

# Psalm 90 & 91

## Part 1

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[00:00:00] Psalms 90 and 91, and leading up to it I might just mention that Psalm 90 is the beginning of the fourth book of Psalms.

The Psalms as they are well known are divided into five books, I don't go into all the details of the divisions at the moment, the first book, Psalms 42 to 72 has some likeness to the book of Exodus because it celebrates the great doings of God. The third book 73 to 89 has some likeness to the book of Leviticus because we learn [00:01:03] there that God's way is in the sanctuary and he certainly would be approached in the sanctuary and it's when we get into the sanctuary we get the divine perspective of everything. The fourth book of Psalms starting with Psalm 90 up to 106 inclusive has some features of similarity with the book of Numbers in that there's the failure of the people in responsibility but thank God the faithfulness of God he brings them through. So the last book, book 5, 107 to 150 inclusive is somewhat like Deuteronomy in that there is much recapitulation of the ways of God, the people under the law, the great law of Psalm of course is 119, Israel is delivered and yet obviously standing before God when [00:02:10] this book is closing in new covenant blessings consequently there's rich response Godward. We might just say that book 1 commences with the first verses of the book in Psalm 1, blessed is the man and concludes with these blessed words, praise ye the Lord.

We might say that this is the fitting sequel to the activities of God in blessing to men that men should respond to God in his worthy praise and all that comes out in the Psalms and all the experimental blessing that is brought before us there gives ample ground for men to praise God.

Well Psalm 90 of course is entitled and the title is part of the psalm of prayer of Moses [00:03:08] the man of God.

It may be that this psalm was written just before or about the time of the wonderful son of Moses which is given to us in Deuteronomy chapter 32.

Chapter 33 of Deuteronomy of course is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death and the reason that we suggest that this psalm might have been written about that time is on account of verse 10 in the psalm. Psalm 90 the days of our years are three score years and ten and if by reason of strength they be four score years yet is their strength labor and sorrow for it is soon cut off and [00:04:07] we fly away.

Psalm 90 of course is the psalm of the dying man. Why does he speak of 80 years at the most and not 120?

Well a brother suggested when I was last in his company down in East Anglia that probably the psalm was written when he was 120 years of age but saying that as the 40 years of wilderness experience were passed through under the miraculous power of the provision of God that he makes no mention of them and he only speaks of the 80 years of his practical experience. For instance as we've sometimes said 40 years in the house of Pharaoh learning to be somebody [00:05:04] or something and 40 years in the back side of the desert learning that he was nothing and we might say as to the 40 years in the wilderness under the miraculous provision of God he was learning that God was everything. But if we were to omit this 40 years of miraculous provision on the part of God we might say that in a sense Moses was 80 years in practical responsible life when he wrote the psalm of Deuteronomy 32 and it may be that at that time he also voiced this prayer, the prayer of Moses the man of God. As we've said it's the prayer of the dying man.

Psalm 90 brings before us the mortal man his days shortened his life forfeit evidently [00:06:04] we might say the first man.

Psalm 91 brings before us a man of another order the man who established his right to live obviously the Lord Jesus Christ the second man out of heaven. And so in regard to this remarkable psalm, Psalm 90 the prayer we would just say very briefly and rapidly verse 1 he speaks of God as the refuge really tells us where he found his rest and his resource. In verse 2 he speaks of the eternity of the being of God. Verse 3 God's sovereignty and holiness. Verse 4 time and its hopes are insignificant in the light of the appreciated greatness of God.

And then in verse 5 the helplessness and guilt of man and in verse 6 the glory of man is [00:07:11] transient he's very unstable flourishing in the morning cut down and withering in the evening of his days so to speak. In verse 7 we learn the why for all this we are consumed by thine anger and by thy wrath we are troubled.

The reason for it of course is that man is a guilty sinful being. So that in verse 8 he says thou hast set our iniquities before thee our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. Obviously this man is experiencing some conscience work in the presence of God. [00:08:01] Such light of the word of God is shining upon him. And just as we read in Hebrews 4 verse 12 this man was experiencing that everything was brought out into the light as exposed before God. In verse 9 he says we spend our days as a tale that is told.

Years passed away in thy wrath we spend our years as a tale that is told. And so in that verse 10 that we've already referred to he speaks of the brevity of man's years.

After all in the light of verse 2 of our psalm what are 80 years?

And we think of this wonderful expression from everlasting to everlasting eternity to eternity thou art God.

[00:09:04] Then in verse 11 we read that his wrath is measured by his fear sensibilities are formed as one grows in the knowledge of God. And so he says who knoweth the power of thine anger? Well only those who fear God of course can know it in its true character at all because some sense of his

holiness has laid hold of them.

So in verse 12 the effect of all this consideration is brought before us so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom return O Lord how long and let it [00:10:01] repent thee concerning thy servants or satisfy us early with thy mercy that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us and the years wherein we have seen evil.

And so in verse 6 he says let thy work he's ceasing from his own work let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto thy children. It's very blessed that the work of God and the glory of God. And so there's a this moral effect is produced in the soul of the man of God who prays in the light and language of this blessed experience of Psalm 90. There's a response Godward let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish [00:11:07] thou the work of our hands upon us yea the work of our hands establish thou it. He's a dependent man the man of Psalm 90 he's boasting nothing in himself if he boasts at all he's boasting of the greatness of God and casts himself upon the establishing mercy of God.

Well it's a blessed thing then to turn to Psalm 91 because as we've said in Psalm 91 we've got a different man in view.

Just as I've been saying it brings before us in contrast to the man of Psalm 90 who has forfeited his right to live the man who has established his right to live and as I've suggested obviously the Lord Jesus Christ the second man out of heaven. [00:12:06] Now verse 1 of Psalm 91 is a divine proposition.

It's put in abstract language he that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty and in verse 2 Messiah takes this up and declares that he will enter into the blessed conscious reality of it.

Now in verse 3 we obviously have another speaker and this speaker is not Jehovah and it's not Messiah it's evidently the Holy Spirit addressing Messiah and saying in regard to [00:13:03] him surely he that is Jehovah shall deliver thee Messiah the man of verse 2 deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and so on he shall cover thee with his feathers etc. right down to the end of verse 8.

Now when you come to verse 9 there's obviously another voice speaking we've had the divine proposition in verse 1 we have Messiah taking it up in verse 2 we have the Spirit of God addressing Messiah in verses 3 to 8 inclusive and now in verse 9 there's a voice speaking and it's speaking to Messiah it's not Jehovah speaking and it's not the Spirit speaking [00:14:05] for the language used you'll notice is the language of experience verse 9 because thou hast made Jehovah which is my refuge even the most high thy habitation and this speaker goes on right down to verse 13 yes right down verse 9 to 13 inclusive and the voice is the voice of one who's proved the blessedness of divine succor support and refuge and he says as we've drawn attention to it because thou that is Messiah thou hast made Jehovah my refuge to be your refuge so to speak says all this will happen no evil before thee it's [00:15:06] obviously the voice of the godly remnant speaking in verses 9 to 13 but when you come down to verse 14 God will have the last word we might say Jehovah yes in the language of new testament of course we would say the father addresses the son and he addresses the preceding speakers and says to them concerning the one of whom to whom they had spoken because he verse 14 that is because Messiah has set his love upon me therefore will I deliver him I will set him on high

because he hath known my name he shall call upon me and I will answer him [00:16:09] I will be with him in trouble I will deliver him and honor him with long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation so unlike the man of declining days in psalm 90 Jehovah says of the man who in verse 2 of psalm 91 speaking says I will save Jehovah he is my refuge and my fortress my God in him will I trust Jehovah says of this man with length of days will I satisfy him and show him my salvation so blessedly in psalm 91 the second psalm of this fourth book of psalms [00:17:15] brings before us a man who has established his right to live and who would exercise his life in trusting in God he is the one who would dwell in the secret place of the most high he is the one who would abide under the shadow of the almighty this obviously in psalm 91 psalm 91 is the man of psalm 16 who said you remember on that blessed occasion has given to us in that psalm preserved me oh God for in thee do I put my trust [00:18:08] and so the one who puts his trust in God lived his life here entirely to the pleasure of God he knows the blessedness of the secret of God he knows the blessedness of the shadow of the El Shaddai the protecting the succoring the sustaining God and though his life was a lonely life his path was a persecuted pathway was a rejected suffering pathway he moved through it in the blessed confidence of these words that we've drawn attention to in verses one and two he makes God his refuge he rests certainly under the shadow [00:19:09] of the almighty and as we travel through the pages of the holy gospels we read of our blessed Lord moving here misunderstood never fully understood even by the most intimate of his disciples moving here in loneliness we read of him on more than one occasion that he moved in the communion of the father's love though the disciples might leave him alone yet I am not alone for the father himself is with me and so in the sweet communion of verses one and two of psalm 91 our blessed Lord trod that path of holy [00:20:03] spotless worth and beauty from the cradle so to speak to the scenes of Jordan where he entered upon his public ministry and from the Jordan through Gethsemane through Gabbatha to Golgotha and there at the place called Calvary he says father into thy hands I commit my spirit so that blessed pathway closed for a season at the place called Calvary but the sweetness of the savor of his devotion his obedience to the father's will abides and the fragrance of it is breathed out in the prophetic spirit of psalm 91 and this if as I've suggested we look upon a failing [00:21:04] word dependent man in psalm 90 we look upon the man of psalm 91 and we hear so to speak the tones of Isaiah the prophet breaking through he will not fail and so blessed be his precious name he is moved here in obedience to the will of God throughout every step of his way he was the one who set his love upon God that the world may know that I love the father and as the father has given me commandment even so I do arise let us go hence and so he passed to the awful suffering of the cross of the cross but the place called Calvary in the light of John's ministry the sweetness [00:22:08] of the whole burnt offering descended as a savor right into the presence of the glory of God and we catch the sweetness of it in this our day and the charm of that devoted man grips our spirits and we praise and glorify his precious name amen