

A Study in Psalms, Week 4 Handout Psalm 90: The Place for Pessimism

*“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,
knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”*

James 1:2-3

Introduction

1. Conwy castle in North Wales
2. Looking around, trying to imagine what it was like to live there
3. Now just a **tomb**—a testimony to the **brevity** of life
4. Psalm 90 deals with the **dark nature of life**
 - a. We don't like to look at this side of the coin
 - b. There's a lesson to learn, however, in studying this somber psalm

Background

1. Oldest of the Psalms
2. Only psalm attributed to Moses, the “*man of God*” (Joshua 14:6, Ezra 3:2)
3. Possibly written after the incident at Kadesh Barnea (Num 13 & 14)

We are pilgrims; God is our home

1. <Read Psalm 90:1-2>
2. Moses led Israel as they camped in 42 different locations during their journey
3. (v.1) Moses describes God as man's “dwelling place”
4. In Deut 33:26-27, Moses describes God as **above**, **below**, and **before** us:
5. Reminds us of Jesus' admonition, “*Abide in Me*” (John 15:4)

We are learners; life is our school

1. <Read Psalm 90:3-12>
2. Moses was taught “*all the learning of the Egyptians*” but learned more walking with **God**
3. Lesson 1: Life is brief and passes quickly, so make the most of it (vv. 4-6)
4. Lesson 2: Life is difficult and seems futile at times, but it's the only way to mature (vv. 7-12)

We are believers; the future is our friend

1. Moses finishes with a prayer <Read Psalm 90:13-17>
2. Yes, life is **difficult** and God **disciplines** us when we fail, but there's **more to the story**
3. The emphasis of this psalm is **life**, not death—life **prepares us for eternity!**
4. (v.13) The word “return” carries the notion of God turning from His anger
5. (v.14) A reference to **manna**? Or to the joy of a life begun with an early commitment to God?
6. (v.15) Moses asks for blessings “*according to the days of affliction*”

Summary and conclusion

1. Moses, like us, struggled as he lived his life for God
2. Life is brief, so Moses prayed “*Teach us*”
3. Life is difficult, so he prayed “*Satisfy us*”
4. His work at times seemed futile, so he prayed “*Establish the work of our hands*”
5. God answered Moses, and He answers us today and prepares us for eternity

Next week, Psalm 92...