

Psalms 18-08-23

This is Thursday the 23rd of August 2018 and we continue our study in the book of Psalms. We had a hiatus last week and we're un-hiased this week so we're back in the study. We have pretty much completed our study of the pair of Psalms Psalm 9 and 10.

We're going to take one final goodbye look at those and then we'll begin tonight, Psalm 11. Let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer, ask his blessing on our fellowship and our study. Father it is a wonderful comfort to remember that it is not by might nor by power but by your spirit that we live our lives, that we reach for those aspects of eternal life that you have granted to us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We seek your righteousness by faith and we are constantly aware of how great your faithfulness and your grace is toward us. We thank you for the opportunity to spend this time looking at the truth of your word together. We pray that as we look at this portion that your Holy Spirit will minister it to each heart, enliven it, make it real and pertinent to us so that we can live in its light and in its power and in so doing bring praise and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ and through him to you.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We, as I say, looked at Psalm 9 and 10 and you remember the acrostic nature but the acrostic is, as they say, broken or incomplete.

I like to say incomplete rather than broken because it's just not visible to our gaze but when you think about the reason for an acrostic Psalm to begin with, it generally invites the author and the reader to enjoy a symmetry above and beyond the parallelisms and features of the content itself. There is a superstructure. I was looking for a little toy model of the VW bus and I knew it was around, it had been unpacked but I couldn't remember where it was and Patty said, well, look on the knick-knack shelf and so I went in and looked on the wrong shelf and I didn't find it and then when I went back in, I remembered that there's this very decorative shelf that hangs on the wall and it was in one of the little crannies, one of the little, it looks like a crosshatch thing.

There's things that go horizontally and things that go vertically and it was in one of those little cubbies but it reminded me that I really like that shelf. The shelf holds these little small keepsakes and each of them has a story or a beauty of its own, a reason to have it but the shelf itself and the arrangement of the things on the shelf lends each of those keepsakes an additional element of design and decor and so you have the little things themselves but they're not just lined up on a windowsill or stacked on the topmost shelf of the thing. The shelf itself also gives them added features and that's what an acrostic does for a psalm.

You have the meaning and the purpose and the content in each of the statements and the lines and the trophies but beyond that there is this beautiful shelf. Well if you've ever looked at shelves, sometimes they're regular. That's the kind I like.

I like it. You take a Coke crate. Have you ever seen where somebody will take an old wooden Coke crate that's got slots for each of the bottles and they just turn it on the side and hang it on the wall and they use that for small things and it's got verticals and it's got horizontals and there's nothing missing.

But other people that like asymmetrical decor will have shelves where you're going along and you have shelf, shelf and then you have a big gap and then you have a little one and then over here there's bigger and smaller shelves within. I understand the appeal of that. I just don't like it as well.

I like and so when it comes to acrostic psalms you can imagine that my favorite is Psalm 119. We talked about the eight acrostic psalms in Scripture and there are also, by the way, acrostic sections in other places. There's a part of Lamentations and different places.

One of the prophets has got a little acrostic section. But Psalm 119 is a beautiful, perfect acrostic and not only is every letter of the alphabet in there, all 22 of them, but each line, there's two lines for each letter and each line starts with the letter. So it's beautiful and it's perfect and if I could only have one psalm out of the collection of 150, 119 is the one I would pick.

It's the biggest, it's the meatiest and it's the most perfectly beautiful. It's in a nice grid acrostic form that heightens the beauty of each of the individual lines. Well, Psalm 9 and 10, as we saw, were, in my view, originally one psalm.

And by the way, I found a reason to even be more convinced that I am right about this. I read, I received as a gift a wonderful commentary and I went back and read what they had to say about Psalm 9 and 10 and the view of that commentary is that they've been artificially smooshed together and that they weren't really together. And that's, you know, go be warm, be fed.

I appreciate everybody's view. Everybody has something that they can add to the picture and we're all, you know, blindfolded men feeling the elephant and so I appreciate that and I had seen that same view elsewhere. But I'm going to show you something tonight that I think will weigh in favor of the unified theory because, again, this is like a shelf that is purposely asymmetrical and if you've got a little bit larger shelf, you can put a bigger thing in there, right? And you can look at that bigger thing.

One of the problems with a Coke shelf thing is unless you're storing spools of thread or something, it's really hard to find enough small things to fill up all the shelves. And then there's so many of them, you can't really, it becomes a little overwhelming. Like, kind of like Psalm 119.

You ever try memorizing that? There's people that have but you're not looking at one of them tonight. So anyway, this is the acrostic and I do believe that it is unified whole and we're going to see just a little bit additional observation of that and then we're going to move on to Psalm 11. So if you have not already done so, turn to Psalm 9 and 10 and I'm not going to review the

aleph and the beth and the gimel and the daleth and the hey that comprise verses 1 through 6 and then verse 7, 8, 9, and 10 were all under the wau, the shepherd's staff, but that was a nice lengthy section all under a single stroke, a single letter.

And then we had Zion in verses 11 and 12 and then chayt, the hard ch sound, was verse 13 and 14 and then tayt, or tayth is the next letter, and that was 15 and 16. Then we had, it says, higayon silah at the end of verse 16. You remember that? There's a major break in the psalm that is written into it by David the author.

Okay? Right there. And so if you get lost in the alphabet soup, don't worry about it because you don't need it for what we're going to look at next. Just be aware that your letters of the alphabet, aleph, beth, gimel, daleth, hey, wau.

You remember my whole thing about the World Wide Web, right? That, what do all the web addresses start with? It's www dot, well, the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, you got, you know, aleph, beth, gimel, daleth, hey, wau. So you've got wau, wau, wau. It's six, six, six.

And so that's my opinion of the whole internet cacophony is that it's probably the mark of the beast itself in some way, shape, or form, this ubiquitous internet that's everywhere and Wi-Fi bubbles surrounding you. And pretty soon they're going to blanket the highways so that you don't even need a cell service. You'll have Wi-Fi in the highway system and it's crazy.

But that'll be the way the Antichrist controls the world. He's going to do it all over the web. And, you know, you'll probably have your computer stuck inside your hat or something.

But, so anyway, wau, uh, and then Zion, chet, tet. So that's wau is six, uh, Zion is seven, chet is eight, and tet is nine. So you get the first nine letters right there.

Okay. And that got us to the Higayon Silah at the end of verse 16 of chapter nine. So just lash yourself to that mast.

We're close to the end of Psalm nine, and yet there is this major break. And then in the verses, you would think that if this was a Psalm that sat alone, that the break would be in the middle. It would be equally divided.

You'd have a port and a starboard. You'd have a fore and an aft. You'd have a, uh, a left side and a right side, and they would be balanced.

But here the break comes after verse 16. Then there's just a short section and you get to Psalm 10. Well, just circle the meditation Silah or Higayon Silah at the end of verse 16, because it's important to what we're going to see next.

Um, the Psalm continues then for the next four verses. And then you have Silah at the end of verse 20. Uh, but there is a chiasm here right at the end of Higayon Silah.

We have the beginning of the chiasm and it extends all the way down to, uh, chapter 10, verse

four. Now it could get complicated to try to explain all of this. You can see it just with your naked eye.

If I explain where the center is and we've already covered this content. And so I'm going to show you the chiasm, but because the chiasm bridges the gap between Psalm 9 and 10, it is strong evidence in my humble opinion that this is a single Psalm. So the, uh, as I say, it begins in 9.17 and extends through 10.4. Well, let me just tell you right now that the center of the chiasm, this is always the most important thing, right? I'm going to show you the center and then we're just going to go above and below and then above and below and above and below and see the corresponding elements.

And you can just mark them as you see fit. Um, if you're using letters, like we typically do, it goes A through G and then you have, you know, F prime, E prime, D prime, C prime, and the rest of it. And then they come back out.

But the center of the chiasm is at, uh, chapter nine, verse, uh, 20. See, 20 says, put them in fear, O Lord. That's the center of the chiasm right there.

You can just circle that phrase, put them in fear, O Lord. Now, what was the theme of Psalm 9 and Psalm 10? Psalm 9, the first half focuses on outside opposition, outside enemies, the nations, the goyim, the, those that are far away, putting on pressure, trying to attack, trying to oppose, trying to tear down. They're godless and therefore they are against anybody that's associated with God, such as God's people.

Psalm 10, David turns his attention to opposition from within. You know, a man's enemies will be those of his own household. And, and this, this is even more tragic.

You know, my familiar friend has lifted up his heel against me, this kind of thing, right? So you can see where it would sort of conveniently break into these two halves, content wise, but the whole Psalm, Psalm 9, 10 is about opposition. It's about what do you do when the world is against you? What do you do when even those near at hand seem to be not helping? And in many cases, a part of the resistance and a part of the problem. What do you do? This to me seems like useful guidance, useful doctrine, useful principles, useful promises, promises, principles, and doctrines.

That's three different ways of describing various kinds of content in the word of God. Doctrines are truths that are transcendent. The character of God, the overall plan and purpose of God, the nature of angels, the purpose of mankind, the nature of Jesus Christ, his work on the cross.

These are doctrines. Redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, atonement, intercession, forgiveness, all of these things, these are doctrinal. These are big chunks of what makes the spiritual world.

Principles derive from doctrines and principles are your application. This is how should we then live. If Jesus is our Savior, if we have an eternal destiny, if we know that we're headed for glory

and we have the opportunity to serve God and reflect his presence and his power both now and then, what should we do? Well, here are the functional principles by which we live.

Principles, they are, this is what you, here's the thing, if you've ever studied in school something like, and I can't think of a good example other than naval engineering which isn't really something, although I would say probably several of us know about, but not enough of us. Let's think about cars. Pretend like you studied internal combustion engines in school, which you probably did if you're old enough.

So they talked about, it started with steam and then it progressed to fuels and they talk about pistons and compression and valves and two-stroke, four-stroke and those, that would be the doctrines related to engines, right? Your owner's manual for your car may describe the functional parts of your car and that's like the doctrine of your car. Here's which button does what. Here's how you turn on the lights.

It has lights, it has windows and so on. But then the principles of operation is if you want to change a tire, here are the steps. If you want to start the car, here are the steps.

If you want to do various things, here are the functional steps. That's your principles. You've got doctrines, which are the defining truths, principles.

This is what you do with those truths, how you operate in the light of those truths, practical, functional things, principles. Then you have promises. You've got doctrines, you've got principles and you have promises.

Promises are where faith comes in. Now, faith comes in when you decide to follow the procedures. Sometimes the things that we are told to do don't make a lot of sense and yet we follow those procedures, you know, feed a cold, starve a fever or whatever.

Sometimes that doesn't always make sense, but we do that because somebody said it was wise. We may not understand the mechanism of a principle, but we do it anyway. That's faith.

But faith really homes in on the promises because promises from God are something that are in the realm of expectation. God says, I will provide for your needs. I will send the Lord Jesus Christ to collect you and take you into my presence.

I will raise you from the dead. I will be with you. I will strengthen you.

I will help you. I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. I will forgive your sins.

I will pass you into glory at the judgment and not send you to the lake of fire. These are promises. And so promises don't necessarily give us a functional principle to follow and they're not necessarily part of a timeless truth.

They are expressions of God's will. God says, this is what I will do for you. This is what I will accomplish on your behalf.

So that's a general way. Most of what you study in the Word of God by way of application is going to fall into those three categories. We have a lot of history.

We have a lot of poetry. We have a lot of other things in the Word of God, but what we are looking for is food for our soul. This is kind of like your meats, your vegetables, and your fruits.

Promises, principles, and doctrines. They serve different needs. They meet different places in our soul that need meeting.

So what we're looking at here is the center of the chiasm that says, put them in fear, O Lord. This word put, and because this is the center of the chiasm, I'm going to go over it a little more closely than I did before. But put, this is the word in Hebrew that means to set or to appoint.

To set or to appoint. And so when it says put, put or place, that's fine. We have in Greek similar words that talk about putting something or appointing something.

But he says, this is the verb sheath, s-h-y-t-h or s-h-i-y-t-h or s-h-e-e-t-h, sheath. You can lay a thing like a foundation. You can set it.

You can appoint it. You can firmly fix it. You can establish it.

You can constitute it or make sure that it becomes something. So a good translation here is to appoint them, set their fate, assure their destination. Then we have the pronoun hem, h-e-m, which is them.

So appoint them. Then we have the preposition lamed, l, which means two or four. And then we have the word for fear, but this is not yireh and this is reverence, dread.

It's translated terribleness, one place, but it has the idea of awe or groveling understanding of how big the thing is that's in front of you. So David's prayer, the central idea in this chiasm is for dealing with the outside enemies and the inside enemies right here in the middle of this two-winged psalm is this central idea. It is a prayer.

It is a confident claim on God's character to appoint these enemies, foreign and domestic, to submission, to dread, to awe, to fear, to recognition of how big their transgression is and how monumental their selfish pursuit of their own ideas has been. Appoint them to dread. Appoint them to awestruck, dumbfounded, low station looking up.

That's the idea. Now on each side of that, you'll see how this chiasm is developed because just before that, he says, let the nations be judged in your sight. That is the next layer out.

If appoint them to dread, O Lord, and O Lord is a part of that because we're going to see the symmetry with O Lord as well. So that would be, if you're going to letter them, the center of the chiasm is going to be letter G. And so appoint them to dread, O Lord. You could just put a letter G right out beside that.

Now, F above it is the last half of verse 19. Let the nations be judged in your sight. That's the letter F. It's the one level out.

Right below that is that the nations may know themselves to be men. See the symmetry there? The nations are going to be judged in God's sight, and they are going to know in their sight that they are men. God's judgment is that they are going to come to know how puny they are.

They are going to be in awestruck dread before God. Okay? Now, knowing themselves to be men, that's your F prime if you're going to label it like a standard chiasm. My suggestion is just circle each element, and then you can put the letter out beside it.

That way, you can just look at the elements in their symmetry. The verse numbers are not always going to be helpful here because it hasn't been divided right, in my view. So anyway, the nations will be judged.

The nations will know themselves to be men. In God's sight, they're judged. In their sight, they say, boy, we are really puny.

We're just merely men in the sight of God. Now, right above F, nations being judged, what does he say at the beginning of verse 19? 19a there says, arise, O Lord, do not let man prevail. That's an element right there.

You can circle that. Arise, O Lord, do not let man prevail. That is your element E. Okay? Now, when I get all finished labeling these, we're going to see why this chiasm.

So bear with me. Arise, O Lord, do not let man prevail. Now, the corresponding element E prime down below is verse 1 of Psalm 10.

Up above, he says, Arise, O Lord. See the O Lord there? Arise, O Lord. 10.1 says, Why do you stand afar off, O Lord? And what is right in the center of those? Put them in dread, O Lord.

So you've got that symmetry there. Right in the center, it is up to the Lord to do these things. And he says, Arise, O Lord.

Why are you standing afar off, O Lord? See how they match? The implication is here, Lord, don't stand far off. Arise, act and judge. And this is the nature of the judgment.

So 10.1 is the E prime. And you can see the second element of it. Do not let man prevail.

Why do you hide in times of trouble? Why would you hide in a time of trouble? It's probably closer. But you know, if you hide, man is going to prevail. Don't let man prevail.

Don't hide in this time of trouble. Make yourself manifest. Show yourself.

Arise, O Lord. So the first part of 19 and all of verse 1 correspond together. Okay, moving out one more level.

We've just got a couple more levels to go here. You look at 9.18. The needy shall not always be forgotten. The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.

Now he can't say this except because of his confidence in God, right? The needy and the poor could perish utterly and completely and never be vindicated, never be justified. How can he say this? The needy will not be forgotten. Who's not going to forget them? It has to be God, right? So the needy will not be forgotten.

The expectation of the poor shall not perish. That's verse 18. We'll look down at verse 2 of chapter 10, Psalm 10.

The wicked persecutes who? The poor. Let the wicked be caught in the plots which they have devised. So the expectation of the poor is that these oppressors are going to be caught in their own traps.

They're going to be hoist on their own petard. Their foul deeds are going to be their undoing. That's their expectation and that is what is fulfilled.

So verse 18. The needy shall not always be forgotten. The expectation of the poor shall not perish.

Even though the wicked in his pride persecutes the poor, let the wicked be caught in the plots which he devises. So that's your D element there. And it expands on out from there.

I'm not going to take all the time because I want to get into Psalm 11 tonight, but just be aware that by the time you get to Psalm 9 verse 17, the wicked shall be turned into hell. That is your A element right there. The wicked shall be turned into hell.

And the B element is all the nations that forget God. Okay. Wicked are turned into hell.

That's A. The nations that forget God is B. Now if you look at Psalm 10 verse 3. The wicked boasts of his heart's desire. He blesses the greedy and renounces the Lord. The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God.

God is in none of his thoughts. All of verse 3 and 4 there where it says he renounces the Lord, he does not seek and God is in none of his thoughts. That all corresponds to the nations forgetting God.

Not in his thoughts like God should be. God should be in everyone's thoughts. God puts himself in the heart of every man.

God manifests himself in creation and puts eternity in our hearts. We ought to be thinking about it. But the wicked expunges that, suppresses the truth and unrighteousness.

You remember Romans 1. So all of that corresponds to the nations that forget God. That's your B element and your B prime element. Now A is the wicked shall be turned into hell.

The wicked shall be turned into Sheol. It says in Psalm 9 verse 17 A. And that single statement beautifully balances verses 5 through 11. Remember that's where the chiasm ceases in Psalm 10.

You have there was no letters and the reason is he doesn't want you looking at the chiasm. This is the big shelf. This is the big item on the big shelf and this is all of the wickedness of the wicked.

Look at 5 through 11 again. His ways are always prospering. Why do the wicked prosper? He seems like whatever he does, he's rich, he's well off, he's comfortable, he's not persecuted, he's bearing down on the poor, he himself is comfortable.

He's like the rich man with Lazarus at the gate. His ways are always prospering. Your judgments are far above out of his sight.

He forgets God. It's not a part of his thinking. As for his enemies, he sneers at them.

He has said in his heart, I shall not be moved. I shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression.

Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity. He sits in the lurking places in the villages. In the secret places he murders the innocent.

His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless. He lies in wait secretly. Much of the time when you see this phrase secretly, it actually means in darkness.

And we're going to see that again in Psalm 11. In darkness. They're out of the light.

Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. It's done in the dark. It's done out of sight.

Can't stand the scrutiny. He lies in wait 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. He crouches. He lies low that the helpless may fall by his strength.

He has said in his heart, God has forgotten. He hides his face. He will never see.

From verse four to verse 11, you see how it's bracketed with God is in none of his thoughts. He forgets God. All of that, all of that forgetting God is balanced by a single statement.

Anytime you see any of these things, David says, when you see the wicked sitting in the lurking place, when you see him murdering the innocent, when you see his eyes fixed on the helpless, when you see him lying in wait like a lion, when you see him prevailing, when you see him comfortable, he could have written this a different way and put a refrain at the end of each of these statements. But instead he uses the chiasm. And verse 17a is the one line that answers

every one of these.

And the structure tells you this. It's economical. So his ways are always prospering.

The wicked shall be turned into hell. Your judgments are far above out of his sight, but the wicked shall be turned into hell. He has said in his heart, I shall not be moved.

I shall never be in adversity, but he's going to be turned into hell. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression. Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity, but he's going to Sheol.

He's going to a place of loss and no return. I say hell. You probably shouldn't use that because it's so misunderstood, but that's what your New King James says.

He's lurking and murdering and lying in wait and catching the poor and drawing them into his net and crouching and lying low and using his cheap wicked strength to waylay the weak and the helpless, but he's going to be turned into Sheol. Every time you see these things and the frustration starts to well up and the feeling of helplessness and, Lord, why don't you arise? Why don't you act? God has already passed judgment. It's sort of like, Lord, why do you let Satan and the demons lose? They've already been sentenced to the lake of fire.

Their time is short. They're doing their last protestations, their last demonstrations, their last appeals, and it's all failing and it's only a matter of time. So the answer to each one of these, do you ever get frustrated listening to the evening news? Do you ever get frustrated looking at the downward spiral of our culture and all of these memes and emoticons and hashtags and all the rest that are coming up that are drawing people into shallow, distracted, thoughtless, meaningless expenditures of time and effort and breath and virtual ink? The antidote, David says, is to stop looking at the horizontal and the machinations of the wicked and look up to the eternal judge in the heavens who has already passed sentence.

It is in the same already category as our salvation. We are eternally already saved. We haven't accessed it yet, but it is certain.

And just as certain as our salvation is the judgment and the removal into Sheol of these people and all of their acts. So this symmetry, you've got that single statement, the wicked shall be turned into hell. Right after the Higayon Silah, you have that single statement and that single thing balances.

It reminds me, I've told you many times, it just comes to my mind, the little tiny stylus wiggling on the record and the big noise that comes out the speaker, those tiny vibrations in a crystal stylus or a diamond stylus are magnified hundreds of times to move the big woofer that's in your speaker system. And this is what happens. The judgment of God can be stated once and it obviates and negates and deals with and eliminates all of the stuff in verse 4 through 11.

So it's a beautiful use of symmetry and asymmetry. Sometimes you like a Psalm 119 where everything's on its shelf. Other times you can see that a single statement by God, all of these

machinations of the wicked, they're running around like rats in a barn full of grain, and it seems like they're just having their way.

God says one word, it's gone. It's just a single line deals with all of this activity. And it's important for us to remember that the wicked are but men.

God is God. And they can't do anything except in His allowance, at His behest, with His tacit permission for a time. But they have already been judged.

It has already been destined to be eliminated and all sent to Sheol from which there is no return. But you look at this beautiful chiastic structure that crosses the boundary between 9 and 10, and to me it is a very persuasive argument that they belong together. Okay, now quickly, Psalm 11.

It's the same theme. And we've been seeing that the Psalms seem to come in pairs. And when you look at Psalm 11 and Psalm 12, they are both looking at the same problem from two different sides.

Psalm 11 is to the chief musician a Psalm of David. We've covered both of those phrases in the past. We can move right on.

Let's read this Psalm, Psalm 11. Because this, by the way, is of a piece. You can see why Psalm 11 follows Psalm 9-10.

It's taking the same theme and turning it in the light just a little bit. Psalm 11 says, In the Lord I put my trust. How can you say to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain? For look, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow on the string, that they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart.

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? The Lord is in His holy temple. The Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes behold.

His eyelids test the sons of men. Got to wonder what that means, right? The Lord tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence, his soul hates. Upon the wicked he will rain coals.

Fire and brimstone and a burning wind is the portion of their cup. For the Lord is righteous. He loves righteousness.

His countenance beholds the upright. And we're going to see that your text note in your New King James is correct, and that should actually be the upright behold His countenance. But let's take a look at this now.

In the Lord I put my trust. So how can you say to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain? First of all, in your New King James, you see that that's in quotes, flee as a bird to your mountain, close quote. Cross out that quote after mountain, because David quotes those who are saying

to his soul, and it goes all the way down to the end of verse three.

The close quote goes all the way down at the end of verse three. David gives an extensive quote of these people who are giving him opposition to his view. He says, I'm trusting the Lord.

This is my ongoing pattern. I'm trusting Him. Look at what I just wrote in Psalm 910.

I'm looking to God and His eternal judgments and His almighty powerful oversight over enemies foreign and enemies domestic. When I look at that opposition, God will judge. God will deal.

In His own time and in His own way, but it is foreordained that that stuff is all going to Sheol. So in the Lord I put my trust. So David, in a single line here, sums up the whole previous double Psalm.

He says, look, I'm trusting in the Lord. So how can you, and this is you plural, how can you all around me say to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain? And they continue, this is them talking. For look, the wicked bend their bow.

They make ready their arrow on the string that they may shoot secretly. And again, this is shoot out of the dark. They're hiding in the dark, shooting arrows at the upright in heart.

And this is still a quote. If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? This is what these people are plaguing David with. This sort of reminds you of Job's wife.

Curse God and die. The foundations have been destroyed. God's not with you anymore.

And of course, his three friends extend that theme for 37 chapters. But the idea here is, this is a quote from the last half of verse one all the way through the end of verse three. Now, in verse one, how can you say to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain? What you'll find unusual here is flee and your are plural.

How can you say to my soul, y'all flee to y'all's mountain? You get the idea this could be David and his trusty band of faithful followers into Dullam. And people are saying, God's anointed king is pursuing you. You need to flee.

You need to go away. The wicked are bending their bow. They're making ready their arrow on the string that they may shoot secretly.

You are really good guys. You're upright in heart. But you're going to be victims.

You're too innocent. You're too trusting. You need to take some action here.

You need to flee to a mountain where you can't be chased, where you can't be followed, because the foundations are destroyed. You can't wait for justice. You can't wait for the system that is in place.

You can't wait for the God-ordained institutions to function. You've just got to hiyako. You've got to flee.

You've got to make yourself scarce. Run away, run away. Now, what do you think about this advice? Well, you remember in Ecclesiastes, there is a time for everything, season for everything.

You just think about what the New Testament says about the devil. It says, flee youthful lusts, right? Something is hooking into your youthful lusts. Flee.

But then he also says, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Right? Resist him steadfast in the faith. Resist him and he will flee.

So, when do you flee? When do you fight? When do you flight? How do you know which one to do? Well, this is why we have promises and principles and doctrines. This is why we have God the Holy Spirit in this age to lead us into the truth that pertains at the moment. There is a time to fight and there is a time to flee.

David himself had to flee. Joseph, when Potiphar's wife grabbed his cloak, had to flee. Right? If he had stuck around, it could have only gone from bad to worse.

So, he fled. Now, was that the right choice? In the immediate aftermath, he might have been rethinking that because what happened to him? He is demoted. He is imprisoned.

He is shamed. He is wrongly accused. He is wrongly punished and he spends years in Pharaoh's prison for something he did not do and something he tried to avoid.

He fled, but the fleeing didn't necessarily help. When they tried to throw Jesus off the pinnacle after he preached at Capernaum, remember they took him to the mountaintop and were going to cast him off? He left. He walked through their midst.

I wouldn't necessarily call it fleeing, but he didn't stay there. He didn't just sit down on the ground and say, make me. He left.

He left that situation. He left that vicinity. He would leave towns and villages.

If they started getting too obsessed with his healing ministry and not listening to the teaching, he would go to other towns and villages and preach the kingdom. There is a time to move and there is a time to stay. There is a time to flee and nobody can tell you what that is.

In our age and in our circumstances, it is us and the Lord. It is the word of God and God, the Holy Spirit. No man should judge another in his decision to stick it out or to flee.

This often happens in marriages. It can happen in tight quarters, in a job, or in a lot of other close associations. How long do you stick it out before you exit stage left? What if you're in a church and you're vibrating and you're uncomfortable and things aren't going well.

Maybe the church is trying to split or divide or it's got issues and problems. You say, well, if I stay, am I a part of the problem? Am I being divisive by not being cohesive? Am I sticking with a sinking ship here? What should I do? I don't know. Nobody knows but the Lord and you seek through reflecting and meditating on the law of the Lord day and night prayerfully guidance.

Lord, let me know. Can I do more good staying or would I do more good if I left? In this relationship, in this situation, in this environment, in this association, in this state, whatever it might be. If you honestly express to the Lord that you want to be in the center of His will, there will be illumination in the direction that we should go.

It is always the case. And if you get no clear direction, one thing I will say is if you don't get any clear direction, maintain the status quo. Keep the status quo until you get the word to change.

It may be raining and thunderbolts all around you. Trees may be splitting and exploding around you. There can be enemy fire and they're running up the slopes.

If you don't get an order to move, stay. Don't change because why would you be changing if you have no word from the Lord? You remember when Saul got all frustrated because Samuel didn't show up and the Philistines are getting more numerous and his army is leaking away. And he says, well, I got to go ahead and do the sacrifice and provide an attacker.

I'm not going to have any troops left. He panicked and did the wrong thing. And it cost him his kingdom.

It cost him his dynasty. It was the last straw. Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul.

All of that took place because he didn't trust. He didn't stick it out. God was doing with Saul's army what he did with Gideon.

They didn't have an attack yet. And so God had to make an artificial set of tests to winnow out the guys that didn't need to be with Gideon and get him down to the faithful 300 with the lamps and the pitchers. God used a different means to get down to the core, to the good guys.

All really Saul needed in his whole army is Jonathan and his armor bearer. That's enough right there. But Saul didn't trust and he made a change when he should have just held fast.

So one principle of the Word of God that you're going to find and it's reflected in this psalm. They're telling David, you need to flee. You need to leave.

You need to change locations. You need to change geography. You need to change strategic advantage here.

He says, why are you telling me this? I'm trusting in the Lord. The Lord will tell me when to move. Now, did David flee from time to time? Yes.

And was he right to do so? Yes. But it's at the Lord's behest. Anytime David moved when he

wasn't supposed to, bad things happen.

And anytime we move when we're not supposed to, bad things happen. So this is very practical advice. We've had the big broad painting here in Psalm 91 of the international enemies.

And then you've got the domestic enemies. And David says, you know how I'm dealing with all of that? I gave you clues throughout that preceding set of psalms. But here, I'm just going to sum it up.

In the Lord, I put my trust. So how can you say this to me that I should be making a change? I'm going to listen to you and take your advice. What if your advice is bad? You know who I'm going to come back and blame? You.

You're the one that told me to go to the mountain. And then I was surrounded and cut off. I had no logistics.

There was no water up there. I couldn't get food up there. And we're starving out.

Now we have to surrender with our hands on our heads. Thanks a lot for your bad advice. Let the Lord develop the strategy, implement the tactics, and give the guidance.

Shine the light. If we pray, if we look to Him, He will give the answer. Most of you that I'm talking to know this from your own experience, that if you wait on the Lord and be of good cheer, He will strengthen your heart.

And when it's time to pull the trigger, He's going to put the thing in your hand. He's going to aim it. He's going to load it.

He's going to say right there. And He's going to give you the strength to pull the trigger. And you're going to hit the bullseye.

But you have to stick. You have to stay. You have to trust.

And that's David's. He leads off with that. In the Lord, I put my trust.

In the Lord, I put my trust. So how can you say to my soul, you're trying to stick stuff in there that doesn't belong. Flee like a bird.

And He's saying, not just me, but those who are with me. We've got a small group. I've gathered around myself people of like mind.

They think like I think. They believe like I believe. They trust the Lord like I trust.

And you're telling all of us, we need to move. It's real interesting to me that it's plural. Y'all flee to y'all's mountain.

Take a group with you. You all need to go. Because the wicked are bending their bow.

What can the righteous do if the foundations are destroyed? Are you trusting in foundations? Or are you trusting on the founder who can make a foundation anywhere he wants? For us in this age, other foundation can no man lay, but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. And that foundation is never moved. Isn't it interesting that in one place, Jesus is the foundation.

And in the other, He's the capstone. He's the omega. And He's the alpha.

He's the bottom. And He's the top. He's the foundation on which you build.

And He's the finishing capstone of the head of the corner. He's both. He's at each end of the chiasm.

And He's right in the center. So you go on in verse 4 here. It says, look, let me expand on what I said in verse 1. When I say I trust in the Lord, the Lord is in His holy temple.

The Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes behold. His eyelids test the sons of men.

Now what does it mean? His eyelids test the sons of men. There's been a lot of analysis done on this because it's an odd thing to say. Hold still now.

I'm going to test you with my eyelid. How does that work exactly? Well, it's really an interesting turn of phrase. And it's an onomopoeitic word in Hebrew for eyelid.

And it is like the beating of a bird's wings. The word for bird in Hebrew is af, A-P-H. And that's used all the way back in Genesis in the creation account.

Well, eyelids are af-afs. They're af-af-ay. Af-af-ay.

But it's for the blinking. It's like bird wings flapping. That's how they imagine.

So it's almost the blinking of the Lord. And when it says eyelids, it is that which blinks. David is so focused on God.

And it's like a zoom. You've seen these things where they start out in space and you see the world like a marble. And then it just zooms all the way down.

And it goes through the clouds and expands. It's like Google Earth. And now you're looking at your roof.

And now you're right now looking at the top of your own head. And now you're looking in that sense, instead of coming down and looking at something on earth, we're going up. And David says, the Lord is in his holy temple, not the temple in Jerusalem.

This is God's holy temple in heaven. The Lord's throne is in heaven, the heavenly throne. His eyes behold.

And then you zoom right in on God's eyes and you can see the eyelashes. You can see his lids

and he's peering intently. David says, I'm looking at God's eyes.

Remember in another place it says, I will guide thee with mine eye. My dad used to quote that quite often and he was really good at it too. He didn't really have to say anything.

He could express a lot just with a look, as most parents can, whose children know them well. And David is looking at God's eyes. What is he not looking at? Whatever the opposition is, where everybody's saying, you've got to flee, you've got to run.

Look, they're coming over the hill. They're coming down the valley. We can see the dust.

We can see the chariots. We can see the sun glinting off the bronze weapons. You've got to flee.

You've got to run. You've got to get to higher ground. You and everybody with you.

You've got to go. You've got to go. And he says, you know what? I'm not looking at that.

I am looking heavenward. I'm looking at the face of my Father in heaven and I'm looking at his eyes. And right now, I don't need to watch the enemy because you know who's watching him? God is, right down to his eyelashes.

I'm watching his eyes and he's watching them. The Lord's throne is in heaven, but his eyes behold, his eyelids test the sons of men. He is aware of everything.

And this word is like dokimazo in Greek. It's the equivalent in Hebrew. When it says he tests, this is test for the purpose of proving, determining the worth of a thing.

It was used for assaying metals or assessing. If you're trying to determine the fineness of silver or the fineness of gold, this is the word they would use. He is assessing quality.

Is it good or is it bad? Is it worthy or is it unworthy? Do you keep it or right now, his eyes are looking at not just the enemy, but he's also looking at me. When I look at my Father's eyes in heaven, when I look at the Lord in heaven, he sees everything. He's already got them figured out and he's watching me.

What am I going to do? I've just said my trust is in the Lord. Well, he's watching to see if that trust is going to hold up. Am I going to fail? Am I going to come apart at the seams? His eyelids test.

The Lord tests the righteous. And David, by implication, includes himself in that category, right? He says, my trust is in the Lord. So I'm sadik, I'm righteous.

The wicked and the one who loves violence, his soul hates. He's sitting on his throne in heaven and he's watching. So he is going to act, all of this implies he's going to act favorably for those who maintain their righteousness and maintain their faith.

And he is going to act in a very negative manner, called here hate, to the wicked and the one

who loves violence. Upon the wicked, he will rain coals, fire and brimstone, and a burning wind. The thing about fire and coal and brimstone and a burning wind is they all come from the heavens in this view.

They're going to rain, so they're coming from above. So David says, God is in heaven looking. He is going to preserve the righteous and from heaven is going to rain all of this bad stuff on the wicked and the violent.

And it's going to be the portion of their cup. Not only is it going to rain on the outside of them, but they're going to have to drink that cup. They're going to drink fire.

They're going to drink coals. Why? The Lord is righteous and he loves righteousness. All I have to do, while I'm waiting for the word to flee or to stay, while I'm waiting for God's next move, what should I concentrate on? I could just say, okay, I'm waiting for a word.

I'm waiting for a clue. Where is God going to shine the light? I'm God texted me yet with the plan? David says, no, I'm not watching and listening and waiting for the word. I am watching and waiting and listening for how to be righteous, how to be faithful.

If I concentrate on being righteous, I have nothing to fear. God loves me and will take care of me if I cultivate the righteousness that he can approve when he looks at it. I don't have to concentrate on waiting to hear from him.

I concentrate on being pleasing to him. And if I'm pleasing to him, I know I'll hear from him at the right time in the right way. I don't have to be leaping at every sound and jumping on every clue and wondering, well, is this the Lord telling me to do A or to do B? Concentrate on what is right.

Find what is right. Find what is the element of faith and concentrate on that. Let God watch the situation.

And when God watches me, let him find me someone he can approve and the situation will take care of itself. That is Psalm 11. And it is the summation answer to Psalm 91.

What do you do when the wicked are strutting and fretting their hour on the stage, sound and fury signifying nothing? Signify something. Be somebody that God loves and can bless. Be who you are supposed to be.

Let God iron out the details of when, where, stay, go, get judged, don't get judged on the wicked. Be what we're supposed to be. That is the focus.

And the peace of God will keep our hearts and minds. We will have peace. David says, you don't need to be telling me this stuff.

Flee like a bird. Arrows. Don't need any of that.

All I need to do is remember that God is on his throne. He sees everything. And when he looks at me, I want him to see what he loves.

Righteousness. So that's what I'm going to be. That's what I'm going to do.

Well, let's close here in a word of prayer and we'll pick up in our study of Psalms again next week. Father, we thank you for the truth of your word and the wonderful practicality of these Old Testament scriptures that are so meaningful and so pertinent even centuries and centuries after they were originally set down. We thank you for the ministry of your Holy Spirit and the wonderful way he enlivens these things and brings them to our mind when we need them.

The assurance and the strength and the comfort that come to us from you through him, all due to the wonderful work of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. He has set a wonderful example for us of steadiness under trial, of focus on those things which are in heaven, those things which are eternal, the things that last and that count. We pray that we can follow in his footsteps in that way, that we cannot be moved, that we can reflect your glory.

And as others see the light in us, they will be drawn to the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit and through him to you and to your throne. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.