

PSALM 89

The LORD'S Covenant with David, and Israel's Afflictions.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (11-22-95).
- B. A Contemplation of Ethan the Ezrahite. "End of Davidic Dynasty Not Understood by Israel."
- C. It seems that the occasion for this psalm was the Babylonian captivity. King Jehoichin had been taken to Babylon along with Daniel and many other Hebrews. Zedekiah was a puppet king and the nation was under Babylonian rule. This psalm seems to question why the lineage of David was not prospering and strong.
- D. The psalm divides into three main parts:
 - I. God is praised for His mercies (89:1-18).
 - II. An Elaboration of God's Promise to David (89:19-37).
 - III. The Present Situation of David's Earthly Dynasty (89:38-51).

THE TEXT.

- 89:1** I will sing of the lovingkindness of the LORD forever;
To all generations I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth.
- 2** For I have said, "Lovingkindness will be built up forever;
In the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness."
- 3** "I have made a covenant with My chosen;
I have sworn to David My servant,
- 4** I will establish your seed forever
And build up your throne to all generations." Selah.
- 5** The heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD;
Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones.
- 6** For who in the skies is comparable to the LORD?
Who among the sons of the mighty is like the LORD,
- 7** A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones,
And awesome above all those who are around Him?
- 8** O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD?
Your faithfulness also surrounds You.
- 9** You rule the swelling of the sea;
When its waves rise, You still them.
- 10** You Yourself crushed Rahab like one who is slain;
You scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm.
- 11** The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours;
The world and all it contains, You have founded them.
- 12** The north and the south, You have created them;
Tabor and Hermon shout for joy at Your name.
- 13** You have a strong arm;
Your hand is mighty, Your right hand is exalted.
- 14** Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne;
Lovingkindness and truth go before You.
- 15** How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!
O LORD, they walk in the light of Your countenance.
- 16** In Your name they rejoice all the day,
And by Your righteousness they are exalted.
- 17** For You are the glory of their strength,
And by Your favor our horn is exalted.
- 18** For our shield belongs to the LORD,
And our king to the Holy One of Israel.
- 19** Once You spoke in vision to Your godly ones,
And said, "I have given help to one who is mighty;
I have exalted one chosen from the people.
- 20** "I have found David My servant;

With My holy oil I have anointed him,
 21 With whom My hand will be established;
 My arm also will strengthen him.
 22 “The enemy will not deceive him,
 Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
 23 “But I shall crush his adversaries before him,
 And strike those who hate him.
 24 “My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him,
 And in My name his horn will be exalted.
 25 “I shall also set his hand on the sea
 And his right hand on the rivers.
 26 “He will cry to Me, ‘You are my Father,
 My God, and the rock of my salvation.’
 27 “I also shall make him *My* firstborn,
 The highest of the kings of the earth.
 28 “My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever,
 And My covenant shall be confirmed to him.
 29 “So I will establish his descendants forever
 And his throne as the days of heaven.
 30 “If his sons forsake My law
 And do not walk in My judgments,
 31 If they violate My statutes
 And do not keep My commandments,
 32 Then I will punish their transgression with the rod
 And their iniquity with stripes.
 33 “But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him,
 Nor deal falsely in My faithfulness.
 34 “My covenant I will not violate,
 Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips.
 35 “Once I have sworn by My holiness;
 I will not lie to David.
 36 “His descendants shall endure forever
 And his throne as the sun before Me.
 37 “It shall be established forever like the moon,
 And the witness in the sky is faithful.” Selah.
 38 But You have cast off and rejected,
 You have been full of wrath against Your anointed.
 39 You have spurned the covenant of Your servant;
 You have profaned his crown in the dust.
 40 You have broken down all his walls;
 You have brought his strongholds to ruin.
 41 All who pass along the way plunder him;
 He has become a reproach to his neighbors.
 42 You have exalted the right hand of his adversaries;
 You have made all his enemies rejoice.
 43 You also turn back the edge of his sword
 And have not made him stand in battle.
 44 You have made his splendor to cease
 And cast his throne to the ground.
 45 You have shortened the days of his youth;
 You have covered him with shame. Selah.
 46 How long, O LORD?
 Will You hide Yourself forever?
 Will Your wrath burn like fire?
 47 Remember what my span of life is;
 For what vanity You have created all the sons of men!
 48 What man can live and not see death?
 Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? Selah.
 49 Where are Your former lovingkindnesses, O Lord,
 Which You swore to David in Your faithfulness?

- 50 Remember, O Lord, the reproach of Your servants;
How I bear in my bosom *the reproach of* all the many peoples,
51 With which Your enemies have reproached, O LORD,
With which they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed.
52 Blessed be the LORD forever!
Amen and Amen.

COMMENTS.

A. God is Praised for His Mercies.

1. Introduction.

[v1,2] In the first two verses, the psalmist pledges to "...sing of the mercies of the Lord forever..." It seems that we always expect God to fulfill His promises the way we expect them and when we want them.

[v3,4] The psalmist summarizes the promises that God made to David through Nathan the prophet in 2Sam. 7. It seems that David and every one after him thought the promise was concerning an earthly kingdom. But God's intent for an earthly kingdom was a Theocracy with Himself as its king. The prophecies concerning the "seed of David" or "Son of David" were concerning the Messiah. God did have Samuel describe the earthly kingdom as oppressive and expensive (1Sam. 18:10-18). Government hasn't changed much in 3,000 years.

2. God's Gracious Mercies Extolled.

The beautiful poetic descriptions of God is enjoyable to read as literature, even if it were not Scripture.

[v5] "...in the congregation of the saints." The word for "congregation," or "assembly" refers to their coming together for worship or for war or any other purpose.

[v6] "Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the Lord?" Some have suggested that "the mighty" refer to angels, but angels do not have children. This must be the mighty of the earth--kings and powerful men in nations.

[v9] "You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them." Some suggest the first part of this parallelism refers to mythological stories of ancient times, but the last part seems to be synonymous and identifies the first part as having control of the sea, which shows great power and seems impossible to control. Jesus demonstrated His power over nature by calming the sea.

[v14] "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne..." Although the main thrust of this psalm is to question where is God's promise to David that his throne will be established forever, the psalmist still expresses complete confidence in God's righteousness and justice. I hope we have this same kind of trust and hope in God. Hebrews 1:8-9 reflects this same thought. And, this is concerning the spiritual Son of David, that the psalmist does not think of in God's promise.

[v18] "For our shield belongs to the Lord, and our king to the Holy One of Israel." The Israelites seem to believe that God is their shield, but that He protects them through the king. Therefore, they believed that when Jehoiachin, the child king, was carried to Babylon in 605BC, with Daniel and others, that God's promise to David failed. Therefore, he begins with 89:19 to review the promises God made to David.

B. An Elaboration of God's Promise to David.

1. Regarding David.

The next 19 verses review God's promises that Nathan reveals to David in 2Sam. 7. The first ten verses apply specifically to David and the last ten to his dynasty or his descendants.

[v20,21] "I have found My servant David...I have anointed him, with whom My hand shall be established; also My arm shall strengthen him." Those of three different offices were anointed with oil in appointment: Prophet, Priests and Kings. The Son of David was referred to as the "anointed" as the Hebrew word is "Messiah," the Greek, "Christ," the Latin, "Unction," and

English, “anointed.” He is Prophet, Priest and King, therefore, He is referred to as “The Anointed” or “The Messiah.”

[v25] “Also, I will set his hand over the sea, and his right hand over the rivers.” This may refer to the geographic extent of David’s kingdom; from the Mediterranean Sea to the “river of Egypt” to the Euphrates.

[v27] “Also, I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.” The inspired psalmist may be describing David as the greatest king in his day, but more likely this refers to “The Son of David” (Mt. 1:1), who is described as “the first-born of all creation” (Col. 1:15), “the first-born from the dead” (Col. 1:18), “the King of Kings and Lord of Lords” (1Tim. 6:15), therefore, He really fulfills the description of the psalmist as “the highest of the kings of the earth.”

2. Concerning David’s Dynasty.

Coffman suggests that this section “extends the application of 2Sam. 7 to David’s line of successors. The words here are principally a poetic paraphrase of 2Sam. 7:14.”

[v29,36] “His seed also I will make to endure forever, and His throne as the days of heaven.” Both of these verses show that the throne of David and his seed will endure forever. But the problem of the psalmist and the Jews was to think that it was of his earthly rule and fleshly descendants. It is the Christ whose throne is forever. On Pentecost in Ac. 2, Peter applies these prophecies to Christ and His resurrection. Jeremiah had prophesied concerning the descendants of Jehoiachin, also called Coniah and Joconiah (1Chron. 3:16-17; Jer. 22:28-30).

In Mt. 1:11-12 Jeconiah is listed in the genealogy of the Christ and described as “carried away to Babylon.” He is in the lineage of Christ, who will not sit on the throne of David and rule anymore in JUDAH. Christ is now exalted at the right-hand of God (Ac. 2:34-36), and will reign until all enemies are under His feet, the last enemy to be destroyed is death who will be destroyed in the resurrection (1Cor. 15:24-26). As He told Pilate, Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world... (Jn. 18:36).

C. The reality in Regard to David’s Earthly Dynasty.

As Coffman says, “There is no need to elaborate this, the psalmist himself did it in these verses.” Coffman goes on to comment: “The appeal to God in these verses comes about as near as any mortal could have dared to come toward charging God with unfaithfulness to His covenant with David and lodging the accusation that God had failed to keep his promises.” But when men misunderstand and misapply God’s prophesy, they come to the wrong conclusions. My problem here is that an inspired psalmist would question God’s actions, but this is exactly what Job is described as doing and many other prophets when asking God why He does what He does. But Habakkuk had questioned why the Lord used nations more wicked to punish His people (Hab. 1:13). God’s answer to Habakkuk is that He will also punish the wicked (Hab. 2:4).

Therefore, God does allow man to honestly question His actions, and gives the answer that we might better understand the righteousness of the one with whom we have to do.

[v52] This is a doxology ending the third book of Psalms and not a part of Ps. 89.