

The Psalms

Psalms 90 & 91

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”
Ps. 119:105

Thursday Bible Study
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

1

Psalm 90 – From Everlasting to Everlasting

- This psalm begins book 4, a section of mostly anonymous Psalms.
- This is a psalm of national lament where the frailty of life stands in stark contrast to the eternal nature of God.
- The psalm is ascribed to Moses who reflects back on the sinfulness of people over against a God of grace.

2

Psalm 90 – From Everlasting to Everlasting

- V. 1 – 2 – Moses starts with the simple truth that God is and always has been the only one to provide refuge. He is eternal, the great “I AM”.
- V 3 – Human life, by contrast is brief and uncertain. No matter how long a person lives, it is insignificant compared to the timelessness of God.
- “Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return.”

3

Psalm 90 – From Everlasting to Everlasting

- V. 4 – Even though we may think that our lives are long, yet in comparison to God, they are but a moment. Time, for God, is nothing.
- V. 5-6 - Nothing in our life is permanent. Our life is like a dream – literally like a sleep. It is like the grass which grows, flourishes, then dies and is cut down.
- All of this is in contrast to the eternal nature of God.

4

Psalm 90 – From Everlasting to Everlasting

- V 7-8 - Let’s face it: all we have accomplished in our few, short years, is to earn the wrath of God because of our sin.
- Even our secret sins are exposed before God.
- V. 9 – What have we deserved from God? His wrath.
- V. 10 - We may live 70 or even 80 years, but when you get right down to it, the days fly by and they are marked by toil and trouble.

5

Psalm 90 – From Everlasting to Everlasting

- V. 11 - Do you really want to mess with the wrath of God? We can’t even begin to comprehend it.
- V. 12 – Teach us to realize the brevity of life and the need to live our days with purpose.
- V. 13 – “Return” - Come back to thy people; show mercy by sparing them. Change your wrath into mercy.

6

Psalm 90 – From Everlasting to Everlasting

- V. 14 – Instead of wrath, show “steadfast love” (*chesed*). Then we can rejoice and be glad all our days.
- V. 15 – Replace the days of evil with days of joy.
- V. 16 – Let the days of evil be removed so that we may have occasion to celebrate your goodness.
- V. 17 - The repetition of the prayer here is emphatic. It indicates an intense desire that God would enable them to carry out their plans.

7

Psalm 91 – My Refuge and My Fortress

- This anonymous psalm is a strong confession of faith, urging all to seek the Lord’s refuge when fearful times arise.
- V. 1-2 - “shelter – shadow – refuge – fortress” These metaphors depict the sure defense found in the Lord God.
- Four names for God correspond to the metaphors, and each gives the basis for the strong confession of faith in God’s protection.

8

Psalm 91 – My Refuge and My Fortress

- V. 3 – “Snare of the fowler” is a bird trap, referring to hidden dangers in life, both physical and spiritual dangers.
- “Pestilence” may refer to an epidemic, but the Hebrew consonants for “pestilence” (DBR) also spell “word” which may also be a snare for God’s people.
- V. 4 – The mother bird protecting her young, or it might refer to the wings of the cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant.

9

Psalm 91 – My Refuge and My Fortress

- V. 5-6 - That protection surrounds us whenever danger comes, whether day or night, by arrow, or by pestilence or any other destruction.
- V. 7 – The Lord will protect us, no matter how many are affected by war or plague.
- V. 8 – God will punish the wicked.
- V. 9-10 - Those who take refuge in the Lord are not exempt from these dangers, but will be protected in the midst of them. (Rom. 8:31-39)

10

Psalm 91 – My Refuge and My Fortress

- V. 11 – 12 - In answer to demonic terrors of the night, God sends his angels to watch over his people.
- Satan used this verse to tempt Jesus (Matt. 4:5-7), but leaves out “to keep you in all your ways.”
- V. 13 - Dangerous animals are often used to symbolize adversaries who attack unexpectedly.
- V. 14-16 - The voice of God, assuring his child that he will deliver and protect.

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