

Bible Study # 79  
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The Writings Series—Book Four—Psalms 90—  
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This evening we are getting into the section of the Psalms that is termed Book Four of Psalms. We have been going through and studying the fact that, traditionally, the book of Psalms has been divided into five sections by the Jews, and that there is a correspondence to two other sections of Scripture that also have five components—the five Books of Moses or the five Books of the Law (Exodus, Genesis, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) and also the five so-called Festival Scrolls or Megillot, which was the term the Jews used. The Festival Scrolls consist of Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther.

As we go through, we will notice there is a correspondence and, particularly, in the fourth section of Psalms, there is a lot of correspondence. The fourth book of the Law is the book of Numbers and the fourth book of the Festival Scrolls is the book of Ecclesiastes. We will note some interesting correlation in Numbers and Ecclesiastes as we go through this section of the Psalms this evening.

The book of Numbers is the book that describes Israel's 40 years of wandering in the wilderness prior to the time that they entered into God's rest.

Leviticus 23:42-43, ““You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”” Israel was told that dwelling in booths during the Feast of Tabernacle was to remind them—it was reminiscent—of the time that they dwelt in booths (temporary dwellings) during the period in the wilderness.

The book of Ecclesiastes was traditionally read at the Feast of Tabernacles and it clearly shows that the physical, no matter how great, no matter how much, cannot permanently satisfy. There is a need for something beyond that.

This very lesson is alluded to in this section of the Psalms. We find in this section many of the Psalms that describe the millennial conditions that will come to Israel and to all nations when God reigns on the earth. We will note some of that. This section of the Psalms,

beginning with Psalm 90, is a section that has many parallels with the account of Israel's wandering in the wilderness.

The time that Israel was in the wilderness, that 40-year period, was a period of temporary circumstances. They were going through the wilderness in a progression over a 40-year period. God was very directly governing. Their needs were provided and their circumstances were provided. He provided their food with manna. He provided their water with water gushing out of a rock. He overshadowed them with a cloud to protect them from the scorching desert heat. He even performed a miracle to where their clothes and shoes did not wear out. It was a time of God's very direct government. When you go through, you find that God was continually intervening. He was governing in a very direct and a very real way.

There are certain parallels to that time in the future. It was a time of temporary status and that was emphasized by the fact that they were dwelling in booths. They were looking forward to and anticipating a time of entering into God's rest.

The phrase “into God's rest” is used in the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges. It is used in Psalm 95 and Paul quotes it back in Hebrews 3 and 4. Consider that you have been on a 40-year hike where you walk for a few miles and pitch a tent. You stay there for a day or maybe two or three days or a week, and then you pick up the tent and move on and go a little further. If you spent 40 years doing that, when the time comes that you are able to cross a river and enter into a land, put away your tent, settle down in a house and live there never having to move again, you would, certainly, consider that rest. It was a state of permanence and peace. It was a state of having a fixed, permanent place. Prior to that time, circumstances were changeable. So, there is that parallel.

That analogy is drawn on quite a bit in this section of the Psalms because Paul draws on that analogy and develops it in Hebrews 3 and 4. In fact, he quotes from Psalm 95, which is right in this section. Then he amplifies and expounds the spiritual implications of that. We will look at it in a few minutes. We have recognition that entering into God's rest means much more than just the historical account of Israel crossing the Jordan River and finally living in a fixed dwelling place, rather than marching through the wilderness setting up tents every few days.

Paul quotes it in Hebrews 3 and 4 showing that it was merely a type of what God has in store for

His people. When we enter into the Kingdom of God, we enter into God's rest. That's the real rest that God has for His people. The Promised Land was merely a type because it was a temporary rest.

The Sabbath is used and illustrated as a weekly reminder of that rest. We are going to look at a tie-in between the weekly Sabbath and what it symbolizes. It symbolizes the time of Christ's thousand-year reign on the earth—the Millennium.

We are going to look at the Feast of Tabernacles in the book of Ecclesiastes. We are going to look at the story of Numbers. It all dovetails together right in this particular section.

We start out in Psalm 90. **This Psalm sets the theme for the entire section of the book—God is our ultimate source of rest.**

Psalm 90:1, "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations." God is our ultimate place of rest.

Psalm 37:7, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; ...." God is the ultimate source of rest.

Ecclesiastes is a book of restlessness; it is a restless book. It shows that all the greatest physical blessings and benefits you can have still do not constitute fulfillment and satisfaction. None of us can ever "top" King Solomon. You can go through and read what he did. None of us can ever do that. The whole world is caught up in this materialistic binge. People think that if they could just have more, they would be satisfied. They want more and more and more and more and they are never satisfied. Solomon writes and he says he had it all, and it's just striving after wind. He had it and just was not satisfied. You see, only the spiritual ultimately satisfies. That's a lesson that those who are physical, even during the thousand-year reign of Christ, will have to understand.

The Millennium is not the ultimate. Physical abundance and prosperity during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth is not the ultimate. Physical prosperity and abundance that human beings will have is not the ultimate. Being a part of the Kingdom of God, being born into the Family of God—that is the ultimate! The ultimate is sharing life with God as a part of His Family into eternity. The ultimate is not being human with all the abundance that humans can have. That's not the ultimate. *Being God is the ultimate.* It is important to understand. We see that brought out. The concept develops that there is something beyond the physical and that is ultimately being a part of the very Family of God—the Kingdom of God.

Psalm 90:1-2, "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God." There's a focus on God and His eternity, His greatness, His power and that He is our ultimate dwelling place. He is our rest.

Verse 4, "For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night." As we read through Psalm 90, we may just sort of read over this verse. I want to call your attention to it because if we go back to 2 Peter 3:8, Peter paraphrases Psalm 90:4, but he gets something out of it that's maybe a little more than what you and I would get out of it. If all we had was Psalm 90:4, you and I probably wouldn't get a whole lot out of that. But we have two other places in the New Testament that quote this verse.

It's important to understand that the New Testament interprets the Old Testament. Sometimes we read over something and we don't necessarily see a lot of significance to it. But when we look in the New Testament, we find that God inspired a deeper significance to be brought out when the same verse is quoted in the New Testament.

Peter addresses the subject in 2 Peter 3.

2 Peter 3:3-4, "knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.'"

Verse 5, they are willingly ignorant of the fact that God has stepped into history and intervened as He did in the days of the flood.

Verses 8-9, "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, ...." When he says, "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," that last phrase, "a thousand years is as one day" is quoted from Psalm 90:4, "a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday."

Peter quotes this phrase, "a thousand years as one day," but he gets a lot more out of it than just that. He says, "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Therefore, Peter concludes, "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years" and he quotes it in the context of explaining that God has a time plan. He introduces the subject that there will be

scoffers saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? We see no evidence. Everything's just going like it always has. There have always been ups and downs. There are cycles, but things just go on. Why, we don't believe that God *really* is going to step into history; that's just old "fear religion." We don't believe that. God's gone way off somewhere.'

Peter says, 'Don't kid yourself and don't be ignorant that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. God is not slack concerning His promises.' In other words, God is not indifferent. He's not careless. He's not lackadaisical. God has a time plan; He's going to do it on schedule. In His schedule, we find a day is analogous to a thousand years.

We have used the term "Millennium" so much, that many times we really are not aware that you never find in the Old Testament the period of the Messiah's rule defined as a thousand years. Did you realize that all the prophecies in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Zechariah or any of the other prophets never define the Messiah's rule as a thousand years? Do you realize that you can go through all of those and never find it stated that the Messiah will rule for a thousand years? Christ didn't mention that in Matthew 24 or Luke 21. That is never defined until you get to Revelation 20. Do you realize that? The first place in the Bible it says that Christ will rule for a thousand years—the very first place—is Revelation 20. If you didn't have Revelation in the Bible, you wouldn't know for sure how long the Messiah's rule is. You couldn't point to a specific chapter and verse that said how long.

The reference to a thousand years is used three times. Each time it is further clarified. Psalm 90:4 is the first place. If all we had were the Psalms, we would read over 90:4 and wouldn't think a whole lot of it. It is just sort of a nice poetic expression. But Peter quotes it in 2 Peter and says there is a little more to it than that. He says a day represents a thousand years in God's plan. God is not careless or slack concerning His promises. He is going to do what He said, but He is on a time schedule. Then, when John comes along in the book of Revelation, he clearly defines that after the return of Christ, His reign is a thousand years.

Revelation 20:1-2, "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bounds him for a

thousand years." That's the first place it clearly defines it.

Verse 4, "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. ...they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

Verse 6, we are told, "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

Verse 5, "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished."

John clearly defines that a thousand-year period in Revelation 20. It is not defined before, but there are some insights that we get from Psalm 90 and 2 Peter 3 that adds to what John said. John clearly defines the time of the Messiah is a thousand years. Psalm 90 and 2 Peter 3 bring out the emphasis that a thousand years is analogous to a day in God's plan. Now, the final day in God's plan is a thousand-year day. That will be the time of the Messiah. If God has a time plan that's laid out in days, the final day is the time of the Messiah and it is a thousand-year day.

God established the analogy of His time plan in Genesis 1 when He created the heavens and the earth. In six days the creation was accomplished, and the seventh day He rested and was refreshed. Why did God take seven days? Did God work as hard as He could, just rushed through it putting out all the effort He could, and it took him six days? Finally, He was finished and He was so exhausted, He sat down and rested for a whole day. Is that what happened? No, it took six days because God chose for it to take six days. God could have done it in six minutes if He had wanted. It wasn't that God went as fast as He could and that was all He could do. It wasn't that it was God's best effort. God chose to accomplish it in six 24-hour periods of time and then to set aside the seventh 24-hour period of time to sanctify it and make it holy. God was establishing a pattern.

He established the pattern of the week, which He gave to Adam—to mankind. The first six days are to accomplish work and effort. God says, 'The seventh day is Mine.' Now, if a thousand years represents a day in God's plan, and the seventh and final thousand-year period is His, well, that's just like the week. The final day is God's and it is preceded by six days. So, if the final thousand-year day belongs to God, we are left with the very obvious implication that final thousand-year day, which belongs to God, will be preceded by six thousand-year days, which

are given to man to accomplish his endeavors. We have a very clear implication of this, and it ties in with the Sabbath. It's interesting to note, and I think we should note, that Psalm 90:4 is the first place that makes reference to the thousand years.

We are going to see, as we come on down a little further, that God makes reference in Psalm 90 to the temporary nature of man. He makes reference to the fact that, basically, about 70 years is the lifespan.

Psalm 90:10, "The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, ...." Now, we've come a long way and we've made great progress. We spend 15 percent of the national budget or gross national product on medical care. The average age has finally reached up into the 70s, and some live on up into the 80s. So, man has made great progress and basically landed on Psalm 90:10. Basically, people live into their 70s, and some with a little hardier constitution make it into their 80s. But it is still very temporary. Time flies away, and the older someone gets, the more conscious we are of how quickly time has passed.

Verse 12, it says, "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

Moses was the one who wrote Psalm 90 and he lived to be 120. Whether we live into our 70s, 80s or even 90s or beyond, the point is it still has an end. None of us come into the world with a little certificate saying that you are guaranteed 69 years, 11 months, 10 days, 3 hours and 10 minutes. Nobody comes along with a guarantee of an exact length of time; none of us know.

The point is: "So teach us to number our days." 'Teach us to recognize our time is finite; it is limited.' I don't know how many days I have ahead. I do know how many I have in my past. They are gone and I can never reclaim them. It is a very vital lesson. We are to be conscious that our time is finite, that our time is limited. "Teach us to number our days"—to realize they are limited. What do we do with that? Do we sit around and be depressed? No. 'We apply our hearts to wisdom.' God says, 'Your time is limited. Make the best use of it. Use it wisely.' God has a plan that stretches on beyond our limited, finite time. We have limited time here and we need to gain a heart of wisdom. We need to recognize it's limited and make good use of it—not just assume we will always have certain opportunities ahead of us.

Psalm 91:1, "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." This seems to be an

implication of God's people dwelling in a place of protection. It clearly refers to those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High, those who dwell in a place that God has for them.

You can compare it to Revelation 12:14, where it talks about the Church 'being taken on the wings of a great eagle into her place in the wilderness to be nourished there by God for a time and times and a half time.' God will intervene and protect. Here it talks about those 'who dwell in the secret place of the Most High, who abide under His shadow.' God protects them.

Verses 2-3, "I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.' Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence." It talks about all the calamities and the catastrophic events going on. Yet, in that midst, God is delivering and protecting His people and the way He will do that is a very beautiful description.

Notice right under the heading of Psalm 92, you have a little title written in small letters, "A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath Day." This is a part of the original text. In the Jewish translation, it is listed as the first verse. It is put in as a title in most of our English translations. Obviously, any Psalm or any part of the Bible would certainly be appropriate for the Sabbath, but here was a specific Psalm that was set apart as a Sabbath song. God says this Psalm is specifically for the Sabbath. We know from history that this was one of the seven Psalms that the Levitical choir chanted every Friday evening as the Sabbath began. This is one of the Psalms that was used in the liturgy there in the temple. Let's notice what this Psalm teaches us, since it is specifically for the Sabbath.

Psalm 92:1-3, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night, on an instrument of ten strings, on the lute, and on the harp, with harmonious sound." The first three verses focus on the importance of coming before God in worship. It talks about the use of music in worship. It says that it is good and appropriate to come before God for praises and thanksgiving. This focuses clearly on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of public worship. It is a day to assemble before God and to give praise and thanks to Him. This is the first thing we learn about the Sabbath from this Psalm for the Sabbath.

Verses 4-5, the next thing we are told, "For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands. O Lord, how great are Your works! Your thoughts

are very deep.” The next thing we are given insight into has to do with God’s great works. The Sabbath is a memorial of creation. The Sabbath was established at creation. God labored and did great works for six days and rested on the Sabbath.

The first thing we focus on in this Psalm is the importance of public worship. The next thing is on the great works that God has done. God is the Creator and He has made us glad through His works. How great are His works. We focus on the fact that the Sabbath is a memorial of creation. It is a time to reflect on the greatness of God’s power and on the great creation that He has made.

Now, notice something else.

Verses 6-7, “A senseless man does not know, nor does a fool understand this. When the wicked spring up like grass and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they may be destroyed forever.” Where did he get this? We can identify the first part of this verse, “the wicked spring up like grass and when all the workers of iniquity flourish.”

You know how grass just seems to grow up everywhere. If you want grass to grow, don’t try to put in a lawn—plant a garden. If I am trying to get grass to grow on my lawn, I have trouble and I have bare spots, but if I plant a garden, grass just seems to spring up everywhere. I have to put forth effort to try to get that grass out. He talks about how the wicked spring up as the grass. They just seem to pop up all over; they flourish. He said he saw and understood what a lot of people didn’t. He understood that they were going to be destroyed forever.

Verses 8-15, “But You, Lord, are on high forevermore. For behold, Your enemies, O Lord, for behold, Your enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. But my horn You have exalted like a wild ox [KJV, “unicorn”]; I have been anointed with fresh oil. My eye also has seen my desire on my enemies; my ears hear my desire on the wicked who rise up against me. The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

Beginning with verse 6 to the end of the chapter, there is a focus on the time of the Millennium, of Christ’s rule. Even though the wicked are springing up like the grass right now, the

Millennium is a time when they are going to be destroyed; it is a time when God’s enemies will perish.

Verse 10, KJV, it is a time when, “But my horn shall You exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

Here is a reference to the Messiah. A horn is used in Biblical symbolism as a symbol of a king or a government. Remember in Daniel and Revelation, the ten horns symbolized ten kings or ten kingdoms. The horn that is described here is the horn of a unicorn. Now, what is unusual about the horn of a unicorn? Well, a unicorn has only one, not two horns like a cow, a sheep or a goat, not many like the prongs of a deer’s antlers—there is one. If His government is going to be exalted like the horn of a unicorn, that means there is going to be one government and one King—not two, not many. There’s going to be one King. The term for anointed is a reference to the Messiah. The word “Messiah” in Hebrew means “the Anointed One.” It refers to the government of the Messiah being exalted. There will be one King.

The enemies of God will be destroyed. The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, like a cedar. The wicked are likened to the grass. Grass grows up very quickly. But have you ever noticed that if you have a few dry days go by in the summer, it doesn’t take too many days before the yard begins to turn brown and die. There’s no staying power. But a tree has staying power and it endures. The wicked pop up all over the place like the grass, but they will wither and die. The righteous will flourish like a tree. They’ll continue to bring forth fruit.

Psalm 92 focuses in on: 1) the importance of public worship—the Sabbath is a day for public worship, a day of assembling to praise God and give thanks to Him, 2) the creation—the Sabbath is a memorial of creation, and 3) a weekly reminder of hope—it is a reminder of the time when Christ’s government will rule on the earth. The establishment of the government of God on this earth is just as sure as the setting of Friday’s sun. You can count on the fact that the sun is going to set on Friday; the sixth day of the week is going to come to an end and the seventh day is going to start. That’s how certain it is that the six thousand-year days God has given man are going to end. The sun is going to set on man’s world, and God’s world will begin.

There are places in the book of Isaiah that certainly likens the time of the Messiah to a Sabbath.

Isaiah 14:7, “The whole earth is at rest and quiet; ....”

Isaiah 14:1, notice, “For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land.” When is He going to do that? That’s going to be when Christ comes back, right?

Verses 3-5, “It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: ‘How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased! The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers...’”

You can tie this in, prophetically, with Revelation 18—the fall of Babylon the Great. It is a time when God will give His people rest from sorrow, fear and bondage. It is the culmination after God has destroyed Babylon.

Isaiah 14:7, in fact, we are told, “‘The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.’”

If you go through Isaiah 14, it is very clear that God likens the time of the Messiah’s rule to a Sabbath. He compares it to a Sabbath, a time of rest. When you understand that a thousand years is as a day and the time of the Messiah’s rule is a thousand-year day of rest, then you understand that is preceded by six thousand years of labor and effort.

Psalm 92 is a Psalm for the Sabbath that focuses on public worship, creation and the time of the Messiah’s rule. Here was a Psalm that was specifically designated for the Sabbath. There is a lot packed into Psalm 92.

Psalm 93 focuses on God’s throne being established and His reign.

Psalm 94:1, “O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs—O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!” God is the One to whom vengeance belongs. We don’t have to avenge ourselves. God is going to intervene and He will judge the world in righteousness. He knows how to properly combine judgment with mercy. He can do it in a perfect balance and in a way that none of us can.

Verses 11-12, “The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are futile. Blessed is the man whom You instruct [KJV, “chasten”], O Lord, and teach out of Your law...” ‘Blessed is the man whom God chastens.’ Happy (or blessed) is someone God corrects and teaches out of His law.

Verse 13, “that You may give him rest from the days of adversity, ....” The reason God corrects,

chastens and teaches us out of His law is so He may give us rest from the days of adversity. God wants to train and teach us. When God chastens and corrects, He does so in love and in mercy. It leads to being blessed and being happy because God corrects us to teach us the principles of His law. God always does what He does in proper balance and does it because He does love us.

Psalm 95:1-2, “O come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.”

I would like to call your attention to the fact that there are seven Psalms specifically set aside for the Sabbath. These seven Psalms were a part of the Sabbath liturgy every single Sabbath in the temple. Psalms 29, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98 and 99 were a part of every Sabbath’s liturgy. They had a special significance and, certainly, they had a special significance to the Jewish community.

I emphasize that because in Psalm 95, we are going to notice that there are verses Paul quotes. He spends two whole chapters in the book of Hebrews expounding these verses. When Paul wrote the book of Hebrews, he was writing it to whom? He was writing it to Hebrews, to people who were familiar with the temple.

If we want to understand what Paul said in Hebrews 3 and 4, if we want to get out of it what the people who first read it got out of it, then we have to sort of put ourselves in their mindset. Paul was writing to people who were familiar with the temple and what the Levites did, people who were familiar with the Old Testament. Paul quotes a portion of Psalm 95, and when any observant Jew of the first century heard a few verses of that quoted, he immediately, in his mind, identified it with the Sabbath because that was recited every Sabbath as part of the Sabbath’s liturgy.

With that in mind, let’s notice what the Psalm says. Then we are going to turn back briefly to Hebrews 3 and 4 and see how Paul used it.

Psalm 95:7-11, “For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: ‘Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, and as in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me; they proved Me, though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, ‘It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’””

The book of the Law, which is paralleled in this fourth book of the Psalms, is Numbers. The whole story of the entire book of Numbers is summarized in the verses 8 and 10-11: “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, and as in the day of trial in the wilderness.” “For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, “It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.” So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest.””

Hold your place. Turn back to Deuteronomy 12 and notice what God said about His rest. Notice what Moses told the Israelites right at the end of his life and right before they crossed the Jordan River.

Deuteronomy 12:9-10, “for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you. But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and when He gives you rest from all your enemies around about, so that you dwell in safety...” They were expecting to cross the Jordan River and enter into rest. Right? Remember that? That’s the setting of the use of “rest.”

“So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest.””

Hold your place on Psalm 95 and let’s go back to Hebrews 3 and 4.

Hebrews 3:7-11, “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, “They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.”’ So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest.”” Paul is quoting Psalm 95.

Now let’s see what he says. He begins to expound it.

Verses 12-13, “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

Verses 15-19, “while it is said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.’ For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So

we see that they could not enter because of unbelief.”

Hebrews 4:1-4, “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: ‘So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest,”’ although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works’...”

Paul now says that entering into God’s rest is a symbolism that goes all the way back to creation when God worked six days and rested on the seventh. He spoke of people entering into rest. The Sabbath is a type of God’s rest. Israel of old, those who didn’t enter into His rest crossing the Jordan, those who died in the wilderness were those who didn’t believe. Paul is applying this to Christians.

Verses 6-7, “Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David [This quotes from Psalm 95; Paul attributes Psalm 95 to having been written by David.], ‘Today,’ after such a long time, as it has been said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’”

Verse 8, “For if Joshua [KJV, “Jesus”]...” The term here is a reference to Joshua. Joshua is the Hebrew form and Jesus is the Greek form of the same word. We normally use Jesus (the Greek form) to apply to Jesus the Messiah. We make that distinction in English, but we should be aware that His name in the Hebrew was the same name as Joshua, of the book of Joshua. One is the Greek form and the other is the Hebrew form. The reference in Hebrews 4:8 is to Joshua, the one who led the Israelites across the Jordan River.

Verse 8, “For if Joshua had given them rest [if crossing the Jordan River and settling down was all God was talking about], then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.”

Later, in Psalm 95, he wouldn’t still be talking about entering into God’s rest if all that had been done was done and over with 400 years earlier when Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River. ‘If Joshua had given them rest, he wouldn’t afterward have spoken of another day.’

Verse 9, “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.” Something you don’t get from reading the English is that all the way through Hebrews 3 and 4 the word for “rest” has been the same word, “*katapausis*,” in the Greek language, which just means “rest.” But in verse 9, the word “rest” is a totally different word in the Greek. It’s not a word that you have to be a great Greek scholar to figure out. The word in verse 9 that is translated “rest” is the word “*sabbatismos*.” You don’t have to be a Greek scholar to figure out that must have something to do with the Sabbath. It does; it literally means “a Sabbath keeping.”

Verses 9-10, “There remains therefore a rest [Sabbath keeping] for the people of God. For he who has entered [or is entering] His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.” If you are entering into God’s rest, of which the Sabbath is a type, you’ve ceased from your own works as God did from His. How did God cease from His works? He ceased on the Sabbath. If you are entering into God’s rest, of which the Sabbath is a type, then you are resting on the Sabbath, too. And you realize that God’s rest is a lot more than what Joshua led the Israelites into. God’s rest was a type of entering into the Kingdom of God.

Psalms 95, which was read every Sabbath and Paul quotes in Hebrews 3 and 4, ties in with Sabbath keeping. Now, who says Paul did away with keeping the Sabbath? Boy, I tell you, when you just take it for what it says—you read Hebrews 4 and go back and read the book of Acts—it’s very clear that Paul kept the Sabbath and taught the Sabbath.

There is a lot packed into Psalm 95. The analogy of ancient Israel entering into the Promised Land as a temporary physical rest was a type of our ultimately entering into the eternal rest of God’s Kingdom. The Sabbath is a type of that rest. It is a weekly reminder of the hope that lies within us. It is the seventh day, after six days of labor, just as the millennial rest is a thousand years of rest that God will give to the world after six thousand years of effort and labor. We find that theme throughout the other Sabbath Psalms (Psalms 96, 97, 98, 99)—the theme of the establishment of the government of God and the reign of the Messiah runs through these chapters.

Psalm 96:1, “Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth.”

Verses 3-4, “Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.”

Verses 9-10, “Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. Say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns; ....’”

—The time when God is going to reign over all nations.

Psalm 97:1, “The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; !...”

Psalm 98:1-2, “Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory. The Lord has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has openly shown in the sight of the nations.”

Verse 9, “For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity.”

Psalm 99:1-2, “The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; let the earth be moved! The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above all the peoples.” We have a theme of God’s government running through all these Sabbath Psalms. The Sabbath looks forward to the time when God’s government will hold sway over all the earth.

Psalm 100:1-2, “Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing.” This is why we open the Sabbath services with songs. We are told to make a joyful noise to the Lord and to come before His presence with singing. God appreciates music. Based on this and other verses, we open the services with singing. That portion of the service should be taken seriously. It is important to God. It is a focus.

Verses 3-4, “Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”

Psalm 101:1, “I will sing of mercy and justice; to You, O Lord, I will sing praises.”

There is a clear reference in Psalm 102 to a contrast of the temporary state and the lack of power of the psalmist, compared with the greatness of God’s power and His eternal existence.

Psalm 102:1-2, “Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come to You. Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble; ....”

Verse 8, “My enemies reproach me all day long, ....”

Verses 11-14, “My days are like a shadow that lengthens [KJV, “like a shadow that declines”], and I wither away like grass. But You, O Lord, shall endure forever, and the remembrance of



your name to all generations. You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her, yes, the set time, has come. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favor to her dust.”

Remember years ago when the work first became involved in the archeological excavation in Jerusalem and the City of David. Mr. Herbert Armstrong used to talk quite a bit about it. For many, many years we were involved there. Well, on several occasions, he made reference to Psalm 102:14, the reference to Jerusalem and the importance of Jerusalem in that context.

It goes on and it talks about the nations ultimately fearing God’s name.

Verses 15-16, “So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. For the Lord shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory.” He’s going to rebuild Jerusalem. He’s going to build it up.

Verse 18, we have reference that this is written down for the generation to come.

There is a clear reference in Psalm 102 to a contrast of the temporary state and lack of power of the psalmist, compared with the greatness of God’s power and His eternal existence.

Verses 3-5, “For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned like a hearth. My heart is stricken and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread. Because of the sound of my groaning my bones cling to my skin.” –Very descriptive of the temporary nature of the psalmist.

Verse 12, “But You, Oh Lord, shall endure forever, and the remembrance of Your name to all generations.”

Verse 11, that’s contrasted with, “My days are like a shadow that lengthens [KJV, “a shadow that declines”], and I wither away like grass.”

“A shadow that declines.” If you’ve ever seen a sundial, which was a time measurement in that day, that’s what happens. The shadow declines. It comes down and you can tell the time. The day is drawing to a close; you can tell because of the way the shadow declines on the sundial. It comes down to the period indicating the day is almost over. What the psalmist says is, ‘My time is short. But You, O Lord, endure forever.’

Verses 25-26, “Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; ....” –A contrast between man’s finiteness and God’s infinite power and greatness.

Psalm 103:1-3, “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His

benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases...” One of the greatest physical benefits God gives to His people is the benefit of healing. Certainly, the greatest benefit is a spiritual benefit—the benefit of being forgiven of our sins and therefore being reconciled with God and having the opportunity to share life with Him in His Family.

We are temporary; in that sense, healing is a temporary benefit. But it is a very, very important benefit. It’s a great blessing that God allows us to partake of, that is made possible through Christ’s sacrifice.

1 Peter 2:24, we are told (referring to Christ), “...by whose stripes you were healed.”

That is not talking about some arbitrary distinction in His sacrifice, but the fact that there certainly is a role of healing that is there. It is through Christ’s sacrifice that we have access to God. You can’t be a partaker of God’s promises if you don’t have access to Him. Christ’s sacrifice makes possible our access to God.

Psalm 103:2-3, it says, “...and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases...”

It continues and shows God’s mercy, His greatness, His patience and all of the things God does for His people.

Verses 10-14, “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”

God understands that we are very, very temporary. He deals with us in mercy, compassion and tenderness just like a human parent would do toward his own little child. Any of us who are parents know how tender they are and how protective we feel toward our little tiny children. God feels that way toward us. He is willing and desirous to forgive us and to be merciful to us. He desires to extend benefits to us.

Psalm 104:1-6, “Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain. He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, who makes the clouds His chariot, who walks on the wings of the wind, who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire. You who laid the

foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever, You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.”

This is a very beautiful poetic description of God as the Creator. God’s greatness is conveyed. There is a poetic imagery in the first few verses of Psalm 104. God is the Creator. He is the One who made everything. He made all of the forces of nature that are so great, so powerful and so awesome. The God that we serve stands ready to forgive us, to heal us and to help us. That God is the One who did it all. Yet, for all the great things that He’s done, He’s ready to hear our prayers. He’s ready to be merciful, tender and kind to us just as a parent with his child.

There is reference to the renewal of the earth that describes creation week.

Verse 30, “You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.”

The creation described in Genesis 1:1-2 is a renewal of the face of the earth.

Genesis 1:1-2, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; ...” We have always explained that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, but the earth became without form. It became void and empty. It became chaotic and confused as a result of Satan’s rebellion (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28). Then God stepped in and in six days refashioned and reformed the face of the earth. It’s referred to in Psalm 104:30 when it refers to God renewing the face of the earth. The creation of Genesis 1—the creation of creation week—was a renewal.

There was a world prior to Adam—a world that was destroyed as a result of Satan’s rebellion or Lucifer’s rebellion when he became Satan. God then renewed the face of the earth. God formed the world for man and then formed man. Man, or humanity, is the family of Adam and had its beginning when God created Adam.

Psalm 105 provides us an overview of Israel’s history. We pick up the story with the call of Abraham and follow it down to the Exodus.

Psalm 105:1-5, “Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works. Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord. Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore. Remember His marvelous works which He has done, ...”

Verses 8-12, “He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which He

made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance, when they were but few in number, indeed very few, and strangers in it.’”

Verses 14-15, He talks about how He protected and watched over them.

Verse 17, “He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave.”

Verses 23-24, “Israel also came into Egypt, and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And He increased His people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies.”

Verse 25, the Egyptians came to hate the Israelites.

Verse 26, “He sent Moses His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen.”

Verses 27-35, he mentions the various plagues that were sent by God.

Verse 36, “He also destroyed all the firstborn in their land, ...”

Verse 37, He brought His people out.

Verse 38, “Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them had fallen upon them.”

Verse 40, “...and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.” –A reference to manna.

Verse 41, He provided them with water.

Verses 42-45, “For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant. He brought out His people with joy, His chosen ones with gladness. He gave them the lands of the Gentiles, and they inherited the labor of the nations, that they might observe His statutes and keep His laws. Praise the Lord!”

God brought Israel out to observe His laws and to be a special people to Him. Psalm 105 gives sort of an overview of Israel’s history. We notice that Psalms 105 and 106 certainly tie in with the parallel of the book of Numbers, which tells the story of Israel in the wilderness.

Psalm 106 continues the theme. It describes the theme of Israel’s wandering in the wilderness in greater detail. It is, in many ways, a poetic summary of the events of the book of Numbers and the book of Judges.

Psalm 106:3, “Blessed are those who keep justice, and he who does righteousness at all times!”

Verses 7-11, “Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; they did not remember the multitude of Your mercies, but rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea. Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake, that He might make His mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up; so He

led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. He saved them from the hand of him who hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. The waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left.”

Yet, what did they do?

Verses 13-15, “They soon forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tested God in the desert. And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.”

Sometimes God gives people their way, but there are consequences that come when He does.

Verses 16-22, “When they envied Moses in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord, the earth opened up and swallowed Dathan, and covered the faction of Abiram. A fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked. They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molded image. Thus they changed their glory into the image of an ox that eats grass. They forgot God their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, awesome things by the Red Sea.”

Verses 24-40, “Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe His word, but murmured in their tents, and did not heed the voice of the Lord. Therefore He lifted up His hand in an oath against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness, to overthrow their descendants among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands. They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices made to the dead. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds, and the plague broke out among them. Then Phinehas stood up and intervened, and so the plague was stopped. And that was accounted to him for righteousness to all generations forevermore. They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses on account of them; because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he spoke rashly with his lips. They did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them, but they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works; they served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they were defiled by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds. Therefore the wrath of the Lord was kindled against His people, so that He abhorred His own inheritance.”

What do we find? We find a poetic summary of the book of Numbers.

They ceased to be thankful and appreciative for what God had done. When people cease to be thankful and appreciative for what God has done, they begin to take it for granted and get in a murmuring, complaining, griping, faultfinding attitude and they are setting themselves up for trouble. That’s what happened to Israel of old. Instead of valuing and being thankful for what God was giving them and for their deliverance, they looked around and everything wasn’t convenient. As soon as things didn’t go their way, they griped, murmured, complained and bellyached. They didn’t trust God.

The only ones who will enter into God’s rest are those who believe God. How can you enter into God’s rest if you don’t believe Him? The generation that came out didn’t enter in because they didn’t believe. That’s why, when the spies came back (you know the stories of giants in the land), the people’s hearts melted (Numbers 13—14). They didn’t want to go into the Promised Land because they really didn’t believe God’s promises. If you believe God’s promises, then you are ready to go where God leads. There’s an awful lot that we can learn because there is a parallel to the Christian life and to entering into God’s rest which ultimately is the Kingdom of God.

We see this summary in Psalms 105 and 106. We see that when Israel came into the land, they mingled and began to lose their identity. It’s important to maintain our identity. We certainly need to maintain our identity spiritually. That is very important. Israel of old began to lose sight of that.

Verses 43-48, in spite of all the things that they did, “Many times He delivered them; but they rebelled against Him by their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry; and for their sake He remembered His covenant, and relented according to the multitude of His mercies. He also made them to be pitied by all those who carried them away captive. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the Gentiles, to give thanks to Your holy name, and to triumph in Your praise. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, ‘Amen!’ Praise the Lord [KJV, “Hallelujah”]!” “Praise the Lord” is just the translation from the Hebrew phrase “Hallelujah.”

We see that there’s an awful lot in this section of the Psalms—a section that focuses in on the

example of God's people ultimately sharing in God's rest and being a part of His Family.

We've seen, this evening, that this section of the Psalms has a great deal of parallel with the story of the book of Numbers. Numbers is the story of how God dealt with His people in the wilderness, how He took care of them under His government, how He dealt with them and brought them through and ultimately set the stage for their entering into the Promised Land. We see why some did not. We see the reference that during the Feast of Tabernacles, we are reminded of the fact that we are still in a temporary status, on the verge of entering into the Promised Land, as Israel of old.

When we go through this section of the Psalms, we are focused on what's temporary and what's permanent. Man is temporary; God is permanent. What's physical is temporary; what God has is eternal. Entering into God's rest is the answer and the solution. This is very amply brought out. There is a focus on the establishment of God's government that God will share with His Family.

We are concluded with this section of Psalms. Next Bible study we will cover the last section—Book Five—Psalms 107—150.