

(How to Understand the KJV Bible) 22 Psalm 90

by Keith Simons

Keith Simons explores Psalm 90, emphasizing God's eternal nature, human mortality, and the importance of seeking wisdom through prayer and repentance.

Duration: 24:44

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Psalm 39:4-5, Psalm 90, Ecclesiastes 3:1, James 4:14

Topics: "KJV Bible", "Eternity", "Divine Wisdom"

Description

Keith Simons explores Psalm 90, a prayer of Moses, emphasizing the eternal nature of God and the fleeting existence of humanity. He highlights how Moses, as a close friend of God, intercedes for the Israelites, acknowledging their sins and the consequences of living under God's wrath. The sermon reflects on the importance of recognizing our mortality and the need for divine wisdom to navigate life. Simons encourages believers to find their true dwelling place in God, who offers safety and mercy throughout generations. Ultimately, he calls for a return to God, seeking His favor and the establishment of meaningful work in our lives.

Transcript

Welcome, my name is Keith Symons and you're listening to the next of our talks on how to understand the King James Version of the Bible. Today we're going to be looking at Psalm 90 and as usual we'll be looking at it verse by verse and word by word. So the 90th Psalm then begins with the heading, A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

A Prayer of Moses. Most of the Psalms seem to be the work of King David but Moses lived several hundred years before David and this makes this the first Psalm, the first in time and in many ways it seems somehow to be a more ancient Psalm than the other Psalms. It remembers to even before the world began, it talks about the creation of the world and the mountains and it seems appropriate that Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible, who recorded Genesis for us, should refer to such things in his prayer.

And then this is a prayer, throughout it, it's spoken to God. Moses is called in that heading, the man of God, to express the close relationship he had with God. This man who God talked to as a friend and Moses with his very close relationship with God, who brought Israel's people and their needs to God.

At a time when Israel's people were often very wayward, they were wandering away from God, they were not wanting to follow God, all sorts of things were tempting them away from God and yet Moses prayed for them. He prayed for their nation, he prayed for the fulfillment of God's promises which God had already made to them, which God made to their ancestor Abraham. So how did Moses pray and what were his prayers like? Well maybe this psalm starts to answer that question.

So Moses begins his prayer, Lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations, Lord. The Hebrew word there is Adonai which may surprise you if in your Bible like in mine, Lord is shown in capital letters here, but it's a custom of various Bible publishers to print the first word of a chapter in capital letters and that's what we see here. Usually the word Lord in capital letters represents the most holy name of God, the name that isn't pronounced by the Jews.

So Lord here means Master. Master, you have been our dwelling place. A dwelling place is a place where you dwell or live, your home, your true home.

And for God's people, for Israel, well their true home was not this earth, although God had promised to them the land called Canaan, their true home was not so much heaven, although that is a place that God has promised that his people will go to after their death, but rather their dwelling place is in God. Their home is in God. It's in God that God's people find safety.

It's to God that they must turn in their troubles, in their difficulties, for security, for help, for comfort. Lord, thou has been our dwelling place in all generations. A generation is a group of people living at one time and of course in due course they die and their children and their children's children after them take their place and the next generation and the next generation goes on.

And Israel's people were very aware of this. They were aware of its relationship to the promises of God, how so many generations had passed since Abraham and more generations would pass too before they had their king and more generations still before the Messiah. But in every generation, God remains their true home, their true place of safety.

How great is this God? Moses prays, verse 2, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. The mountains were brought forth. And if that suggests to you the language of childbirth, you're right.

That's what it is in Hebrew. Before the mountains were born, like little babies, these vast mountains were once born into the world. And that language continues where it talks of thou hadest formed.

That word formed in the Hebrew language represents the labor pains of the mother, the pains a mother has before her birth. God, you formed with pains, with struggling the earth and the world. And then was brought forth like a baby, the mountains.

That's a picture language that's being used here. Yet, it's before that that we're talking about. Even before the formation of the world and the universe, from everlasting to everlasting, as far back as you can go and more besides, and forever and forever more, God remains God.

It's he who created this earth. It's he who created the universe. It's he who created the greatest things on earth, the mountains.

He is God, the creator. He is the powerful one. Verse three, thou turnest man to destruction and sayest, return ye children of men.

That could mean in verse three, you return man to the dust. Do you remember in Genesis how God formed man from the dust of the earth? And you return man to the dust. And you say, return children of men.

Verse four, for a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night. A thousand years. Just think how many generations there are in a thousand years.

But to God, it is nothing more than we think about yesterday. In fact, a thousand years is even less to him because it's like a watch in the night. Okay, the word watch used to mean the time period which God would watch for.

And gods were appointed to carry out their watch through the night to look after the cities and make sure that there were no robbers and no one was attacking the city. And amongst the Jews, a watch meant a third part of the night. So a thousand years in God's sight are as a third part of the night.

But that's even less than it might seem because you're calculating maybe the number of hours. But no, those are spent in sleep. It's just the sleep between one god and another god.

Just a few hours passing by in your sleep. That's what a thousand years is to God. It's like nothing, like nothing at all because God is so great from everlasting to everlasting.

And Moses here begins to pray for the people and he prays for the people by explaining to God just how weak they are. He's thinking of this picture of generations and one generation succeeding another. So it's as if in the night, verse five, thou carriest them away as with a flood.

They are as asleep. In other words, as suddenly as a flood comes, they're dead. That's how quickly a strong man, a proud man, a great man, a wealthy man is taken from this world.

As suddenly as a flood comes in and then they sleep the sleep which is death. And if that happens at night, well the next generation come along in the morning. They are like grass which grows up.

Oh there's hope with this new generation. They look young and they look strong and they look healthy. Verse six, in the morning it flourisheth.

That means it flowers. The grass flowers. Yes it's doing so well and groweth up.

In the evening it's cut down and withereth. So as if in a day the whole life is spent just like that grass which seemed to be growing so well but was cut down for hay at the end of the day and it just dries up. Verse seven, for we are consumed by thine anger and by thy wrath are we troubled.

We're living under God's anger. Wrath means the same as anger. Why? Verse eight, thou has set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

What are iniquities? Sins, wrong and evil deeds, the wrong and evil things we do against God. The secret things and the not so secret things that we do against God. There's nothing secret to God because his face is light.

He sees everything. So what we consider secret are not secret to him. He sees them clearly.

They're set before him. No wonder he's angry. We've not obeyed his instructions for our lives.

We've turned away from him. We've rebelled. We've been tempted by every kind of wrong and evil thing.

Verse nine, for all our days are passed away in thy wrath. We spend our years as a tale that is told. As a tale that is told.

This is probably an example of the King James translators translating one word picture with a very similar one. In the Hebrew, we spend our years as a murmur, as noise. You're listening to me speak and you're listening to the noise.

But what would happen if I suddenly went silent? Well, let's try it for a moment or two. Did you look at your machine and see whether it was still working? Did you feel slightly alarmed at the second or two silence there? Because when sound finishes, then there's nothing. The sound has gone and disappeared forever.

That's what the Hebrew says. But in the English, it's a tale that is told. Like we tell a story and then we finished and there's nothing left.

Verse 10. The days of our years are three score years and 10. A score means 20 years.

So three score years and 10 are 70 years. And if by reason of strength they be four score years, that's 80 years. Yet is their strength labor and sorrow.

So it's saying we might live for 70 years or 80 years. I mean, even today, that's a pretty good life, 70 or 80 years. At the time of Moses, none of the people who left Egypt as adults entered the Promised Land 40 years later, except for Joshua and Caleb, the two men who remained loyal to God.

And that whole generation died in the desert as Moses was leading them. We might live for 70 years. If we're strong, we might live for 80 years.

Yet is their strength labor and sorrow. We call that strength. What does it feel like to the person who's living those 80 years? Labor.

In other words, a struggle, effort, difficulty, trouble, sorrow. And that strength, what we call strength. Well, is it really strength? Because it is soon cut off and we fly away.

We must leave this world behind. We can't remain here forever. Our bodies will return to the dust, as we've said.

Our spirits return to God who gave them to be judged by him. We fly away. We leave this world.

Verse 11. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. The fear of God means respect for God.

Oh, God's anger causes us to respect him. If only we respected him as much as that anger was due. If only we respected him properly, then we wouldn't fall into sin.

Then we wouldn't move away from him and move into doubts and uncertainties and ignore his law. Or if we did, we would soon turn back to him. We would soon repent.

Much better than living under the anger of God is to be wise and live under the favour of God. Verse 12. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Teach us when we're young to think about you, to respect about you, not to bring about your wrath, but rather with respect for God, to love God, to serve him. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Teach us, Moses prayed.

It's the first petition, I think, the first request in this entire prayer. He's spoken of the greatness of God. He's spoken of our weakness and our sin.

And now he says, God, please teach us. Teach us to be aware of the shortness of our life so that we may begin to think about your wisdom. We might begin to study the wisdom which would teach us to serve you.

Verse 13. He's praying very much for Israel's people, for the people he led at the moment now. There they are.

They've wandered away from God. They're living under God's wrath. They can't enter the promised land because of their sins.

And Moses prays, return, O Lord, how long? And let it repent thee concerning thy servants. Often when we see this prayer, how long, it means for God to return and to save his people. But here, it seems to mean that he's asking God to turn away from wrath and to change his mind about his people who Moses calls his servants.

He wants God to change his mind that they don't live their lives anymore under wrath, but that they might go in, the nation of Israel, into the land which God has promised them, and that they might do something worthwhile and good with their lives, that they might serve him and honour him and live for him. Verse 14. O, satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

God, if you show your kindness to us, if you show your kindness to Israel's people, if early in our lives we could turn to you, we could trust you, we could respect you properly, then all our days on earth that you have given us, we can rejoice and be glad in you, we can live for you, we can serve you. Make us a people, a nation of people who genuinely love you. Verse 15.

Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us and the years wherein we have seen evil. For forty years, Moses is praying, we've wandered in this desert. For forty years we have suffered these troubles because of our sins.

Now turn things round, please God. Show us your mercy, show your mercy to the next generation, that they may enter into the land you've promised for them, and they might know the gladness of a close relationship with you, a right relationship with you. Verse 16.

Moses prays, let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto their children. Thy servants means Israel's people, their children means future generations, people who come after them in their families. Let thy work appear unto them, thy work, the things that God is doing, and thy glory unto their children.

Thy glory means the majesty, the beauty, the honour of God's rule, where God is king. Let Israel's people know God's honour, let them see how beautiful and wonderful it is for him to rule their lives and to be working in their lives. Verse 17.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. Let us know his kindness, his favour, that's the meaning of beauty in this context, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us. Establish means to make strong, make strong the work that we do as we serve God in this world.

Make that work strong. If we do this, if we try to do it in our own efforts, we will certainly fail. We'll just end up serving ourselves and seeking to please ourselves, but we want to please God.

We want God to be pleased with what we have done. Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. Moses repeats the prayer.

Yes, do this. Make it strong that we will work for you in this world, and that as God's people we will reach out toward the other people of this world, the people of other nations, and show them too the kindness and the honour and the beauty and the wonder of our God. Please write to me.

I'd love to hear from you. My email address is 333kjb at gmail.com. That's 333kjb at gmail.com. Now, here's the whole Psalm. Psalm 90.

A prayer of Moses, the man of God. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men, for a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carryest them away as with a flood, they are as asleep. In the morning they are like grass which groweth up, in the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth.

For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath, we spend our years as a tale that is told.

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 labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Return, O Lord, how long, and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O 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.

Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us. Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/30/SID30038.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/keith-simons/how-to-understand-the-kjv-bible-22-psalm-90/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net