

Psalm 90 Introduction

I know no higher compliment than that which we see in the title of this Psalm - “A Prayer of Moses, the man of GOD”. Moses is known as the man of GOD. We are given in [Deuteronomy 33:1 NASB] **1 Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death.** – and again, in the second part of [Joshua 14:6 NASB] **6 Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea.** Dear saints, there is no greater display of GOD’s Lovingkindness and Grace than for us to be that which is given in that short prepositional phrase – “of GOD”. That little word “of” instructs us that in order to be of GOD, He must do the divine work of making us such. That little word means: from or out of; proceeding from, as the cause, source, means, author or agent bestowing (granting). There is no greater endeavor for man than to be “of GOD.

Dr. Robert Godfrey addresses some of the difficulties in studying the Psalms in his teaching “Learning to Love the Psalms” that have been very helpful. One of the difficulties addressed is that there seems to be no particular arrangement to the Psalter. It seems to be a collection of prayers and songs that could be placed in any order. However it may seem, this is not true. We must keep in mind that the Psalter is divided into five books, which in itself means there is an arrangement and even a movement in the Psalms. It is true that the Psalms are poetry and are not read the same way as an Epistle in the New Testament. The other books of the Bible can be outlined and the context is easier to determine by what precedes the text and by what follows throughout the whole book. So, in that sense, the Psalms are different, but there seems to be a movement from Book III to Book IV. Book 3 is Psalm 73 through Psalm 89 which is unique in that expresses some of the most intense despair and is the emotional center of the Book. Dr. Godfrey has suggested that Book III is best characterized by the title “Crisis over GOD’s Promises”. Not every Psalm in Book III expresses despair or crisis, but the most intense is seen in this Book. For example: Psalm 73 is characterized by great personal distress, Psalm 74 is a lament over the loss of GOD’s temple, and Psalm 88 is perhaps the bleakest Psalm that expresses individual loneliness, a sense of abandonment, and uses such phrases as “darkness is my only companion” or “My acquaintances are in darkness” which may better be worded “my acquaintance is darkness” meaning that the psalmist is familiar with only deep sadness – that he knows no joy.

Psalm 89 culminates by specifically expressing a sense of the loss of GOD's Faithfulness. The movement of Psalm 89 looks like this: The first part expresses the Covenant Promises, specifically that David's Son will always sit on David's throne. The second half says "but David's Son is not sitting on David's throne. Haven't You broken Your promise, Your Covenant? There is no greater crisis or intense despair than to think that GOD has broken His promises. Book IV, begins with Psalm 90 which is "A Prayer of Moses, the man of GOD". This is the most ancient Psalm that we are given. There seems to be a "going back" and recounting GOD's Faithfulness. Just as we see throughout the Psalms in Book III and in many other places in Scripture, the OT saint often goes back to the deliverance from Egypt as a reminder of GOD's Might, Holiness, Sovereignty, Mercy, Love, and Providence for His people. The movement from the end of Book III to the beginning of Book IV, Moses goes back prior to the Deliverance from Egypt to Creation to recount GOD's Faithfulness and Provision for His people. This example that is repeated throughout the Scriptures of going back and recounting helps us to know that when we have trouble looking ahead, we should by faith look back; into the Word of GOD so that we may face all of life, whether in times of difficulty or joy, with the confidence of the Son of David being on the Eternal Throne. We have been mercifully been given the means of grace; that is the Word of GOD, the Abiding Holy Spirit, and the Person and Work of Christ that anchors our souls.

As I have studied this Psalm I have learned that some have erroneously tried to deny that this Psalm was penned by the Prophet Moses. I have also noticed that the men I trust most in handling the Word of GOD do not take this stance. Spurgeon concludes that the expressions used in this Psalm so strongly illustrate the condition of Israel in the wilderness and the words are so similar to the words used in the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) which presents more than enough evidence of its Mosaic origin. Some of the Jewish writers that Dr. Gill looked to in his lifelong pursuit of learning Hebrew attribute the next ten following, being without a name to Moses. However, we know Psalm 95 was penned by David according to Hebrews 4:7 NASB **7 He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."** We that know Psalm 96 is most likely to be David's from 1 Chronicles 16:23 NASB **23 Sing to the LORD, all the earth; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.** Psalm 99 mentions Samuel who lived long after the time of Moses. There is agreement among most that Psalm 90 and 91 belong to the Prophet Moses. I often look for what our Pastor has taught concerning the Psalm itself or the doctrine that we are to be instructed in by

the Psalm. I found the first part of his teaching on Psalm 90, and this is the first thing addressed – that this Psalm was indeed written by Moses, the man of GOD by whom the LORD brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. However, the strongest testimony is set before us by the Word of GOD in the Title of this Psalm.

Read Psalm 90

Think of the perspective of the psalmist contrasted with our own regarding the specific part of the Covenant of David's Son always being on the Throne. He did not know the fulfillment of the Covenant as we do. The New Testament mercifully reveals Christ as the Son of David – the King of the Eternal Kingdom. The psalmist's eyes would have probably been more toward a king to deliver Israel in that day from their enemies on this earth. We have been mercifully shown GOD's Provision fulfilled in that Christ Jesus has and is fulfilling that Covenant in which every soul's salvation hinges upon. This Psalm and the movement between Book III and Book IV strengthens and supports that we need to not only be about preaching the Gospel to our families and to those around us in whatever setting the LORD by His Providence has placed us in, be it the home, school, work, neighborhood, or the grocery store, but we need to daily preach the Gospel to ourselves. Let us by GOD's Mercy look with this perspective as we encounter the LORD GOD through His Word in this Psalm together. May we see this as applied to Israel in the wilderness and the far higher ground upon which we as believers now stand.

What I pray for us in this endeavor of studying this Psalm together is that our hearts will be instructed by the Holy Spirit's teaching, the Word of GOD and this Psalm the Truth and Certainty of our LORD's Mercy, Omnipotence, Sovereignty, and His being Eternal as well as the Truth of our own frailty, shortness of life, and our greatest need is to be "of GOD" by His Merciful Glorious Grace. May each soul be able to say as the Apostle Paul: [2 Timothy 4:7 NASB] **7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;**

Amen