

NOTES ON VARIOUS OTHER PSALMS &/or CATEGORIES OF PSALMS¹

1. **MESSIANIC PSALMS** (or portions of Psalms). Psalms 2, 8, 16, **22**, 34, 35, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 78, 109, **110** & 118.

2. **PENITENTIAL PSALMS**. Psalms 6, **32**, **38**, **51**, 102, 130 & 143. “In these (Psalms), the distress afflicting the psalmist is his sin, and so the lament is a confession of sin.” (Ryrie, p. 835). The three primary penitential Psalms by David are, in order, **38**, **51** & **32**. Psalm 38 may not have been written at the time of David’s sins with Bathsheba & Uriah. However it, along with the other two Psalms listed above, **illustrate the steps that often transpire when one sins: i.e. first a covering up and hiding of the sin-with disastrous mental & physical consequences (38), then a breaking down and confessing of the sin & a pleading for mercy (51), then finally the joy & relief experienced once sin is confessed and dealt with properly (32).**

3. **ROYAL PSALMS**. “So designated because the theme is the supreme King” (Ryrie, p. 833, lists as royal psalms: Psalms 2, 18, 20, 21, **45**, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132 & 144).

4. **PSALM 119** – *The Psalm of the Word*. “This wisdom psalm concerning the law of the Lord is an alphabetic acrostic in which each stanza of eight verses is devoted to successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, each verse of a particular stanza beginning with the same letter. The psalm conveys the thought that the Word of God contains everything man needs to know. Except for verses 1-3 and 115, it is addressed to the Lord. The psalmist uses 10 different terms for the law or Word of God, every verse except verses 90, 122 and 132 mentioning at least one of these terms: *law* (i.e. instruction or revelation), *testimonies* (or precepts), *ways*, *precepts* (or orders), *statutes* (or decrees) *commandments*, *judgments* (or ordinances) *word*, *path*, *word* (the last ‘word’ meaning promise or utterance as in v. 11).”²

5. **PSALM 90**³:

Introduction: This is the oldest Psalm in the Psalter. It was **written by Moses** during the time of the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites. Since each of the five books of Psalms was probably designed to correspond to the reading of the five books of the Law in synagogue services, Psalm 90 (the first Psalm of the 4th book) would coincide with the reading of the book of Numbers. That book, of course, records the wilderness trials and experiences of the people of Israel. Surely no better psalm than this one containing Moses’ meditations during that period of time, could possibly open the reading of the book of Numbers.

v. 1 – “Moses, in effect, says—*wanderers though we be in the howling wilderness, yet we find a home in thee, even as our forefathers did when they came out of Ur of the Chaldees and dwelt in tents among the Canaanites...*but the saints dwell in their God, and have always done so in all ages. Not in the tabernacle or the temple do we dwell, but in God himself...It is of New Testament saints that the Holy Ghost has said, ‘*He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in God and God in him!*’ [I Jn. 4:16]” (Spurgeon, Treasury of David, Vol. 2, p. 61)

v. 2 - “God was when nothing else was...in this Eternal One there is a safe abode for the successive generations of men.” (ibid)

v. 3 - “God resolves and man dissolves. A word created and a word destroys.” (ibid)

v. 4 – “*A thousand years!* This is a long stretch of time. How much may be crowded into it—the rise and fall of empires, the glory and obliteration of dynasties, the beginning and the end of elaborate systems of human philosophy, and countless events, all important to household and individual, which elude the pens of historians.” (ibid)

¹ Compiled by Mike Edwards.

² Charles Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible* (KJV) (Moody Press: Chicago, 1994), pp. 916-917, italics in the original.

³ All quotes on Psalm 90 taken from C.H. Spurgeon’s “*The Treasury of David*” (page #'s indicated), St. Vincent & the Grenadines, January 2008.

v. 5 – “*‘Thou carriest them as with a flood’* As when a torrent rushes down the river-bed and bears all before it, so does the Lord bear away by death the succeeding generations of men... We are not cedars or oaks, but only poor grass, which is vigorous in the spirit but last not a summer through. What is there upon earth more frail than we!” (ibid, pp. 61-62)

v. 6 – “**Here is the history of the grass—sown, grown, blown, mown, gone;** and the history of man is not much more.” (ibid, p. 62)

v. 7 – “*‘We are consumed in thine anger’*... **This was especially the case in reference to the people in the wilderness, whose lives were cut short by justice on account of their waywardness.**... It must have been a very mournful sight to Moses to see the whole nation melt away during the forty years of their pilgrimage, till none remained of all that came out of Egypt... A sense of divine anger confounded them, so that they lived as men who knew that they were doomed. **This is true of us in a measure, but not altogether, for now that immortality and life are brought to light by the gospel, death has changed its aspect, and to believers in Jesus, it is no more a judicial execution.** Anger and wrath are the sting of death, and in these believers have no share; love and mercy now conduct us to glory by the way of the tomb. It is not seemly to read these words at a Christian’s funeral without words of explanation, and distinct endeavour to show how little they belong to believers in Jesus, and how far we are privileged beyond those with whom he was not well pleased, ‘whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.’... We may learn much from it, but we ought not to misapply it by taking to ourselves, as the beloved of the Lord, that which was chiefly true of those to whom God had sworn in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. When, however, a soul is under conviction of sin, the language of this Psalm is highly appropriate to his case, and will naturally suggest itself to the distracted mind. No fire consumes like God’s anger, and no anguish so troubles the heart as his wrath. Blessed by that dear substitute, ‘Who bore that we might never bear His Father’s righteous ire.’” (ibid)

v. 8 – “Rebellion in the light of justice is black, but in the light of love it is devilish. How can we grieve so good a God? The children of Israel had been brought out of Egypt with a high hand, fed in the wilderness with a liberal hand, and guided with a tender hand, and their sins were peculiarly atrocious. We, too, having been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and saved by abounding grace, will be verily guilty if we forsake the Lord. What manner of persons ought we to be? (II Pet. 3) How ought we to pray for cleansing from secret faults?

v. 9 – “**The first sentence is not intended for believers to quote as though it applied to themselves,** for our days are all passed amid the lovingkindness of the Lord, even as David says in the twenty-third Psalm, *‘Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.’*” (p. 63)

v. 10 – “mellowed by hallowed experience, and solaced by immortal hopes, the latter days of aged Christians are not so much to be pitied as envied. The sun is setting and the heat of the day is over, but sweet is the calm and cool of the eventide...”

“The unusual strength which overleaps the bound of threescore and ten only lands the aged man in a region where life is a weariness and a woe. The strength of old age, its very prime and pride, are but labour and sorrow; what must its weakness be?” (p. 63)

“Moses mourned for men as he thus sung; and well he might, as all his comrades fell at his side. His words are more nearly rendered, *‘He drives us fast and we fly away;’* as the quails were blown along by the strong west wind, so are men hurried before the tempests of death. To us, however, as believers, the winds are favourable; they bear us as the gales bear the swallows away from the wintry realms... Who wishes it to be otherwise? Wherefore should we linger here? What has this poor world to offer us that we should tarry on its shores? Away, away! This is not our rest.” (63-64)

v. 11 – “Moses saw men dying all around him; he lived among funerals and was overwhelmed at the terrible results of the divine displeasure... it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. Holy Scripture when it depicts God’s wrath against sin never uses an hyperbole; it would be impossible to exaggerate it... What the power of God’s anger is in hell, and what it would be on earth, were it not in mercy restrained, no man living can rightly conceive. Modern thinkers rail at Milton and Dante, Bunyan and Baxter, for their terrible imagery; but the truth is

that no vision of poet, or denunciation of holy seer, can ever reach to the dread height of this great argument, much less go beyond it.” (64)

v. 12 – *So teach us to number our days...* “**We are more anxious to count the stars than our days, and yet the latter is by far more practical...**

v. 16 – *Let thy work appear unto thy servants.* “See how he dwells upon that word servants. It is as far as the law can go, and Moses goes to the full length permitted him: henceforth Jesus calls us not servants but friends, and if we are wise we shall make full use of our wider liberty.

v. 17 – *And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us...* “**Good men are anxious not to work in vain.** They know that without the Lord they can do nothing, and therefore they cry to him for help in the work, for acceptance of their efforts, and for the establishment of their designs. The church as a whole earnestly desires that the hand of the Lord may so work with the hand of his people, that a substantial, yea, an eternal edifice to the praise and glory of God may be the result. We come and go, but the Lord’s work abides. **We are content to die, so long as Jesus lives and his kingdom grows.**” (66)