

Psalms 18-08-09

This is Thursday, August the 9th, 2018. We continue our study in the book of Psalms. We are in between Psalm 9 and Psalm 10, which, as we mentioned last time, comprise or compose, depending on how much you understand about the word comprise.

That's a good word to look up, by the way, comprise. Is something comprised of two things, or do two things comprise one thing? It's a tricky word. At any rate, we're looking at two psalms, which are actually one psalm, and we know this because of its acrostic feature in terms of form, and because of the unity of its content.

But it has been broken into two psalms, and as we look at the break, the bridge, and the continuation tonight, we'll see why. It is considered to be a broken acrostic because there are some letters that don't seem to be present, and we will continue our investigation of why that is, and I think you'll find it as interesting and illuminating, hopefully, as I have in the study. Let's take a moment, as we always do, to ask God's blessing on our study, on our fellowship, that our souls will be nourished, that we'll be motivated, that the Lord Jesus will be glorified, that we'll better understand our Heavenly Father and be better prepared for service now and in the future.

Practically prayed my prayer before I even said it. Let's pray. Father, it is a wonderful thing to gather as believers who share an enthusiasm for Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the wonderful appreciation we have for Your plan, Your salvation that was brought into being through not just an abstraction or an immaterial thing, but it came to earth in bodily form in the person of the Lord Jesus.

We thank You for Him, for His revelation of Your love and Your grace and Your mercy, as well as Your righteous standard and Your judgment, Your intolerance of sin and evil and the impending judgment upon it. We are grateful to be delivered only and solely by Your grace. We thank You for that.

We thank You for Your ongoing protection, preservation, provision, and blessings that You rain down upon us, and we pray that we can be worthy of those as we seek to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. As we look particularly at this section of Your Word tonight, may God the Holy Spirit bless it to each heart, help us to gain a firm grasp of those truths that You would have us to know in this day and in this time, in our circumstance, for Your glory. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, this is quite the interesting pair of psalms in our English here, 9 and 10. I was somewhat taken aback and caught by surprise.

I was just chugging through. I thought, well, we've got Psalm 1 and Psalm 2. We've got Psalm 3 and Psalm 4. They're falling into these nice pairs, 5 and 6, 7 and 8. Then when I got to 9 and 10, and I thought, well, you know, they're probably going to diverge a little bit. You can't just keep

pairing up these psalms.

And then this is the pair to end all pairs, and the combination that speaks of time and eternity. It speaks of enemies, foreign and domestic. And it's a powerful, powerful picture, not only of God's patience and God's judgment, but also on the span of human history.

And I did not see that coming. But I think the Lord Jesus saw it, and I think He understood things about His disciples. I think He understood things about His betrayal.

I think He understood Matthew 24, when He talks about the city of Jerusalem being trodden underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of those Gentiles are fulfilled. I suspect, I can't prove it. I will bow at the feet of those who know more than I do.

But I think that He got some of that insight in His humanity from these two psalms. And we're going to see why tonight. My little hamster is just upside down in the bottom of the wheel right now.

I don't know that I'll be able to do it justice, but I'll do my best to show you what I have seen, and you can see what you think. But it reminds me of what they've learned about DNA. There is coding in the order of the amino acids, and it gives you a very straightforward, I mean, in some ways, it's a straightforward plan for construction.

But what they have begun to realize is that there is a higher level of communication encoded in the DNA that isn't immediately visible. You say, well, if I, and we've learned this by the hammer-smashing method in science. You know, we're pretty ham-fisted and pretty mechanical, and so we've only begun to understand this very sophisticated system that God has put in place, I think perhaps through intermediate agency.

We know that God the Father had the plan. The Lord Jesus Christ, without Him, was not anything made that was made. And I think there's further delegation involved.

But the overall beauty of it is just stunning. And the more they study DNA, and they said, oh, we're going to find the simple building blocks. We'll see how it all evolved.

You know, warm pond, little globs. We're going to crack the secret, and it'll all be physics and chemistry, and there is no need for God. Well, the more they look, the more they realize the information and the sophistication of the encoding of that information is radically beyond anything that could happen by accident.

And, of course, nobody wants to publish papers on this. Nobody wants to come out and say, you know, I'm just scratching my head here because the more we study this, the further it becomes in terms of possibility that any happy, fortuitous, random circumstance could have brought this about. It is worse than finding a DVD encoded with a full movie, like the Ten Commandments.

They're getting in there, and at first they could see the pits and the ridges, and they said, oh, it looks like there's a code here. And they began to read them, and they said, you know, I can see that there's an order and a symmetry and there's information here. But the further they go, the more they realize you don't get a DVD encoded movie in high def by accident.

Something had to know what to put there. Something had to write it. Somebody had to construct something that would not only write it, but read it.

And you don't get not only the DVD, but the DVD player by accident. And the mechanisms inside the cell that play back this information, that take it apart and determine its order and where to send it. Little pieces of it get sent different places.

If you're going to encode a protein for a specific function, it doesn't send the entire genome down there. It cuts out a little piece and says, okay, you just need this part here. If you're going to spell check, you don't have to run every single feature of Word to get your document spell checked.

You just activate the spell check part, right? If you see a little red squiggly underline and you right-click it, it's going to suggest the right spelling. That's not every single feature of Word. It's specific.

It's directed. It has some intelligence to it. Of course, it's written by teams of people over dozens of years to get it to this point.

Well, they're beginning to understand that what's encoded in DNA is even more complex and sophisticated than that. We are not even able to touch the hems of the garments of the programmers that put this stuff together. We're basically like aborigines with a sledgehammer finding a Chevy in the middle of our territory.

We're taking hammers and smashing it to try to figure out, how did it work? How did this fall out of the trees and become an automobile? The reason I bring that up, and you've heard me talk about this before, but not only should you take with great circumspect caution any great pronouncements about how life began on this planet, ex nihilo, from chemical and physical processes, but there is consistency across God's universe. Romans 1 tells us, what may be known of God is manifest in creation. That aspect of creation tells us something about God.

Well, I see this same thing in God's Word. You have the straightforward communication of the text. You have what the text says.

Look at Psalm 10. Let's just dive right in and see what the text says. We've already covered 9. I'm not going to really even review it, except to say that Psalm 9 was occupied with external enemies, external opposition.

Remember, my enemies in verse 3. You've rebuked the nations in verse 5. Their cities in verse 6. He's going to judge the world in verse 8. All of this is at a distance. This is the surrounding

environment. Watch in verse 10 and see if you notice a difference in the nature of the opposition.

Chapter 10, rather. Psalm 10. Notice, again, no superscription.

This is the second half of a Psalm. Verse 1 says, Why do you stand afar off, O Lord? Why do you hide in times of trouble? The wicked in pride... You can scratch out his. See the italics? The wicked in pride persecutes the poor.

Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised. For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire. He blesses the greedy, renounces the Lord.

The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek. Always hesitate to cross out the Lord or cross out God, but it's not in the text. It comes in the next phrase.

The wicked, verse 4, in his proud countenance does not seek. He's not a seeker. He's not questioning.

He's not looking. God in none of his thoughts. His ways are always prospering.

Your judgments are far above out of his sight. All his enemies, he scoffs at them. He sneers at them.

Now, how distant is this set of evil people, these types? They're near enough to hear them talking, right? They're devising plots and schemes. They're in the near periphery. This is my point.

You've got the nations. You've got the adversaries that are at some distance sort of attacking your whole infrastructure and your whole way of life, your nation, so to speak. Here, you've got the wicked near at hand.

He's talking. He's sneering. He's plotting.

He's scheming. He's godless, and he's right next to you. He can get into your business because he's just down the street.

He's just across the street. He's in your near personal space. Verse 6, He has said in his heart, I shall not be moved.

I don't want him saying that. I shall not be moved. That's one of my favorite gospel songs.

Like a tree planted by the waters, I shall not be moved. But the wicked says in his heart, He won't be moved. Well, somebody's going to move.

Who do you think it's going to be? The righteous or the wicked? The wicked says, I shall not be moved. We sing, I shall not be moved. Who's going to move? Well, whoever's got the omnipotent God on his side is not going to be moved.

But he says, I shall not be moved. I shall never be in adversity. Gracious sakes, we don't even say that.

We know that in this world you shall have tribulation, right? Jesus promised it. Be of good cheer. I've overcome the world.

But for somebody that says, I'll never be in adversity, that's just fantasy. His mouth, verse 7, is full of cursing and deceit and oppression. Under his tongue, trouble and iniquity.

There's a lot of verbal stuff going on here. A lot of verbal trouble. A lot of talking.

In the history of the world, there has never been as much verbalization, mostly in the form of Twitterization and social mediaization. But if you want to talk about trouble that comes from communication by evil people, there's never been a time in the history of the world that it was as great as it is today. And because of that, you can, instead of physical piling on, you've got to recruit a bunch of people to pile on.

You've got to have a crowd. You've got to have a mob. It's rare to be able to assemble a mob for any length of time because by nature they're unruly and chaotic and they can't stick together.

You can get the French Revolution for a little while, but pretty soon everybody gets tired and goes home. The problem with verbal opposition is, with the Internet, it can be recruited at any time. You can not only get a flash mob in the physical sense, but you get this piling on of political correctness where somebody can be booed off the stage and shouted out of a conversation with no reason, no fairness, no justice, no balance.

And it's never been this way like it is now. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression. Under his tongue, trouble and iniquity.

He sits in the lurking places of the villages. In the secret places he murders the innocent. There's no better example of anonymity than people who develop a handle and an avatar and an emoticon and go off and savage people with no personal consequence.

They're in lurking places. They're in secret places today as never before. He lies in wait secretly, verse 9, as a lion in his den.

Notice, Satan goes about like a roaring lion. You can hear him. You can see him.

He's seeking whom he may devour. He's out traveling. These guys are sitting in their den.

They're sitting in their mother's basement. They're sitting in their little secret place. They don't have to travel anywhere because they've got their computer.

They've got their phone. They've got their tablet or their phablet or whatever it is they're typing on. Lies in wait secretly as a lion in his den.

He lies in wait to catch the poor. He catches the poor when he draws him into his net, into his internet. Yeah, that's a stretch.

Verse 10, So he crouches, he lies low. What is one of the first things God ever said after Adam and Eve left the garden? One guy's offering was accepted. The other was not.

His countenance fell. What did God say? If you do well, will you not be accepted? If not, sin lies crouching at the door. Crouching at the door.

It's furtive. It's secretive. It wants to catch us unaware, unprepared.

He crouches, he lies low, that the helpless may fall by his strength. What a mighty warrior. He doesn't go after the strong.

He doesn't go in a fair fight. Who is being victimized here? The poor, the weak, the helpless. Victimize those who can't really fight back.

I.e., he's a coward. Cowardly people don't want a fair fight. They want one they can easily win.

Pick on somebody who's not as capable of expressing themselves. They're not able to defend. You get atheists piling on Christians who know their Bible and know their Lord Jesus, but in terms of debate and argumentation, they can be outflanked by people with witty comebacks and ad hominem insults and things like that.

They're not strong debaters, and so their faith is picked apart and their identity as a Christian is savaged because, in the eyes of the world, they're helpless. They're not helpless when the chips are down and they're able to endure. They're not helpless when it requires faith and patience and endurance.

They're not helpless when it comes to looking out for the interests of others. They're much stronger than these people. But this is one of these hollow, cowardly victories that people win in university classrooms and in coffee table debates.

And it's pathetic. He crouches, he lies low, that the helpless may fall by his strength. Verse 11, he has said in his heart, God has forgotten, he hides his face, he will never see.

And today he doesn't say, God has forgotten. He says, God is forgotten. Patti? Patti? Buon moro.

So, verse 12, Arise, O Lord, O God, lift up your hand. Do not forget the humble. Why do the wicked renounce God? He has said in his heart, you will not require an account.

You observe trouble and grief to repay by your hand. The helpless commits himself to you. You are the helper of the fatherless.

Break the arm of the wicked and the evil. Seek out his wickedness until you find none. The Lord

is king forever and ever.

The nations have perished out of his land. Lord, you have heard the desire of the humble. You will prepare their heart.

You will cause your ear to hear, to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may oppress no more. Isn't that a great phrase at the end, the man of the earth? Oh, the earth brought me forth. Accidentally.

What a happy... I'm a man of the earth. I came from the goo. From the goo to you by way of the zoo, they used to say.

All right. Well, keep in mind now, and I am going to briefly review, just in case you want to write the letters next to the verses in Psalm 9. This is an acrostic. And this second level of communication that we're looking at, it's not... We see what the text says, and we could spend weeks just looking at this wonderful content that is at the first level.

But God, through the psalmist David, has encoded some additional information here. And it is a reminder that this is divine. And I brought one of... My brother Matthew and I enjoy reading this guy.

He's got a good take on things. This is the book of Psalms by Robert Alter. There's a couple of different men.

Everett Fox has done some Hebrew to English sort of really literal translation. Robert Alter has done the same thing. But I want to just read you what Robert Alter says about Psalm 10.

I don't have time to read you what he said about Psalm 9. But this is very typical of the... Well, here's what he says at the beginning of Psalm 9. This Psalm and the next one, that's Psalm 9 and 10, are a striking testimony to the scrambling in textual transmission that, unfortunately, a good many of the Psalms have suffered. Septuagint presents 9 and 10 as a single psalm. There's good evidence for the fact that it was originally one poem.

Well, of course, because it was and is. It is notable that some lines of poetry have been interspersed between the acrostic lines, unlike other acrostic psalms, in which the sequential letters of the alphabet occur in consecutive lines. You have a line that begins with Aleph, the next line begins with Beth, Gimel, Dalet, Hay, Vav, Zion, etc.

He says, well, this one's all scrambled and messed up. The text is not intelligible and is in all likelihood defective. Something along the following lines seems to have happened to our psalm.

At some early moment in the long history of its transmission, a single authoritative copy was damaged by decay, moisture, fire, or whatever. Lines of verse may have been patched into the text from other sources in an attempt to fill in lacunae. Lacuna is one gap, lacunae are many

gaps.

Quite a few phrases or lines were simply transcribed in their mangled form or perhaps poorly reconstructed. When chapter divisions of the Bible were introduced in the late Middle Ages, the editors, struggling with this imperfect text, no longer realized that it was an acrostic and broke it into two psalms. The result of this whole process, alas, is that we are left with a rather imperfect notion of what some of the text means.

And I say, you didn't work hard enough. Now, let's take a look at what we've already covered in Psalm 9 very quickly. Psalm 9 began, and to the chief musician, upon, remember this, al-mut al-abayn, death of the Son.

Now, do you not think the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing why He came, would have seen this superscription from His great, great, great, fill in how many greats, grandfather David, at least 14, right? Actually, at least 28, according to the genealogy, 14 to the carrying away and 14 down to the Lord Jesus. But you put in 28 great-grandpas and you get back to David. A little more, actually.

So, it begins, actually, our verse 1 is the Hebrew verse 2. And where He says, I will praise you, O Lord, this is governed by the letter Aleph. We saw this last time. So, our English verse 1 and 2 are both the letter Aleph.

Aleph is the head, it's the ox, it's strength, and it is a celebration. And I don't have time to go back and review everything that these mean. I just want to fill them in because I'm going to argue that what Robert Alter says and what the vast majority of interpreters I've checked say, isn't necessarily so.

You ever hear that song, Ain't Necessarily So? Great tune. Well, that one says what the Bible says ain't necessarily so. I'm here to tell you what they say about the Bible, ain't necessarily so.

So, then you get to our English verse 3 and 4. That is governed by the letter Beit. Be, the house. And this is the presence, God's presence in the house.

You remember that. Starting at verse 5 with the nations and the wicked on the outside and all of that. Verse 5 is Gimel.

This is the camel. This is the people coming from afar. The dromedary caravans and so on.

I think the dromedaries. That's verse 5. Then verse 6. Remember in verse 5 ended with a dalet. And that's sort of the missing dalet.

There's a strange missing letter there because verse 6 begins with He. And He is observation. This is looking out the window.

He is the window. But it means to see, to perceive, to get the view, to get the picture. And that's verse 6. And it's also by itself.

Destructions are finished forever. You've destroyed city. Even their memory has perished.

When I look out the window, I don't see them anymore. They're gone. They've disappeared from observation.

They are no more. Then verse 7, 8, 9, and 10 are all governed by wow, the stake, the nail, the fastener. The Lord endures forever.

This is permanence. They build something. You put nails in it.

You hope those are good galvanized ringed nails that are never going to come loose. The Lord endures forever. His throne is prepared for judgment.

He'll judge the world in righteousness, administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness, and it's permanent. It's unchanging. It doesn't vary.

There's no appeal. There's no coming back and reversing it. The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed in verse 9. Those who know your name will put their trust in you.

You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you, and that is also permanent. See how there's content in here that's a wonderful thing to know that God is going to deal with the enemies and He's going to preserve and protect and defend His own, the oppressed. He's going to be our refuge, but there's this additional level of communication.

All of these things are permanent promises. They don't change by dispensation. They don't change by age.

They don't change by time. They're fixed and immovable. Then you get to verse 11 and 12, and this is Zion.

Zion is that which cuts. It's a sword. It's a sharp edge.

Sing praises to the Lord who dwells in Zion. Declare His deeds among the people when He avenges blood. This is the avenger of blood.

It's the sword that is going to wreak justice on these enemies. If God swings a sword, you're not coming back from that. No surgery is going to fix what God cuts.

When God is joined together, let no man tear us under. They say that in weddings. When God is joined together, let no man try to part.

Well, if God parts a thing, do you think there's any bringing it back together? Zion. He remembers them. He does not forget the cry of the humble.

Then in verse 13 and 14, you have Chet. The letter Chet. This is, Have mercy on me, O Lord.

Consider my trouble from those who hate me, you who lift me up from the gates of death. The

gates of death. And when you get to the letter Chet, it has several different meanings.

It can be an inner room or a chamber. It can be a fence. It can be a gate in a fence.

But it is that which separates. When you shut the door, it cuts off. Those who were wanting to climb into the ark once the flood started, the gate was shut.

The door was shut. Chet. It divides.

You're either inside or you're outside. You're either in the inner room or you're on the outside. You're either sitting down to the table where the Lord Jesus is serving manna or you're on the outside saying, Lord, Lord, in your name, did we not dwell? I never knew you.

Separation. Division. It's the shutting of the gate.

Chet. Have mercy on me. Consider my trouble.

You who lift me up from the gates of death that I may tell all your praise. In the gates of the daughter of Zion, I will rejoice in your salvation. See how the idea is communicated not only in the content but also in the form.

It's governed by this letter. Then you have Taith. The letter Taith.

Sort of a soft T in verse 15 and 16. That letter is something that twists. It sometimes is used for a serpent or a snake.

It is to twist, to turn, to surround. It has this idea of circular or spiral type of motion. The nations have sunk down to the pit in which they made.

In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught. It's twisted. It's entangled.

The Lord is known by the judgment He executes. The wicked is snared in the works of His own hand. You get the idea that this entanglement, this twisting, this snaring is in view with that letter Taith.

Then in verse 17 you have the letter Yod. Yod is the hand. Yod means hand.

It means to grasp, to close or close upon. It can mean work that you do with your hand. It can mean the deeds or completed work.

We have this in English under handiwork. All of this is represented by a hand. It can be the hand itself or what the hand accomplishes.

The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God. What's going to put them there? Is it, well, it's sort of a consequence of their own action? No, they are in God's hand and God is going to take them and He is going to put them there. This is God's work.

They will be turned into hell by the Lord God. The nations that forget God are going to go away. And it is God's active judgment that's going to do it.

Then Kaph is the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Kaph is the palm of the hand. It's also used for a wing.

Kanaf is the word for bird and it starts with Kaph. But it has the idea that this is something that flaps its palms, if you want to be a little bit literal. The palm of the hand, the wing, and it has the idea of covering, sheltering under the wings is an idea there.

And 18, 19, and 20, the last three verses of our Psalm 9. The needy shall not always be forgotten. The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever. Arise, O Lord, do not let man prevail.

Let the nations be judged in your sight. Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves as men. But the contrast here is that as God uses His hand to turn the wicked into Sheol and to the nations that have forgotten God are separated and moved away, God is spreading His wings over the humble and over those who are oppressed and are needy.

The expectation of the poor. What is the expectation of the poor? Remember Psalm 91.1? The one who dwells in the shadow of the Almighty? This is the idea. Kaf.

Well, that brings us to our psalm tonight, Psalm 10. And it begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is Lamed. Lamed, if you've ever seen it, it looks like a weird thing.

It's got a vertical line and then it's got a horizontal line and then it's got kind of a curved line. Lamed. And it's a picture of an ox goad.

It's a picture of a thing that you whack your ox with to get him to go. It's Lamed. And it's a staff or a rod, a prod.

And we think about the rod, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. And Lamed is that idea. And the question that begins Psalm 10, as you remember, Why do you stand afar off, O Lord? Why do you hide in times of trouble? Now, is that question answered anywhere in this context? Why do you stand afar off? Then he talks about the wicked for verse after verse after verse.

Verse 5, His ways are always prospering. He says all of these things in his heart. He snares.

He scoffs. He's prideful. He's oppressive.

He's vindictive. He's just nasty in every respect. And the question for verse after verse after verse, line after line goes unanswered, Lord, why are you standing afar off? Why are you hiding in times of trouble? And the trouble is people trouble.

This is not hurricanes and natural disasters. This is not earthquakes and impacts from wormwood or anything. These are people problems.

Why do you stand afar off? Well, the answer is in the governing letter. Lamed in the acrostic is the next letter. And what does it speak of? Why is God afar off? Lamed.

It's the rod of correction. The Lord's arm is not shortened that He cannot save. You can say it with me.

Nor is His ear heavy that He will not hear. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear. David answers the question that he's asking here with the starting letter.

It's correction. It is the rod. Now, you would say, well, but it seems he's been talking about the oppressed and the needy up here, and then all of a sudden you have this Lamed.

This is where it gets really interesting in terms of the form. Because what's the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet? It's just like in English. You go, Kahf, Lamed, K-L-M.

And the letter M in Hebrew is Mame. Well, then you have N, just like in our alphabet. Noon.

Then it breaks down a little bit. Kahf, Lamed, Mame, Noon, Samik, Ion, Pay. So where we have N-O-P, the O is kind of the ion, but there's an extra letter in Hebrew, Samik, that's stuck in there that's dropped out of our alphabet.

But you would think, well, verse 2 or at least verse 3 or something ought to start with Mame, the next letter in the alphabet. Mame is a good, strong letter. It has the idea of what is mighty, what is massive.

Mayim is one of the first words in the whole Hebrew text to begin with M. The darkness is on the face, the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, the Mayim, the seas, the mighty seas, that which is big, massive, something that's overwhelming and chaotic, like the deep, the wicked, or like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. And that which flows, water that moves and can't be stopped. It's like a flood.

Mayim, it's a strong word, a strong term. And come to find out in our acrostic pattern here, from verse 2 all the way down to verse, in our English, it's going to be all the way down to verse 12. No, that's in Hebrew.

It's verse 11 in English. We have no acrostic. All of these verses, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, just make no sense at all.

They don't have any relation to the Hebrew alphabet. This is why Alter and so many others say, well, it's broken, it's damaged, it was a big water spot, and they just kind of patched in a bunch of stuff to see what they could do. And then, after skipping six letters of the alphabet, Mayim, Nun, Samech, Ayin, Peh, and Tzadeh, six letters, suddenly in your English verse 11, it picks back up, and you have an almost perfect acrostic finish with Kof, Resh, Shin, and Tav.

Last four letters fully represented, and that's how the psalm finishes. And there's pretty much

two verses for each one of those. We'll talk about it in a minute.

But all of this intermediate stuff is broken, and you think, oh, well, if it's a damaged and broken psalm, and it's patched and imperfect, and we don't really know what it said, how can we study it as the inspired text? Well, I will not give you all of the perambulations I've gone down in studying this, but I can tell you that from a Hebrew perspective, it's just fascinating. I've never seen such a predominance. The six letters that are missing, it's Mayim, Nun, Samech, Ayin, Peh, and Tzadeh.

But where you would expect the Mayim, and Mayim means a great, strong force right after the rod of judgment, Nun, and Samech, and then Ayin, Peh, and Tzadeh are not in evidence. But the words inside these verses are full of those letters, and the concepts that those letters represent are fully present. Let me show you.

So we had the oxycode in verse one. Lord, why are you standing afar off? Why do you hide in times of trouble? Well, God is an ever-present help in times of trouble, right? Never suffer the righteous to be moved. They who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.

Right? Mount up with the wings of eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint. How can it be both ways? When the Lord Jesus cried from the cross, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, why was God far away when the Lord Jesus ostensibly needed Him most? What was going on? Lamed. This is judgment on sin.

The Lord Jesus took responsibility for the sins, and God says, I'm going to judge those sins. And I can't be both present and judging at the same time. So when there is judgment, your iniquities are separated between you and your God, He's not going to hear.

He's not going to communicate. When it is suffering for judgment, when it is judgmental discipline, God's not going to be around to listen. People couldn't splash around as the floodwaters were rising and say, Lord, I believe now.

If you'll stop the rain and let the water recede, I'll jump in the ark. Me and my whole family will. We'll all go in.

We believe now. Once the opportunity passes and the door shuts, that gate shuts, you're either on the inside or the outside. And now it's time for lamed.

It's time for judgment. And there is an answer to the question, why do you stand afar off? God stands afar off when He is judging evil and He's judging wickedness. And there's no talking to Him in that period.

So, read verse 2. This is where we would expect maim, the waters, the chaotic floods, the rushing uncontrollable tide of water. The wicked in pride persecutes the poor. Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire. He blesses the greedy and renounces the Lord. Now, I would have expected maybe verses 2 and 3 to be governed by maim.

Instead, what is it governed by? The wicked. What are the wicked like? The troubled sea. And the waters cast up mire and dirt.

And so you have that idea. And what's interesting to me is the very first word of verse 1 of Psalm 10 when he says why, the word why is lamed, maim. Why? So, if you're looking for the maim, it's right there in the question.

Why? Judgment. And it's a flood of judgment. It takes you back to the Noahic flood.

It takes you back to the... There's going to be another flood that isn't water. It's going to be fire. It's going to be a lake of fire.

A sea of fire. Why do you stand afar off? L-M are the first two letters of that section. But the letter maim is also reflected in verse 2 when he says let them be caught in the plots which they devise.

The word plots is mezemot. It's got two M's in it. Mezemot is the feminine plural ending.

But these mezemot, these M-M, it's a double word. It's plots. You're going to get this flood of wickedness that God is going to let go.

Now, here's my suggestion. It's a suggestion. I can't prove it.

But, why, as Israel has been going along happily with their Aleph-Beit, Aleph-Beit, Gimel, Dalet, Hei, Vau, Zayin, Chet, Teit, Yod, Kaf, and then all of a sudden, we've talked about it before in terms of dispensations, I always think of it as two German cuckoo clocks on the wall. One of them hadn't been running at all. This one over here had been running for several thousand years.

And all of a sudden, after the death of Christ and His resurrection and at Pentecost, God just stopped the pendulum on that clock. And it's got seven years left to run, according to Daniel. Only 69 of the 70 weeks that God revealed to Daniel have passed, and that clock has stopped.

I was expecting it's 11 o'clock. I was expecting one more hour. Where is it? I was expecting seven more minutes.

Where is it? The clock has stopped. But there's a bunch of stuff happening that isn't governed by that clock anymore. So what is it? It's, from a Jewish point of view, it's confusion.

It doesn't make any sense. It's chaotic. It's the floods of the Gentiles.

Jerusalem is trampled underfoot by the Gentiles. We didn't see that coming. The Lord Jesus reveals that in Matthew 24.

Jerusalem will be trodden underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Then God is going to reach over and stop the church clock, start the Israel clock, and let the final seven years run off. But in the meantime, there's this weird interruption.

Did the Lord Jesus know that it was coming? I think He did. I think He knew it in His humanity, and I think He may have learned it by looking at this very sophisticated communication structure in Psalm 9 and 10. We already saw that in the first twelve letters there's one that goes missing.

One of them goes out the door. It's the dalet, the door. Who is it that gets up and goes out the door in the upper room? The one that dips with me in the dish dives out the door, so to speak.

And I think Jesus knew that He was going to lose one of His twelve disciples, and He figured out which one it was, and I think He may have learned it from this. But when you get to Lamed, suddenly there's this interruption, and for the next 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 verses, there's confusion, and there's no rhyme or reason. But the concepts are there.

The flood tide of wickedness is present. Nun, the next letter, speaks of the fish, or something that jumps out or sprouts. Fish, they would see them jumping out of the water.

I've seen film of the Sea of Galilee where the tilapia or whatever it is that live in there are leaping out of the water. And these are fish. And it came to mean something that is a descendant or an offspring, something that springs forth, springs out, something that proliferates, reproduces.

And that can be a good thing or a bad thing. If you have a crop, you want it to be 30-fold, 60-fold, and 100-fold. If you've got cancer, you want it to go the other way.

If you've got wicked, if you've got tears in your wheat, you want those to diminish, not to increase. So it can be used more than one way. But in this area here, you've got noon governs, in verse 3, the wicked boasts of his heart's desire.

Where it says heart, that's a word that you know. That's nephesh. It's his soul's desire.

Nephesh. And it says he blesses the greedy and renounces the Lord. The verb there for renounce is a noon verb.

His heart renounces noon and noon. You get down to verse 5, his ways are prospering, your judgments are far above, out of his sight. Out of his sight is another noon word.

So these evil manifestations, you've got maim all over the place. You've got noon all over the place. When you come down to verse 4, the wicked in his proud countenance, you know what proud countenance literally is? It's his high nose.

It's his nose is elevated. Proud countenance. His nose is up in the air.

And the word for nose is one of our next letters, which is going to be pe. We haven't quite gotten there yet because our next letter is tsade. Maim, noon.

I'm sorry, samik. Samik. It's the letter S. And interestingly, samik is a beam.

It's a girder. It's a support. It's something that makes a foundation, that keeps something stable, and provides assistance.

And there's practically no samik words anywhere in here. I could only really find one. And it's way down in verse 11 where it says, God hides his face.

That's a samik word. But samik is almost entirely absent in this whole section. Why? Because it's the chaotic waters.

It's the churning, foaming seas, casting up mire and dirt. And there is no support. There is no firmness.

And there is no permanence or security. There's no foundation under it. They're going from one thing to another.

It's the rudderless ship. And it's interesting to me that it's hard to write very much Hebrew without using samik. And it is practically absent.

Certainly you don't have any big nouns or verbs that start with it in this section. And you go for these 10 verses without it. But then the next letter, maim, noon, samik, which is M-N and then the weak S, if you will.

Then you have ayin. We've talked about ra, the evil ayin. And of course all through here where it's talking about the wicked, you've got R-A.

You've got the ra with the evil ayin in it. But your ayin words here, in verse 1, when the Lord stands afar off, that's an ayin word. And it tells you why he's standing afar off.

Not only is it lamed, the rod of discipline, but standing afar off is ayin. God is going to stand away from evil and stand away from wickedness, stand away from faithlessness. Why do you hide in times of trouble? The word hide is an ayin word.

And all the way through here, the poor in verse 2. To be poor is thought to be evil and poor is an ayin word. When you get down to verse 7, the wicked, his mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression. Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity.

Trouble is an ayin word. So you've got those notions all the way through here. Then you get to the next letter, P. And as I said, the nose in verse 4, that's af.

The aleph is really silent in that. And so when you talk about af, the peh is prominent in that. In verse 5 where it says, the wicked, as for all of his enemies, he sneers at them.

This is a peh word. It's a ph word. It's almost af.

It's like phooey. It's a soft ph. He says phooey to them.

His sneer is almost onomopoetic. The word mouth in verse 7. All of this speaking and tongue and so on is all governed. Peh is the letter that stands for mouth.

It looks like a mouth. It begins the word mouth. And anything that is spoken, anything that is expressed, anything that is communicated is under this letter peh.

And I'm just going to give you the last letter here and then we'll sum up. If you're getting lost in the alphabet or the aleph bait, just hang on because above and beyond this it's going to make a point for us. When you get to tsahdeh, we had maim nun samik, s-a-m-e-k, then ayin, a-y-i-n, peh, which is p-e, and now tsahdeh, t-s-a-d-e.

Tsahdeh is a t-s. In our English we have r-s-t. Well, they kind of got them mashed together and they've got t and s together.

Tsahdeh. In verse 3 when it says, the wicked boast of his heart desire, he blesses the greedy. Greedy is tsahdeh.

These letters are in the middle of the alphabet often represent negative things. You've seen it. Maim is the churning waters.

Nun is the spread of something bad or the springing forth of something that you didn't want to see. Samik is what you want. You want firmness and support and it seems to be lacking.

Ayin is the eye. What you see, what you understand, what you experience. And Ayin, the Lord, it looks like He's not watching.

He's standing afar off. Ayin, He's not looking. He's hiding.

He's not visible. He can't be seen with the eye. The poor and trouble all begin with Ayin.

Peh was the snaring, the nose, the mouth, a face in verse 11. God is forgotten. He hides His face.

And it's Peh. Face begins with P just like the nose and the mouth and the face. It's all together.

It's all governed by this letter. Sade, the last of this set of letters, is a fish hook. We started out with Maim which is the sea.

Then we went to Nun which is the fish. Then we went to all of these other bad things under these letters and now the last missing letter is Sade which is the fish hook. What do you do with a fish hook when you're ocean fishing? You throw it in the sea and you pull out the fish.

Now he's no longer doing his own thing. You have taken control of the fish. You're dominating

the fish.

You are taking control and charge. You are exerting your God-given sovereignty and suzerainty over the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. You can't govern them unless you hook them.

And you do that with Sade. It's a fish hook. And it means something sharp, something inescapable.

You're hooked. I can't escape. I'm hooked on cigarettes.

I'm hooked on some drug. I'm hooked on some series that I can't quit watching, whatever it might be. Hooked.

And it's Sade. And the greed in verse 3, blessing the greedy. Greed is a hook.

It's an addiction. I have, but I must have more. No matter how much you have, you still need more.

And so all of these letters persist and pertain through this section that is mixed up and chaotic, and I think it's done on purpose. And I think it represents from the time of God's judgment on the nation of Israel, when the Lord Jesus was judged for sin, but He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. For the last 2,000 years, Israel has been under judgment.

And when they come to their scriptures and they look, why, Lord, are You far off? Where is the Messiah? Where is our nation? Where is Jerusalem and the Davidic kingdom and the Solomonic glory and the promises and the law and righteousness and separation and specialness and our unique relationship with You that was established at Sinai? Where is it? Why do You stand afar off? Why instead does all of this pertain? Persecution of the Jews, holocaust against the Jews, a stench in the nostrils and a disabusing of everything that they represent. Why is that? It is judgment. And they're going to be under judgment until... And notice that everything under the seawater is hidden.

You can't see what's down there. I used to have dreams about what was dwelling and lurking below the surface of the water. And my dream, I hadn't been in California in a long time, so it was this pond right out here.

But I would have visions. We had these time and life books that Mom and Dad got and they showed ancient life and here are these slithering, swimming serpent things and weird proto-crocodiles. And of course, to picture them, they've got like 25 different kinds all in one little body of water and it's a cross-section.

It's a cutaway. Well, I would have dreams at night where I would see this cutaway of this pond down here and there was all kinds of strange denizens that in daytime and with normal light I could not see. But in my dream, I could see below the surface and I could see down in the cross-section and there's all this scary stuff in there.

Well, in this section of the psalm, all of these scary things where God is absent and the wicked are riding high and God is in absentia. And we say, Lord, we know that I want them to perish in their plots and get entangled in their own snares and so on, but I don't see it happening. The wicked are on top.

The Gentiles are trotting underfoot Jerusalem, so to speak. Well, do we ever feel this way? It's not always clear. It's not always evident.

Sometimes the purposes of God and the workings of God are hidden. And we have to draw strength from knowing that there is a higher superstructure. There is a plan and purpose beyond we want to see vindication and justification.

Well, the reason God had me get sick is I wasn't in traffic and look at that big pilot they had. The reason that this didn't work out is I ended up getting this better job or this better school or this better thing. We want simple cause and effect.

We want God to just be the genie of the lamp. And if I want this thing and I think it's His will and I go for it and it doesn't happen, well, He's got to show me why I want to see in the here and now. This psalm is a wonderful illustration, I think, of God saying, you know, sometimes my ways are higher than your ways.

My thoughts are higher than your thoughts. And there are things that I do that are past finding out in this life. You're looking for the next letter in the acrostic, it's in there, but you're not going to be able to see the order.

You're not going to be able to see the pattern because there is a higher, divine plan underway. And science, till yet, can't figure out what God has done in DNA. They don't know where the code is that makes us yawn or sneeze.

They don't know why when they bang under your patella with a little rubber hammer, your foot swings up. Find that in the DNA. They can't find a lot of behavioral, instinctive information that is encoded in the DNA.

All the code that they can read is blueprints for constructing things. And remember, they used to say, well, and there's a whole bunch of junk. And they said, you know, your belief in God and your design inference and creation belief is all nonsense because if it was science, you could make predictions.

And 15, 20 years ago, I said, look, everything they're calling junk DNA, I predict, based on a wise creator and a sophisticated creative plan, that that's not junk. Sure, there may be a few flaws and mutations here and there, but they're going to find that all of that stuff has a purpose. Well, guess what? They don't call it junk DNA anymore because they're beginning to find out, oh, we just couldn't read the thing right and we didn't realize that there is such a sophisticated level of encoding.

It's like a zip file. You know, if you've ever looked inside a zip file with a text reader, it's just gobbledygook. If you've ever looked inside a JPEG or a BMP, a graphic file, just pull up the actual characters on your screen, it's just, it looks like junk.

But if you've got something that reads JPEGs, like MS Paint or some display program, if you've got something that, like PK Zip and PK Unzip, you can apply it to that file and suddenly there's wonderful information inside. They've even got programs now, I forget the name of it, there's a fancy name, where you can take a picture and you can use this file to encode text inside it. You can put a message in there.

When somebody pulls up the JPEG, they just see a picture of a boat on a lake. But if you've got this reader interspersed in the bits in safe places that don't mess up the picture, is information, message of a completely different kind. You have to know it's there and you have to be looking for it.

Listen to me now. God has put information in His Word, in our souls, that is perceptible and meaningful and applicable when God the Holy Spirit is active in our hearts. We don't have to always understand the first level of order.

Sometimes the acrostic is not going to be there. And you say, but Lord, where's maim? At least noon. I love noon.

Fish? Jesus ate fish. Jesus cooked fish. Surely there's going to be a noon somewhere.

Oh Lord, psalmic, the structure, the support. Surely there's going to be a psalmic in there. And you look through 10 verses and you've got to really get a magnifying glass to find a single psalmic anywhere in there.

Lord, where's the support? Where's the structure? What do you think Israel's been saying for 1900 plus years? Oh God in heaven, where's the Messiah? Where's your support? Where's the fulfillment of all your promises? Has God forgotten any of those promises? Are there any of them that are going to fall to the ground? No. But if you're looking for a perfect little make sense to the human mind order, think again. God is showing us here this isn't a corrupted text in my view at all.

This is any more than parts of DNA are junk. We need to look with the eyes of faith. We need to be susceptible to the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

And we need to remember God's ways are higher than ours. I think one of the greatest expressions of God's omnipotence is that he has managed to communicate as much as he has to our little squirrel brains, our little hamster brains. That we can understand as much as we do is a miracle of God.

And the fact that we can't understand God wouldn't be God if he was parsed by the human mind and everything he did made sense. And we could predict what he was going to do next

and well you know I've got the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet there's a maim coming. Maybe not.

I'm expecting a fish. Well if you ask and if you seek and if you knock that door will be opened. The dalet that seems to be missing will appear and it will open.

The sense that you're looking for, the structure and the support will come but probably not in a way that you expect. Maybe not even in this life. You may not see the sense and the divine purpose until later.

This is why it's called faith. It's what we can't see. It's the missing letters.

They're not really missing. They're just at a level that doesn't show up in our text. Do you think this psalm makes perfect sense in God's economy? Of course it does.

There is a time where God is going to let evil run rampant. They're going to seem to be on top. They're going to seem to prosper.

They're going to seem to have it all over the oppressed and the poor. But that's why we had the first part of the psalm. Judgment is coming.

The sword of avenging is coming. And you've got to trust what you do understand in the areas where you don't. I think this is a beautiful, beautiful illustration for us to go with what we know and to trust where we don't know and where we can't see it.

It's not yet clear. It will become clear if we persevere, if we are prayerful, if we are susceptible to teaching. It will come.

Maybe not in this life. It will come in God's time and in God's way. But notice, the order picks up at the end because in the final verses, 12 through 18, you pick right back up with an almost perfect acrostic right to the end of the alphabet.

It's a little murky, but for Israel, when is the rest of their alphabet going to show up? The millennial kingdom. It's going to be the Messiah ruling with a rod of iron. The nations, all of the land promises, the people promises, the inheritance promises, all will be fulfilled, fulfilled through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, we'll take a final look at the content in this psalm beginning at verse 12 where it says, Arise, O Lord. And guess when this time of uncertainty and confusion for Israel is going to cease and it will be orderly and it will be visible. The word arise here begins with kof.

Kof. Kof is the back of the head. It even looks like the back of the head.

It means that which follows, what follows after. What follows after the time of uncertainty, what follows after the troubled sea and the churning of the wicked and their seeming dominance and success. This is what comes after.

And he picks up at a perfect place in the alphabet. God says, look, here's what's coming after the confusion. Here's what's coming after you wait, after you are patient, after you trust.

Arise, O Lord. The Lord Jesus is going to arise at the second coming and guess who else is going to arise. Daniel 12.2. Many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake.

The Lord Jesus arises first. They are going to arise. It's a beautiful, that word arise, starting with kof.

This is what comes after. There is a rising of the Lord. There's a rising of the Lord's people.

They're all going to arise. Lift up your hand. Do not forget the humble.

And of course he won't. God resists the proud. God gives grace to the humble.

And we'll pick it up from there next time. But what a beautiful psalm. Psalm 9 and 10.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for opening our eyes to see its beauty and its depth.

We pray that your Holy Spirit will illuminate the page, illuminate the content, and illuminate the form to enable us to grow, to be motivated, to be encouraged, to be patient, to be faithful, to be good servants and good reflections of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as we live out what remains to us of this life, anticipating all the glories of the next. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.