is transformed by the presence of the Lord. Many through the years have spoken of “practicing the presence of Christ” and this verse sums up what they mean if they are biblical in the use of the phrase. In the presence of the Lord there are the fruits of the Holy Spirit fresh and new each morning.

Fullness of joy is the life of the Holy Spirit filled believer, when in the midst of pressure situations we can be relaxed and filled with joy in the Lord. At the right hand of God (the place where his power is manifested – the place of spiritual fellowship) there are pleasures that are sustainable forevermore.

APPLICATION

1. Let us walk in spiritual fellowship with the Lord and ensure we keep very short accounts with our God, confessing any sins that crop up and walking closely with our God.
2. The joy of the Lord is pleasure forevermore; it is eternal joy the Lord offers and eternal pleasure is our inheritance in Christ Jesus.

DOCTRINE

ETERNITY FUTURE

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